

Wonderland

The Spring Fashion Issue

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by Hedi Slimane

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McQ Find Finke

INSTALLATION FANTASIST OPHELIA FINKE TEAMS
UP WITH McQ THIS SPRING FOR A SURREAL,
CRONENBURG-ESQUE SHOWCASE

OPHELIA FINKE'S WORK is the Where's Wally of the grown-up art world. The Germany born, London based Saint Martins graduate creates otherworldly installations, where seemingly everyday scenes – surgeons performing operations, archaeologists on a dig, explorers... explorin' – are skewed with jarring, disturbing details. Like Hitchcock, spot Finke in the background of her scenes – guised as a cowboy hat-toting doctor, in tribute to her MD father.

Her newest project is a collaboration with McQ for their SS15 campaign. The shoot, photographed by Laurence Ellis, sees factory workers craft mutant, slime-coated wooden ornaments and battered motorbikes, all the while model Sunniva Wahl sports the sleekly androgynous line. Pointing into the distance in each shot, Finke chats to *Wonderland* here.

Wonderland: Ophelia, when did you first get interested in art?

Ophelia: From as long as I can remember, my childhood room was chaotic and wild. That might have been art already. My mum is also an art historian and I remember going through her art books and beholding old paintings.

W: Central Saint Martins has a great reputation, but how did tutors there react to, and nurture, your work?

O: I was about to study medicine in Germany, but knew that I rather wanted to be an artist. I decided to send an application to Saint Martins because I knew it from Alexander McQueen. I saw his fashion shows

and I knew that he had studied there. I sent some photographs in my email and I didn't think they would reply, but they asked for more photos and I made a portfolio over night. Studying there was a great experience; I love the new campus and facilities. It's a temple of creativity. It showed me that I was on the right way.

W: How did the collaboration with McQ come about?

O: My friend, the photographer Laurence Ellis, who worked with them and also collaborated with me, introduced us.

W: The set is like a Cronenberg scene, can you describe it succinctly?

O: My installations are environments. They are clearly confined areas – you might call them wonderlands, with their own coherent systems. The colours white and beige are predominant in this installation; you can see a work in progress, materials and tools lying around and a group of assistants working in the background.

W: It's quite a vision. Where did you get your ideas from?

O: The main inspiration was the Italian city Carrara that is well known for its marble quarries. The white, beige colour scheme might resemble the stone, while the assistants and machines – but also it's unfinished – reminds me of a quarry.

W: What is it that you are trying to express

by featuring yourself in the shots?

O: I think [it] opens up the piece and it becomes more accessible for the audience. I become one with the work, at the same time it is my signature. This is me wearing the coat and the cowboy hat, it's me being a piece of work. It started with the doctor's coats, as my dad was an inspiration for me wanting to become a doctor. I was always wearing his coat and dressing up like him as a child, dreaming of this heroic doctor. The cowboy hat is the next step into my own personality.


W: Do you have an affinity with Alexander McQueen's playfully escapist work?

O: Alexander McQueen was about creating these worlds – every show was a performance. I feel our work is quite similar. I had the option of freedom to create whatever I wanted to do and that's the way I really wanted to do it.

W: How is London an inspiration-source for you?

O: Darkness and never-ending rain. Melancholia is very important source of inspiration.

W: The last question is a big one. Who are your favourite ever artists?

O: I think that everyone is inspiring and everyone is an artist. 



M:G 35'5
Photographer Laurence El

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