

THE INTERNATIONAL FASHION AND MUSIC MAGAZINE FROM PORTUGAL

# ZOOZ

FALL // 2007

ISSN 1646-4869

9 771646 486084

PORTUGAL € 7  
UK £ 5

UNKLE / ELECTROMUNGO / MICRO AUDIO WAVES / NORBERTO LOBO  
ESN / ANTIPOP FESTIVAL / MODA LISBOA / STUART SEMPLE  
WILBERT DAS / SANDRA BACKLUND AND 111 PAGES FASHION AND BEAUTY

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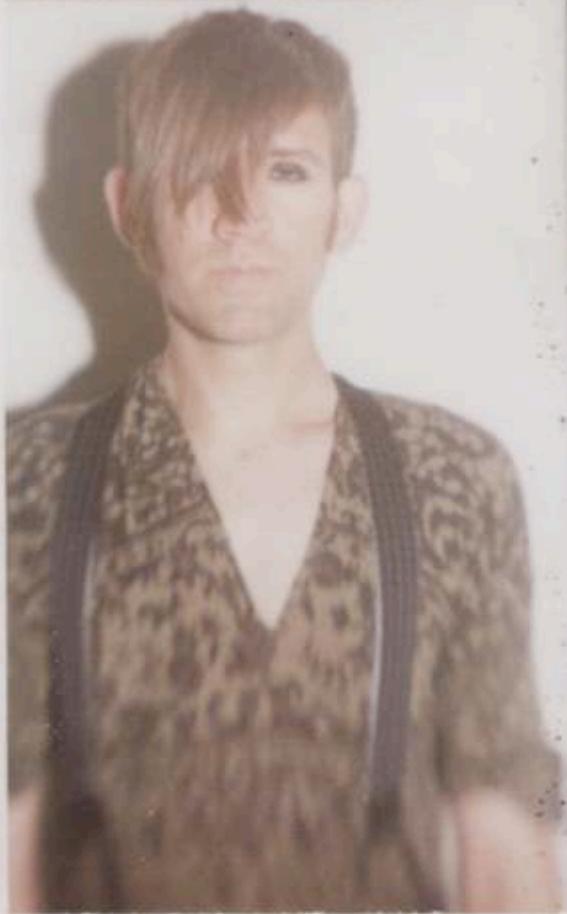






# STUART SEMPLE

Matt Hussey // Portrait Photos by Ellis Scott // Images courtesy Stuart Semple





"Kurt Lied" 550x300x20cm

**Gunge green, bubblegum pink, orangeade and ray-gun red. These are the colours of artist Stuart Semple. Dumping his previous tag, 'Nancy Boy', Stuart has produced a new collection aptly titled, 'Fake Plastic Love' that combines the cinematic with the intimate, but without the pretension of a British art scene over shadowed by Damien Hurst and the YBA's.**

**Why did you decide to drop the 'Nancy Boy' tag?**

I always thought I would. When I started out, I had to make money from what I did. So that meant that my work had to constantly evolve, which, in some ways, I wish I didn't have to do. I didn't want to get stuck under the one title. I saw my work getting better, and I saw the pseudonym as an extension to my work.

**Tell us something about Fake Plastic Love.**

The initial idea was to play with the scale of things, to make something monumental, and challenge my skills as an artist. The dimensions [of my work] have become more cinematic, more 159, they touch on the ideas of movies and pop culture.

**There's elements of Fritz Lang's Metropolis in your work, was that quite deliberate?**

The work is like an album, like a musician might make. They have a narrative to them all, a Marilyn Monroe figure

continues throughout the smaller pieces. It's more my dialogue with pop art, and how art became mechanized through screen printing, and graphic design moving over to computers. I wanted to try and bring those original elements back into painting. I think the language of pop art traditionally communicated ideas of capitalism and consumerism, whereas these days it's more about things that are happening in our lives, things like YouTube. I think pop art can describe so much more than that, I think it can be quite emotional.

**There's a lot of very recognisable figures and celebrities in your work. What qualified them as subjects for you to paint?**

A lot of the images I use originate from photo shoots and music videos, and so they're made to look attractive. I think a big part of what the work is about, is the ability to identify them. I think everyone can find an intimacy in the painting. Images of things they grew up with and used to watch on TV.





"Living Doll" 550x300x20cm



"You're Not Alone" 550x300x20cm

Is it important that your work is accessible to people who wouldn't normally choose to look at art?

Definitely. I want to entertain people. I don't like the idea of art being an elite thing that you may or may not understand. That it shouldn't be funny or a spectacle. I want all those things in it. The feelings you get when you listen to a pop song or watch an 80s Hollywood movie.

You've had a few spats with Charles Saatchi, who could be seen as representing the more "traditional" side of art. In that sense, do you see yourself as anti establishment?

I don't think I'm deliberately anti-establishment. It's not like I'm against things, the difference is, my work is different from the generation before, the YBA's (Young British Artists). It was so different from that I guess it could be considered that way. It's painting for a start, it's brightly coloured, a bit trashy. Things the YBA's never really experimented with.





"Scared to Sleep Alone" 550x300x20cm

Is there a real sense of wanting to get back to a narrower definition of an artist. To paint and nothing else?

It's just what I'm interested in doing. I was always inspired by Jeff Koons, Andy Warhol, stuff coming out of New York. I wasn't as interested in the British art as much.

You've mentioned before that you wanted to make art similar to the way you listen to music, what sort of music were you listening to whilst painting your new work?

It changes all the time. I might be painting something that feels very fast and intense, so I might be listening to Pavarotti, but then when I'm painting something a bit more atmospheric, I may stick a bit of Radiohead on.

So does the mood of the music you listen to transfer over to your paintings?

Yes, it's about the atmosphere of the piece.

Were there any specific techniques you used to create the pieces?

Well, I've developed my own paint, which I use to create the pieces. I work with the factory to create my own colour palette. So my yellow's always my yellow, and green's always my green.

Do you have names for your paint?

Yeah, I've got things like gunge green for green, bubblegum pink, orange-ade, ray gun red, pretty boy pink, deep purple, skid mark is for brown.

Obviously. So is it important for you have to colours that you can call your own?

Yeah, because in a collection you may have work that was created five years ago. So when they're in a gallery, it keeps them all consistent.

You've also got a clothing range coming out?

Yeah, we've just finished the new line.

What are the key differences between what you put on canvass and what you put on a t-shirt?

The clothing for me was a lot more experimental, and for a while it gave me a chance of focusing on something else. Of going through different processes like photographing models and directing. Painting's a very solitary thing, where as with the clothing, there's a whole team involved.

Are there similarities between fashion and canvass?

Yeah, there are some. But with this season's designs, I've stopped doing the designs. I'm hiring new young designers to come and design for me.

Your paintings exude a real sense of control. Where as with the clothing, there's a lot more influence from other people. Has that become quite a nice balance between the two?

I did feel with the last creation, I felt so isolated with the painting. You forget you have any friends. I felt as though I needed an excuse, so clothes became quite a natural thing to come in.

What can we expect from you in the next six months?

The clothing range comes out next year, and I'm going to Italy and Berlin for a new exhibition of mine called, 'Do you know me'. But I think I need a bit of a rest!

Stuart Semple's new exhibition Fake Plastic Love is on show from October 12 - November 2 at the Old Truman Brewery, Brick Lane, London.

[www.stuartsemple.com](http://www.stuartsemple.com)  
[www.ellisscott.co.uk](http://www.ellisscott.co.uk)