

Shoes Made of Teeth: Art or Stupid?

And coats made out of human hair – what about them?

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Fashion, in the pretentious, fashionverse sense of the word, is at its best when it's essentially unwearable – a creation far too beautiful to ruin by doing something as selfish as pressing it to your skin and using it to warm yourself up and not be naked in public. That's why, when artists use clothes as a canvas, the result is often far more interesting to look at than whatever you'll see paraded down a catwalk. Because, instead of worrying about what entitled department store buyers are going to dislike, they have free reign to comment on geopolitical issues with ridiculous, oversized rags, or make preposterous uniboob dresses that no one's realistically ever going to wear.

Or, they can make shoes out of 1050 dentures and jackets out of human hair, just like Hackney-based creative-duo, **Fantich & Young**. The pair met a while ago and decided to create art together, because, as Dominic Young – one half of the team – says, "you've got to play with people, otherwise you'll just be doing drum solos the whole time, and nobody likes that".

I spoke to Dominic about the duo's work and their concept of "Darwinian Voodoo".

VICE: Why did you choose to make shoes out of teeth?

Dominic: The Apex Predator shoes were inspired by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and natural selection, then we subverted that idea by including references to the supernatural elements of pagan rites and ceremonial rituals. We tried to instill the concept of viewing nature as a threat by doing what we did.

Right. That sounds kind of deep for a pair of shoes.

Well, as artists, we look for contradiction, and the contradiction here was the logic of science versus the belief in the supernatural. We look for contradictions because they create tensions and tensions create creativity. Most of our work is based around that concept and, if you were to look at the shoes within that context, they'd make a lot more sense. We often play around with Herbert Spencer's concept of social Darwinism, which is where you apply the laws of nature to society.

Heavy.

Basically, if you apply the laws of nature in the Serengeti on to society, you're going to have a war on the weak. So, these shoes are social Darwinistic shoes. They're called the Apex Predator because they represent the ruling elite and there's no predator for the social elite, is there?

No, I guess not.

Because once things go wrong for the ruling elite, they get bailed out or there's a whitewash. So, they're the ruling elite and they're the Apex Predator. But that's only my opinion of what we've instilled in the work. We allow the viewers to make up their own minds.

Cool. So – these shoes – are they made out of real human teeth?

No, they're not from dead people or the dentist's floor, or anything. They're actually dentures from China.

They remind me of something out of a horror B-movie.

It's interesting you say that, because we're both big film fans – we're very into *Salò*, Lindsay Anderson's *If* and a little bit of Kubrick – but yeah, the shoes do have a early-50s hammer horror feel to them. We were actually inspired by a makeup artist who worked on a lot of hammer horror films, but his name escapes me, I'm afraid.

That's alright. What about the human hair suit? That's pretty freaky, too.

That stems from our Darwinian Voodoo concept. The work was created as a fine art sculpture in 2010 and it's a vintage Savile Row suit that's been customised with human hair, glass eyeballs, bones and a canine denture.

Darwinian Voodoo? Did you coin that phrase yourselves?

Yeah, it's just us trying to sum up what we're trying to do in two words. It sounded quite good. Instead of saying magic and science, we called it Darwinian Voodoo, for good or for bad.

Nice. How much are you pricing this stuff at? Because I presume it's sold as art rather than fashion, right?

Yeah, as art sculptures in a limited edition. They're going to retail at £1500 per pair, but all inquiries will have to come to us because we don't have an outlet.

I can't afford anything limited, so that's out of the question for me. What are you going to make next out of human body parts? Could you make underwear out of my pubic hair for a fee, perhaps?

Now there's an idea that could really take off. No, we're beginning to to rummage through the darkest recesses of our imaginations and, as we speak, a ladies' shoe is in the works. It'll be something that Hilary Clinton would look good in. They've got power and they've got sassiness.

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