

THE COVER ON THE WALL

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IN 1953, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER MADE A SPEECH AT THE UNITED NATIONS CALLED ATOMS FOR PEACE, with the objective to ‘inform’ the American citizens on risks and advantages of a nuclear future. At that time, it was written that the speech was pure propaganda, that Eisenhower wanted to downplay the ghosts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and promote nuclear research in the United States and the rest of the world, assisting and building with American companies the first nuclear reactors. History teaches us that the first ‘clients’ were Iran and Pakistan. Sixty years later, the band Atoms for Peace comes out with their first album, *Amok* – a syndrome that defines one who goes crazy, it literally means ‘uncontrolled, unrestrained’. The album cover was designed by Stanley Donwood, writer, artist and collaborator to the best Radiohead artwork; we asked him to describe the birth of this first album. But it doesn’t stop here. Thanks to the



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participation of the artist Insa, the offices of XL Recordings on Hyperion Drive in Los Angeles have become an enormous interactive mural inspired by the cover (check it out online).

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO COLLABORATE WITH ATOMS FOR PEACE AFTER YEARS WITH RADIOHEAD?

With Radiohead, I try and paint or draw what I feel when I listen to their music. Each album has a sort of life of its own and as a consequence even my work is very different for each album. Atoms for Peace are different from Radiohead, much more underground in the way they try to make propaganda, to transmit messages. There is a line of subliminal communication between The Eraser and Amok, as if they were using the same secret codebook.

HAVE YOU LISTENED TO THE ALBUM?

I have listened to it repeatedly, from beginning to end, following each evolution. It has been two intense years for each one of us, two years to record, two years to finalise my artwork. Rather interesting.

AMOK'S COVER PORTRAYS AN EXPOSITION OF METEORITES, WITH THE A BACKDROP OF AN APOCALYPTIC LOS ANGELES. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS FASCINATION FOR THE APOCALYPSE, RECURRENT IN SO MANY OF YOUR WORKS?

Apocalypse means discovery or revelation, throwing away what it covers. For us 'modern people' it has a negative meaning, in the sense that it is always associated with a disastrous phenomena, in the biblical sense, on the other hand, is the triumph on the Good versus Evil, the end of a negative era and the birth of a new world. If we looked at it in this way, the Apocalypse would be positive, but as far as I am concerned I wouldn't swear on it, I am no Muzio Scevola. ●

