

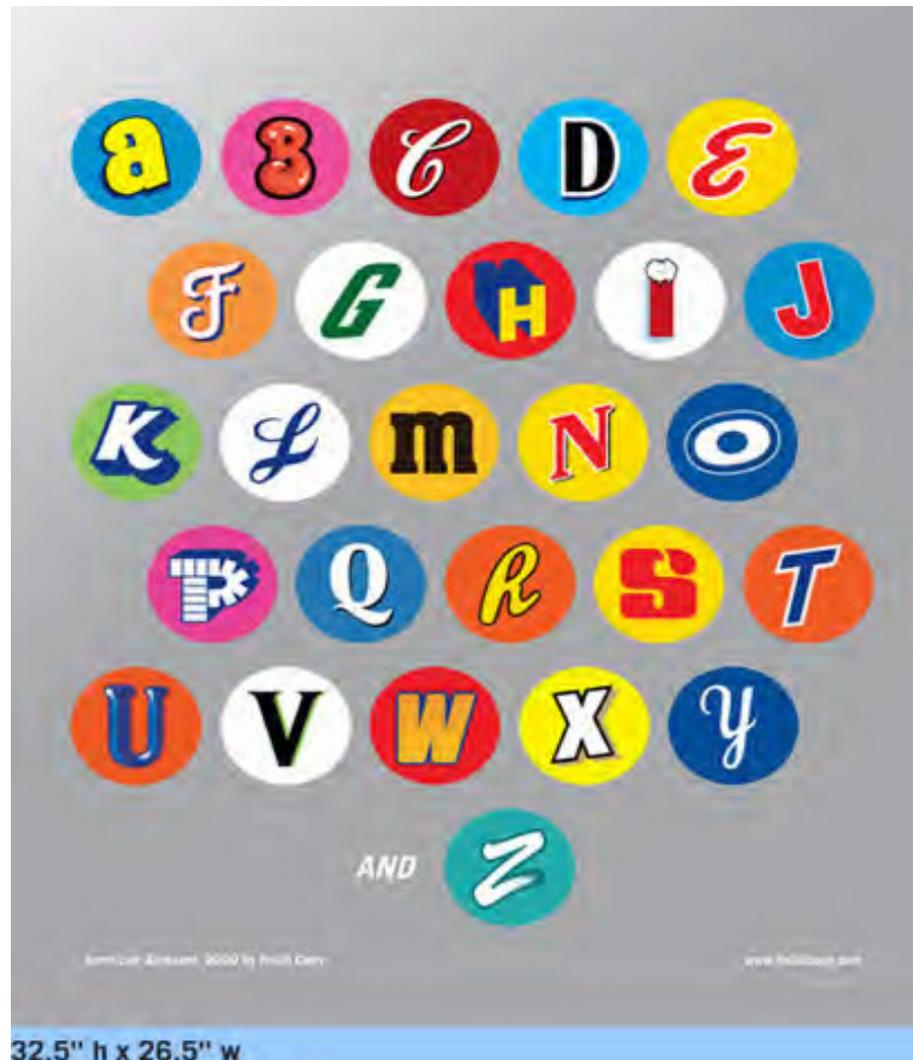


Beyond Consumerism: ‘alternative hedonism’ and cultural politics

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Heidi Cody poster : alphabet comprised of brand logo letters





The Bratz & Bratz Boyz Secret Date Collection pairs each Bratz character with a mystery Bratz Boy, two champagne glasses, and “tons of date night accessories”. It is marketed at six year olds’. (Juliet Schor, *Born to Buy*, Schribner, NY, 2004, p215)





GO GIRL

(EAN:9771470272)

Lifestyle magazine containing articles on fashion, beauty, reader stories, celebrities, songwords, puzzles, quizzes and posters; everything that is important in the life of girls aged 7-11.

Add this magazine to your basket

Disenchantment with consumerism

- Other conceptions of pleasure and fulfilment are gaining more of a hold...
- Current forms of affluence are seen as compromised by their negative by-products or viewed as pre-emptive of other enjoyments...

The Voicings of Discontent

- Are low-key, diffuse, politically unfocussed.
- But the regrets and disquiet are real enough.
- And speak to a sense of the opportunities we have squandered in recent decades for enjoying more relaxed and less narrowly reductive ways of living.

New Economics Foundation Happy Planet Index

- The HPI shows that around the world, high levels of resource consumption do not reliably produce high levels of well-being (life-satisfaction), and that it is possible to produce high levels of well-being without excessive consumption of the Earth's resources.



 THE HAPPY PLANET INDEX

An index of human well-being and environmental impact

New Economics Foundation

Happy Planet Index

- **Self appointed world ‘leaders’ – the G8 - score generally badly in the Index:** The UK comes a disappointing 108th – with the remainder of the G8 faring little, if at all, better. Italy is 66th, Germany 81st, Japan 95th, Canada 111th, France 129th, United States 150th and Russia 172nd.

‘...ever since the ground-breaking work of Abraham Maslow and Manfred Max Neef, psychologists and alternative economists have set out to demonstrate that, far from there being any automatic increase in wellbeing for every increase in levels of consumption, much of our current consumption is turning out to be a very inadequate surrogate for meeting human needs in a more satisfying, durable way’. (Sustainable Development Commission)

‘For those of us with huge overdrafts at the Bank of Hours-in-the-Day, the real luxury is time. Time with the kids, phone switched off. Or time for yourself, to read and relax in peace. Luxury is a long lunch recovering the person you love, or a gourmet dinner with friends, cooked to order and served by your own private pool. It’s me-time. Family time. The elusive holy grail of modern life.’

(Coastline holidays at: www.coastline.co.uk)



Consumer society: the paradox

Is now becoming increasingly dependent for its continued flourishing on our collective preparedness to spend the money we earn by working too hard and too long on the goods which help to satisfy the goods we have increasingly sacrificed through over-work and over-production.

‘Alternative Hedonism’

- Responds to the current crisis as an opportunity for moving to a fairer and more life-enhancing use of resource
- Its special focus is therefore on the downsides of the consumerist lifestyle
- Is premised on the idea that even if consumerism were sustainable it would not enhance happiness beyond a point already reached

‘Alternative hedonism’ claims...

- The Euro-American consumerist model is unlikely to be checked in the absence of a seductive alternative – of an altered conception of what it is to flourish and to enjoy a ‘high’ standard of living.
- The chances of shifting to a less rapacious consumption, and hence of reducing social and environmental exploitation, are dependent on the emergence and embrace of new modes of thinking about human pleasure and self-realisation

Distinctive to its critique...

- Its focus on desires implicit in current expressions of affluent consumer anxiety and disaffection
- It engages with an actually emergent culture of consumer equivocation: is therefore grounded in an already-existing 'structure of feeling'
- Can appeal to that in legitimating claims about the less attractive aspects of consumerism.
- Hence offers an immanent critique of 'consumerism'- which departs from much earlier opposition to the shopping-mall culture...

‘Alternative Hedonism’ therefore

- Has a distinctive normative positioning...
- Adopts an approach to needs and welfare policy that avoids both left-wing patronage or ‘dictatorialism’, and complacent affirmations of ‘sovereign’ consumer choice...
- Offers an anti-puritan conception of potential consumer pleasures and fulfilments...

An 'alternative hedonist' response on need...

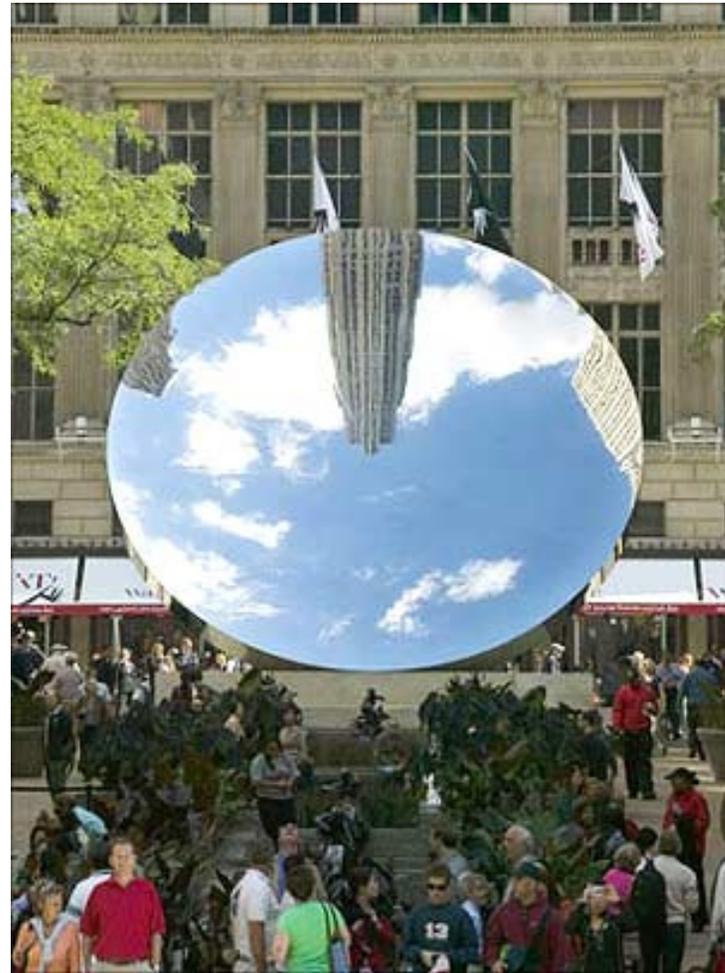
- **will reject the 'back to the Stone Age' conception of its agenda as failing to recognise its innovative quality**
- **highlight the more backward, puritan and ugly aspects of a work-driven and materially encumbered existence**
- **challenge the presumption that 'progress' and 'development' are synonymous with speeding up and saving time**

Anish Kapoor 'Cloud Gate' sculpture, Chicago



Anish Kapoor, 'Sky Mirror'

Anish Kapoor's *Sky Mirror* is a breathtaking, 35-foot-diameter concave mirror made of polished stainless steel. Standing nearly three stories tall at the Fifth Avenue entrance to the Channel Gardens at Rockefeller Center, *Sky Mirror* offers a dazzling experience of light and architecture, presenting viewers with a vivid inversion of the skyline featuring the historic landmark building at 30 Rockefeller Plaza





 GALACTIC

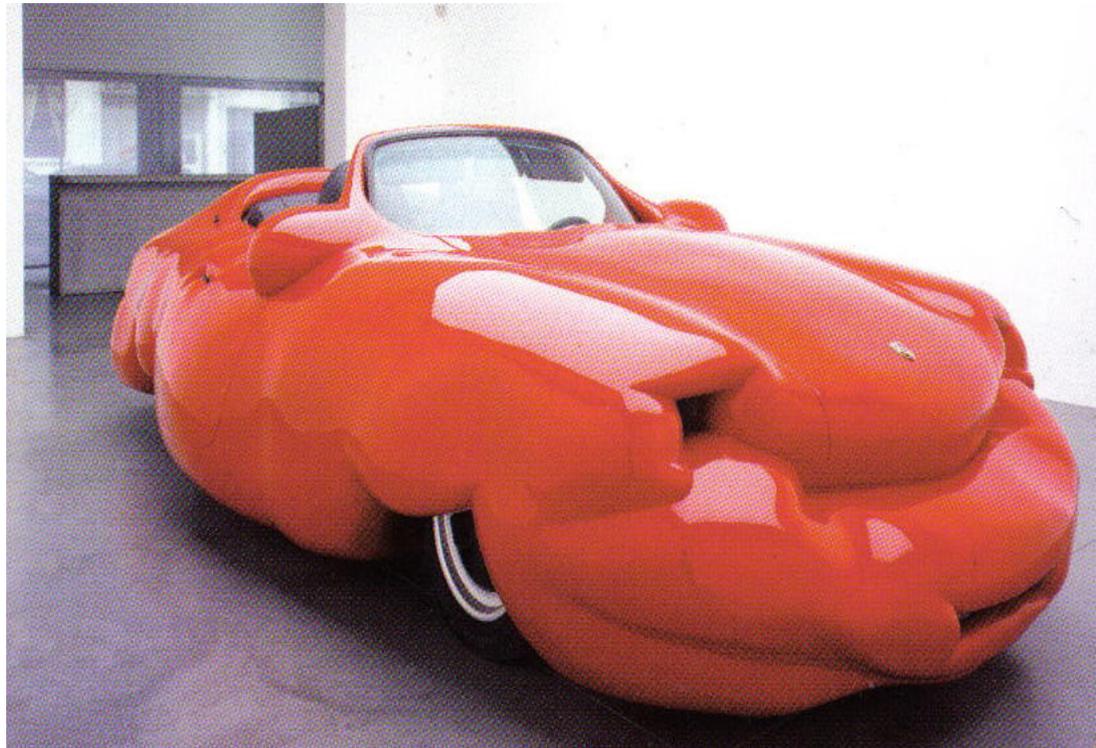
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Fernandez Arman *Long Term Parking* 1982



Erwin Wurm, 'Fat Convertible' (MOMUK,
Vienna)





A pesticide ad from the early 1950s. For many, gardening became a military operation: new "miracle" pesticides promised to liquidate unwanted plants and animals.



13 mg TAR 1.1 mg NICOTINE
SMOKING KILLS
Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers

GOODBYE GRINGO? (7,4)



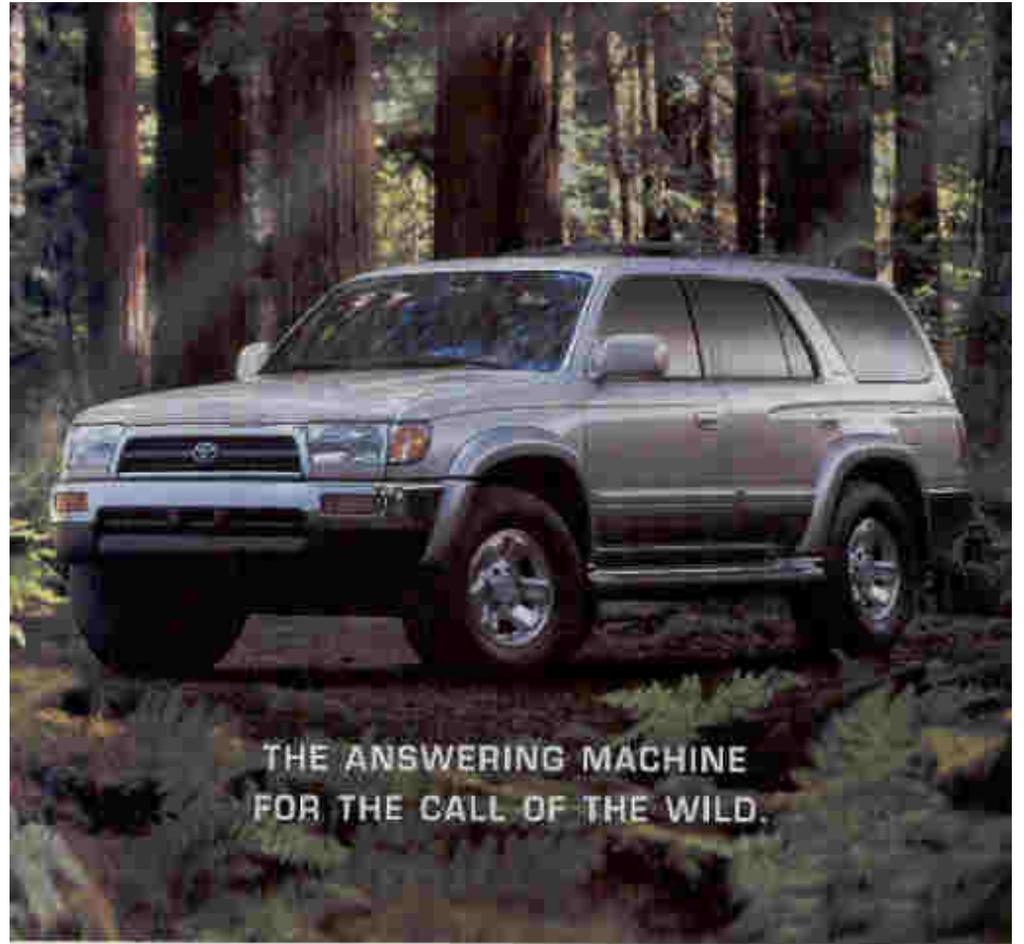
12 mg TAR 0.9 mg
SMOKING
Health Departments' C

Beauty is only skin-deep. "Best Premium Sports Car In Initial Quality" is to the bone.

The Chevrolet Corvette is a lot more than just another pretty face. And you don't have to look very far to realize just how true that is. According to J.D. Power and Associates, Chevrolet Corvettes ranked as The Best Premium Sports Car in Initial Quality. It's all part of our commitment to create a sports car that leads the world in performance, technology and quality engineering. corvette.com



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THE ANSWERING MACHINE FOR THE CALL OF THE WILD.

From a rugged mountain state to deep in the misty forest, nature calls out for us. And the 1997 Toyota 4Runner, available in either 2-wheel or 4-wheel drive, is one of the only machines capable of answering that challenge. With a powerful 251-hp V6 engine* and the highest ground clearance in its class, you'll be able to handle about anything nature may throw at you. And with 4Runner's roomy interior and available leather-trimmed seats, it's a comfortable ride, even when the going gets tough. The 1997 Toyota 4Runner. Your answer for the call of the wild.

*At 2500 RPM. Actual mileage may vary. ©1997 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. All rights reserved. 4Runner is a registered trademark of Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

 **TOYOTA 4RUNNER**
I see what you do for me.

Barbara Kruger





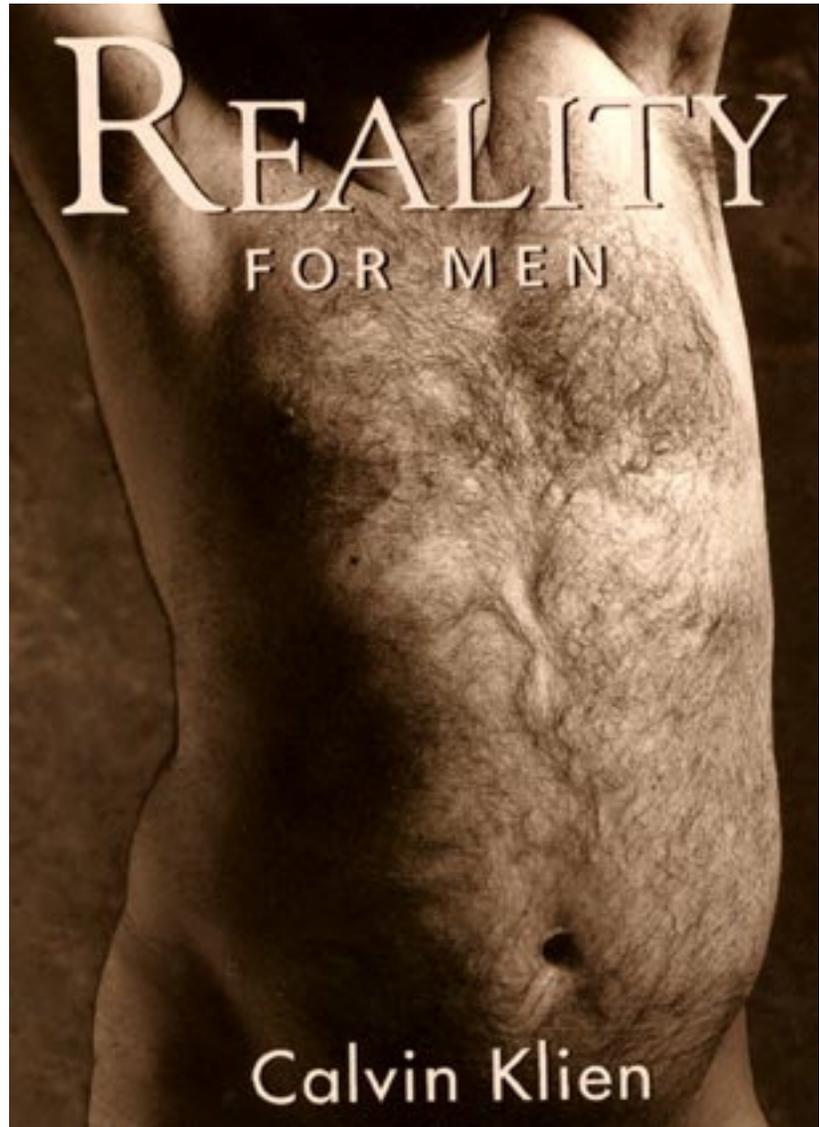
You

are

seduced by the sex appeal of the inorganic

Kieron Dwyer
"Consumer Whore"
Graphic, 1999

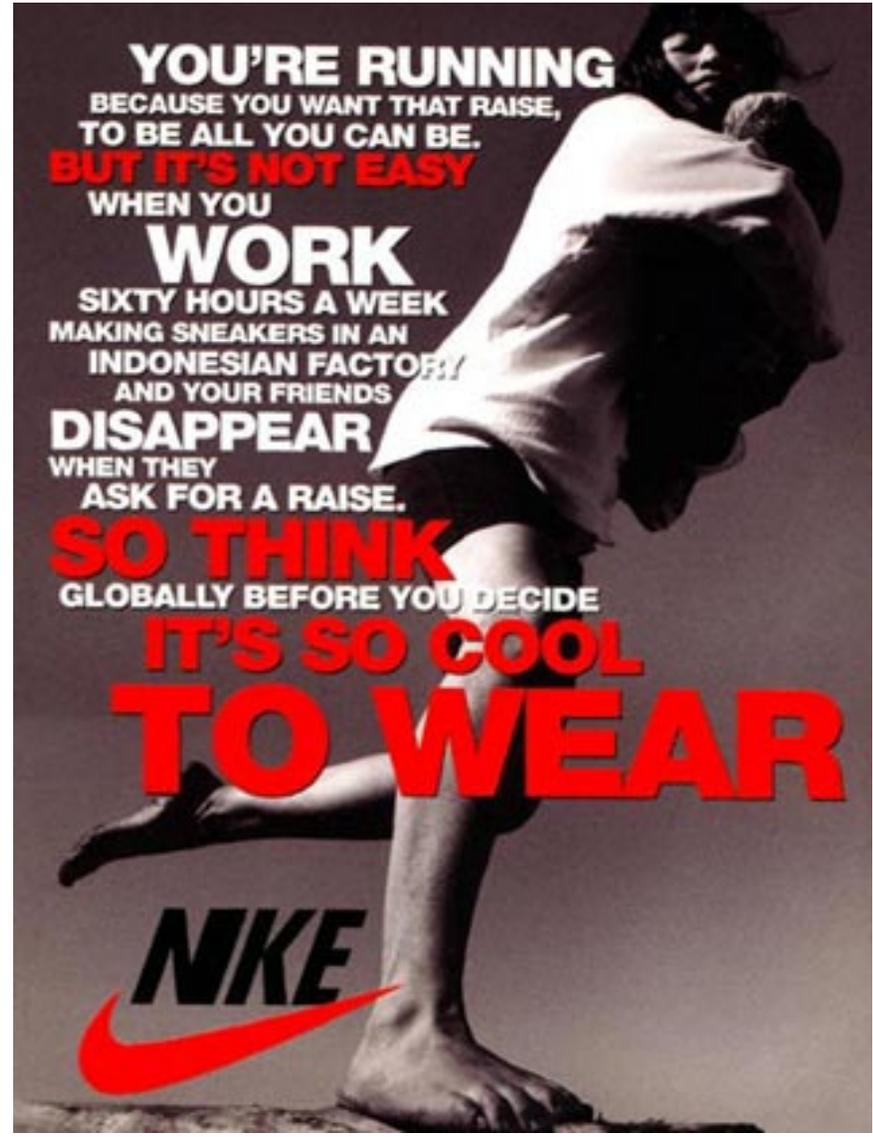




REALITY

FOR MEN

Calvin Klein



YOU'RE RUNNING

BECAUSE YOU WANT THAT RAISE,
TO BE ALL YOU CAN BE.

BUT IT'S NOT EASY

WHEN YOU

WORK

SIXTY HOURS A WEEK

MAKING SNEAKERS IN AN
INDONESIAN FACTORY
AND YOUR FRIENDS

DISAPPEAR

WHEN THEY

ASK FOR A RAISE.

SO THINK

GLOBALLY BEFORE YOU DECIDE

IT'S SO COOL

TO WEAR

NIKE







BUY NOTHING DAY

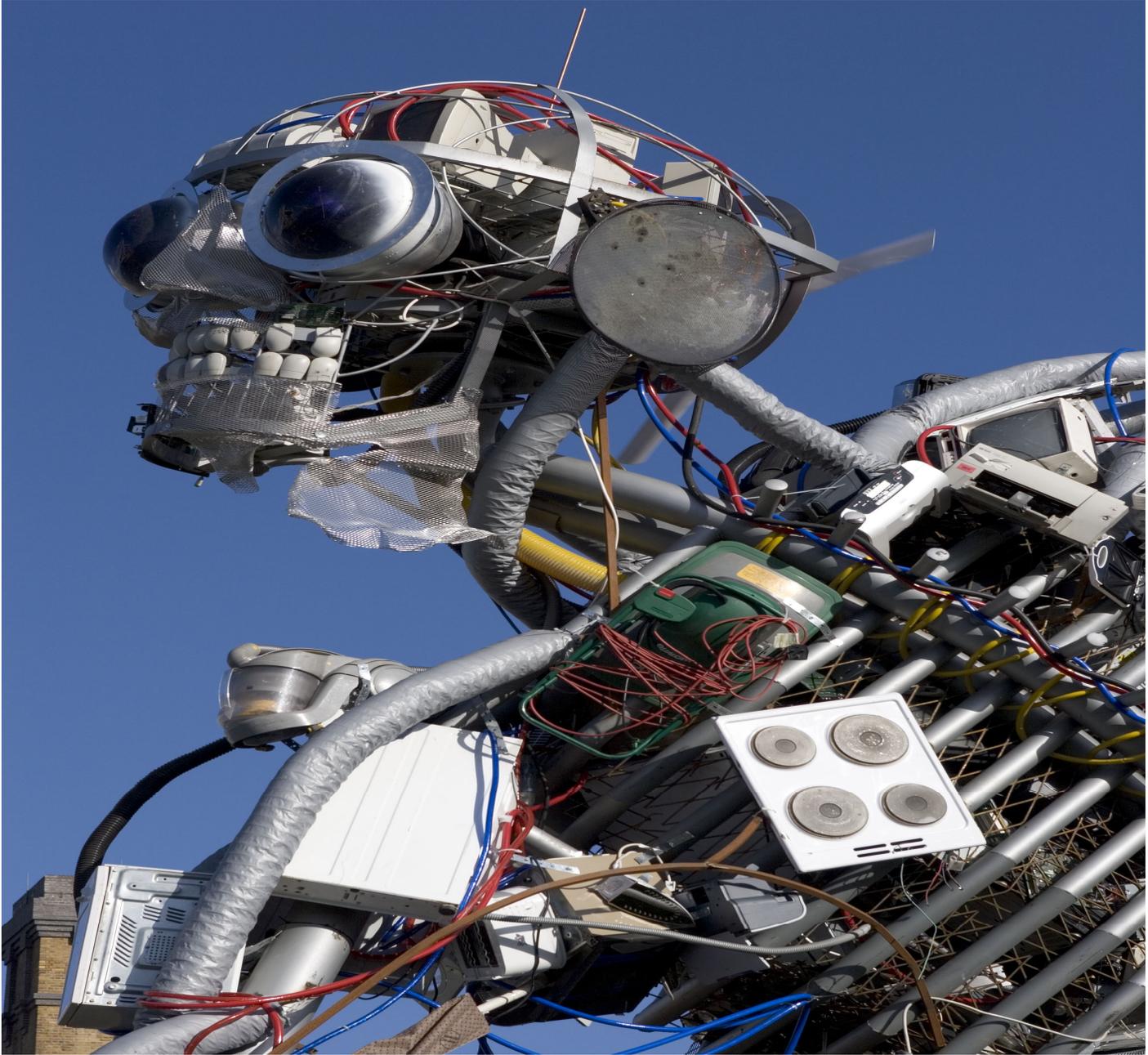
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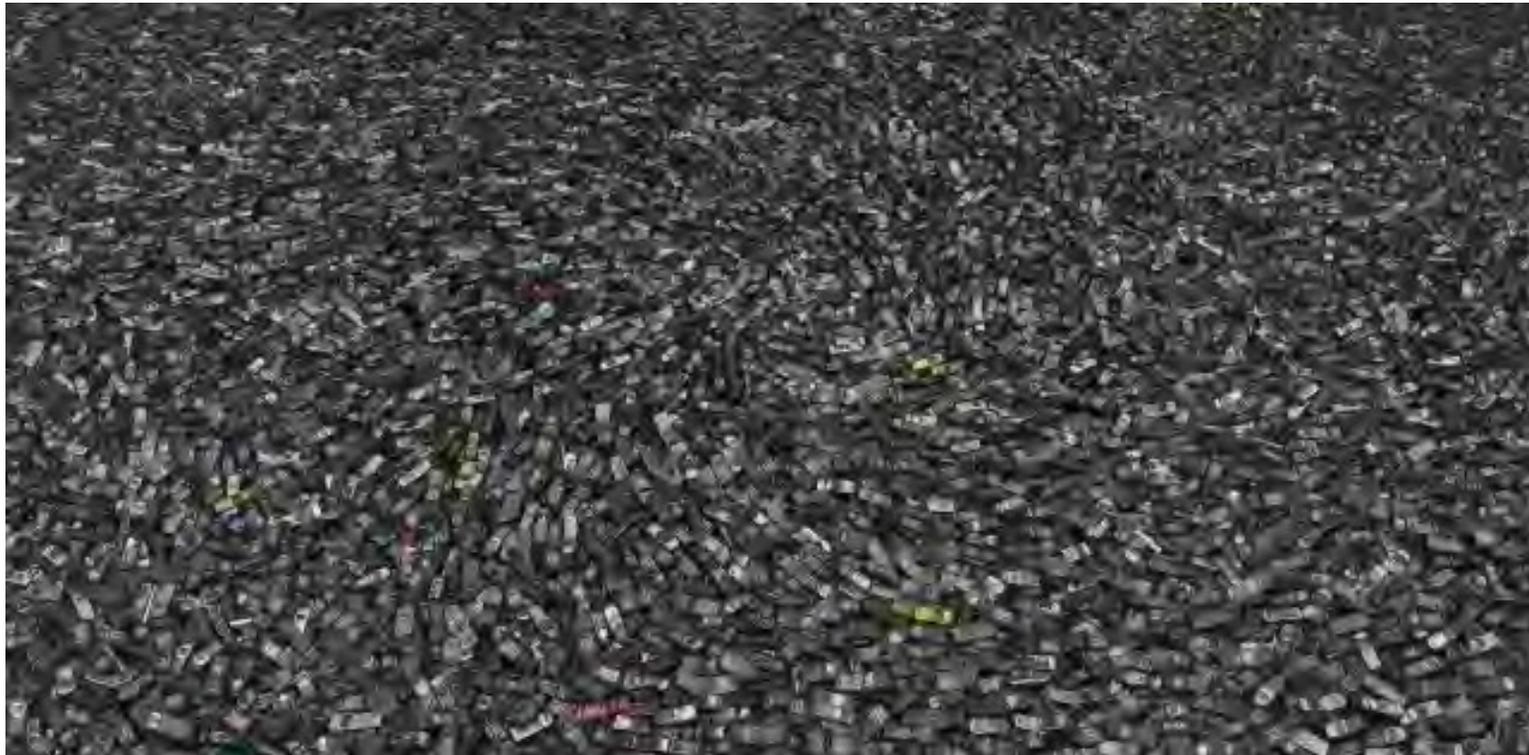








ART NOT OIL
Chris Jordan True Portrait Of An Oil Company





ART NOT OIL

Chris Jordan True Portrait Of An Oil Company

