

Reed and Rader, Image Makers



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PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVEN PAN

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While the rest of the industry is still struggling to catch up with the ancient art form of the short film and get it out into the world through the no-longer-novel medium of the internet, there are some young image-makers who are already way ahead in taking fashion beyond the printed page. Pamela Reed and Matthew Rader are natives in the world of interactive

multimedia animation: both 27, they belong to a generation for whom communicating online has been instinctive since their early teens. These days they live and work together in Brooklyn, but they weren't always so fashionably located – which is why their understanding of the power of the internet is so intuitive. 'I can't remember any part of my childhood that was remotely fashionable,' says Pamela, explaining that they both come from 'very small, blue-collar townie cities' – hers in Pennsylvania, his in Ohio – 'where you couldn't really buy fashion magazines.' For both of them, the internet brought the faraway world of fashion and creative imagery into their everyday lives. They met in 2001 while at art school in Pittsburgh, and moved to New York to study photography in 2005, which is when they set up Reed & Rader. Now they create animated fashion stories that open up a new space somewhere between film and the traditional print shoot. The effect is eerily like the living photographs of the Harry Potter films, only with high-end credits: it's as if the models are there in the present moment, breathing and blinking right before your eyes. 'We no longer take still images,' says Matthew. 'That doesn't inspire us any more. We don't want to take photos and just toss them online. We want to do something new, to take advantage of online technology. That's what excites us. Predominantly, we're just pretty big nerds. Creative nerds.' Although fashion editorial (*V*, *Muse*, *Dazed & Confused*) is their main area of operation, they don't consider what they do to be fashion photography: 'That's just where the work ends up.' They are much more interested in building fantasies than in documenting clothing, and their work has a world-of-its-own flavour that nods to Guy Bourdin and David LaChapelle. 'The main thing that interests us is sculpting a world that's not possible in real life,' says Pamela.

Right now they're working on increasing the interactive aspect of their work. 'Going forward, we have to break down that wall between the content producer and the viewer, and figure out how to make the viewer the content producer,' says Pamela. That's why Matthew is back at school, on an interactive telecommunications programme at NYU. 'It's like art school for engineers or engineering school for artists,' he says. 'You do everything from physical computing and robots to making screens interactive with gestures. It's like a crazy scientist's laboratory there.' What sort of *Videodrome* future this knowledge might lead them to is anyone's guess.

These two are streets ahead in both understanding new technology and imagining how it might transform fashion imagery, and they're well aware that this gives them and their contemporaries a powerful edge. 'The older generation are scared,' says Pamela. 'The young kids are coming for them and we basically want to destroy their world. We're like, "Hey, we don't think you're relevant any more. We want to kick you out and steal your jobs!"'