Lorsque l’on regarde les dessins mo-
menteux de David Haines, l’artiste anglais, on ne peut qu’être bouclé
par l’extra-réalisme d’aussi grands for-
mates mais également par ce qu’il nous
donne à voir : embâlages de fast-food, logos de marques, et surtout jeunes
« Scally » du Nord de l’Angleterre et leurs
baskets élevées au rang d’objet féti-
ché. Au-delà de nous montrer des éléments
de la culture moderne, David Haines
cherche également une structure my-
thologique sous-jacente dans chacun de ses
dessins. S’inspirant d’images trouvées
sur internet, il mêle ainsi cultu-
re d’aujourd’hui et mythé passé, et nous
propose de découvrir le monde à travers ses
yeux.

Comment et pourquoi vous avez choisi de méditer sur cette culture
scandaleuse ?

David Haines : J’ai toujours dessiné, donc je n’ai jamais vrai-
ment choisi cette voie. Tous les enfants dessinent, la plupart des gens s’habituent en grandissant, mais moi je n’ai jamais arrêté. C’
Pourquoi au au choix de travailler à partir de photos trouvées sur internet ?

Pour moi, dessiner consiste à comprendre une chose à tel point que, d’une certaine manière, on devient l’œcumène, le consulaire. Dessiner des images trouvées en ligne est une extension de cette attitude. Les photos qu’il m’ont envoyées pendant notre discussion étaient un moyen de me rapprocher de ce qu’ils étaient vrai-
ment, sans jamais les avoir rencontrés. Depuis lors, tous les dessins que je fais prennent partie de ces images que je trouve sur le net. Les dessins sont maintenant trop grands pour que je travaille directement sur le fichier JPEG, donc je les redimensionne et je les mixe parfois avec d’autres images pour créer une nouvelle composition.

Ces dessins reflètent à la fois la culture de la jeunesse avec les logos de marques, les emballages de fast food…

Les logos en même temps, mais pas nécessairement d’un point de vue politique. Les logos sont souvent comme des baguettes à travers la structure et la répétition de thèmes et de sujets. Les logos me semblent être l’équivalent contempo-
rain de cette idée.

How did you come to the drawing and why did you choose this medium particularly?

I have always made drawings, so I never really chose to work in this way. Everyone draws as a child; most people stop as they grow older, but I never did.

Why did you choose to work with pictures found on internet and how do you proceed?

For me drawing is about understanding something to the point where you in some way, through accurately rendering its image, control it. Drawing images found on line was an extension of this. The first drawings I ever exhibited were of mens faces which I had chatted with on dating sites. Drawing the photographs they had sent me as part of our chat was a way of trying to get closer to how they really were without ever meeting them.

Since then all the drawings I make have have as start point images found on line. The drawings are now too large to work directly from the jpeg file so I repose them, sometimes mixing several internet images together to form new compositions.

Your drawings refer to youth culture with brands, fast food packaging, etc. Why did you choose to speak about that?

Logos interest me, but not necessarily in a political sense. Theres something about reoccurring motifs which is comforting in that they give structure to our chaos. I am influenced by the writings of people such as Claude Levi Strauss. His analysis of mythologies exposed how we take comfort and structure through the repetition of themes and subjects. Logos would seem to me to be the contemporary equivalent of this.

You are from Nottingham and you are now living in Amsterdam. Is it an influence for you?

Amsterdam is a great place to work and the liberal attitude here has enabled me to develop in a way that may have been harder in the UK. However, I still take most of of my imagery from the ‘scally’ culture of Northern England.

How did you discover the “sneaker fetishist culture” and why did you want to include it in your drawings?

I discovered it in several sex clubs in Amsterdam and Antwerp! I didn’t make a conscious decision to include it, it just developed that way. I began looking at every aspect of sneakers from the name, design, use, smell etc and referred to this in the work. As a result the sneaker has taken on a pivotal role in what I make. Oh yes - and several sneakers brand names make reference to ancient mythology, which was a nice coincidence.

Your photo-realistic drawings are very “clean”, delicate but according to me the subject are mysterious, difficult. Which message do you want to transmit behind your drawings?

I don’t think making art is necessarily about transmitting a specific message. If I see a work of art I like my response to want to step inside the artist’s shoes, to see the world through his or her eyes for a while and experience their world. If people see my work and get that feeling then I would be very happy. I guess the amount of love that goes into the work is a way of encouraging that response in the viewer. I don’t think my work is photo realist by the way, the level of detail and my use of non photographic focus refer more to medieval and early renaissance realism.

How long do you need to realize a large scale pencil drawing?

They take anything from 2 to 4 months.

Why do you like in drawing in large scale?

I am a bit obsessive. I love the chances that scale gives me to render every leaf on a tree, every hair on an arm. The drawings have also been compared to historical paintings through their scale.

How do you do the drawing for you in 2010?

I think in the age of digital communication, with thousands of images bombarding us every day, there has to be a place for something different. My drawings are all unique, they are hard to photograph ( you have to see them in the flesh to really see them) and they take months to complete. In this sense drawing is in a way a confirmation of humanity and I guess thats true of a lot of art; thats why we need it, thats why we get addicted to it.