

from the producer of **CONTROL** and Director Roddy Bogawa

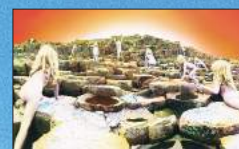
TAKEN BY STORM

THE ART OF STORM THORGERSON AND HIPGNOSIS



This man designed half of your record collection.

with interviews featuring David Gilmour and Nick Mason of Pink Floyd, Robert Plant, Peter Gabriel, Steve Miller, Graham Gouldman, Alan Parsons, and members of The Cranberries, Muse, Catherine Wheel, The Mars Volta and Biffy Clyro



contact:
646-932-0845 mobile
fallencinema@earthlink.net email
www.takenbystormfilm.com
www.roddebogawa.com

The image is a contact sheet of six photographs, arranged in a 2x3 grid. Each photograph shows a child with blonde hair crawling on a large, circular, stone-like structure that resembles a giant's foot or a large, hollowed-out rock. The child is positioned in the foreground, looking towards the camera. The background is a bright, outdoor setting with some greenery and a clear sky. The word "synopsis" is printed in a bold, black, sans-serif font in the upper left corner of the first photograph.

synopsis

For over forty years using 12" x 12" album covers as his canvas before his untimely death in 2013, Storm Thorgerson produced some of the most visually arresting images in popular culture - Pink Floyd's **DARK SIDE OF THE MOON**, Led Zeppelin's **HOUSES OF THE HOLY** - eschewing computer manipulation in favor of building massive sets and tableaux in his quest to "do it for real". **TAKEN BY STORM: THE ART OF STORM THORGERSON AND HIPGNOSIS** features intimate interviews and footage of Thorgerson along with musicians he's worked with throughout his career including David Gilmour and Nick Mason of Pink Floyd, Robert Plant, Peter Gabriel, Graham Gouldman of 10cc, Alan Parsons and more recent collaborations with Steve Miller and the groups The Cranberries, Muse, Catherine Wheel, Biffy Clyro and The Mars Volta. Other interviews include Aubrey (Po) Powell, partner in famed company Hipgnosis and Green Back Films one of the first music video companies, along with Thorgerson's numerous photographers and collaborators and artists Sir Peter Blake, designer of The Beatles Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band and Damien Hirst.

Exploring Thorgerson's essential philosophies ("record covers should parallel themes in the music rather than illustrate") and idiosyncratic processes (dragging 765 beds onto a beach for a Pink Floyd shoot), **TAKEN BY STORM: THE ART OF STORM THORGERSON AND HIPGNOSIS** is a film about the man behind some of the most recognized album covers in Rock and Roll, his creative journey at the intersection of art, commerce, and technological change and the visual legacy of his art that will continue to resonate throughout contemporary culture.

statement

Over dinner one night, my good friend Chris Brokaw mentioned visiting a friend who worked in Storm Thorgerson's studio to which I joked sounded like the great name of a Black Metal band singer but upon mentioning his company Hipgnosis, I immediately recalled many of their surreal and uncanny images. One vivid memory I always will have is the occasional typo of "Hipgnosis" on some covers - sometimes "Hypnosis" or "Hipnosis" - and if in fact these were all one and the same mysterious designers. That night, Chris told me how Storm and his assistants had recently executed a record cover design in which they dug out a trench of sand on a beach, built a stairway into the hole, added storm doors, and then simply photographed the image. I was taken with the idea that someone in the day of Photoshop and digital manipulation would still work in such an anachronistic method and the story and the notion of a search for some 'truth' in an image affected me rather deeply. For weeks I couldn't shake thinking about it. I went online and bought an old out of print book on the work of Hipgnosis and when it arrived, I had another shock - the realization of exactly how many records Storm and Hipgnosis had designed that I had obsessed over in my formative years. Music has always been a big influence on my life and these images were often the picture track to the soundtrack played in my room over headphones or shared at a friend's house. I got Storm's email contact and sent off half a dozen proposals - some with lots of pictures, others with very theoretical readings of the images, some relating his work to movements in art practice, etc. - but it was only after the most personal email I wrote that I finally got a response (of course it was three lines..."Hi Roddy. Doing a lecture at BAFTA in London in two weeks. Want to come?").

This final email that perhaps intrigued Storm (or maybe at this point after months firing off emails he started to sense I was somewhat serious) was a simple retelling of seeing Pink Floyd at the age of fifteen and how I had spent hours trying to describe the giant inflatable pig at the concert and how it was the same pig from the record cover to my father as we drove home in his Volkswagen Beetle.



statement continued

Weeks later arriving Storm's studio after a handshake he immediately told me he couldn't talk and to go off with his assistants and he'd see me later. I spent the rest of the afternoon driving around London with them buying up as many cabbages as we could as we filled up the trunk of our taxi. That night at the lecture, Storm projected images of his work while a topless woman was getting body painted with dozens of eyes on her back and as he lectured from the stage about his processes, the cabbages were passed out to the two hundred or so audience members who were instructed to hold the cabbage in front of their face while Storm took a picture from the front of the stage. And so my film began...

In my mind, Storm's work is in many ways what I always hope for from my films - questions sometimes without answers, an attempt to tap into some deep emotive resonance - though I can't in any way claim a semblance of his productivity or even sharp wit (my suggestion...don't even try) but making the film has fulfilled much of these feelings for myself. I am grateful to everyone's generosity at every stage in the making of the film, especially Storm, and it is really a testament to him that all the musicians, music industry representatives, and others around happily participated or allowed themselves to be cajoled or bullied one more time in the documenting of such an incredible body of work that has certainly affected millions throughout the decades.

production notes

My first meeting with Storm was in London in September of 2007 when I was finally given “permission” to do a little filming at a presentation he did at BAFTA. Fortunately, I was able to raise some initial funding before the economic crash via art foundations and grants and in perhaps an unthinkable decision in today's digital HD climate, started shooting the project in 16mm. Thinking back I might claim some kind of empathetic gesture to that of Storm's practice and that it spoke also to that of my own as a filmmaker but of course as time went on and the trips back and forth to the UK started adding up (not to mention 16mm film stock and lab expenses), I ran out of money. At every given turn, however, the film seemed to touch a nerve for funding sources and producers (Rob Roth, Broadway Producer and avid music memorabilia collector helped tremendously) and allowed me to document some of Storm's last designs.

Initially, the project was to be strictly a portrait film but it quickly mushroomed to include many of the musicians with whom Storm has worked with along with the artists, illustrators and photographers who have helped him create his artistic vision throughout the years. There are far too many strange, funny, beautiful, and odd stories to write here about the making of the film but I attribute it all to now being part of Storm Thorgerson's cosmos. One unforgettable instance happened in Norman's Record Store in New York when I decided to buy Robert Plant's record RAISING SAND and literally at the moment I touched the CD, the store clerk started playing Led Zeppelin's The SONG REMAINS THE SAME. To add to this uncanny moment as I left the store, my phone rang and it was Storm who simply said “Plant's in”. You may think all this as fiction but I can assure you that the more time you spend with Storm, the more frequent these types of moments occur.



production notes continued

Storm believed in Fate, numerology, symbols, UFO's (though perhaps not in space aliens), word play, bad jokes, luck, and being in the presence of those who inspire him as part of his artistic practice which as you can imagine was intertwined with his life and throughout its production, my film followed these twists and turns.

Making the film was an utter pleasure of sorts - interviewing various rock stars and being able to buy vinyl records as "research" but as making any film has its difficulties it was roughly a three year journey to get **TAKEN BY STORM** completed. It couldn't have been done without my growing friendship with Storm and perhaps an unknowing trust and belief in his and my "love of vinyl". Music was my entry point into art and eventually filmmaking and my formative life was influenced by much of the music and imagery in **TAKEN BY STORM**. The film is not an epitaph, dirge, or nostalgia trip but really about his artistic drive and vision. As the world dissolves away into digital files, images get re-coded as zeros and ones, and we dissipate into the electronic ether, Storm continued making beguiling hyperreal poetic images that defy these impulses. When I started the film, I was talking on the phone to Chris Brokaw about a Black Sabbath LP that I had just gotten in the mail and he joked "so you're going to get all of Storm's designs" which I thought silly - though now years on and dozens and dozens of purchases later, that goal seems potentially within my grasp! And most importantly, the unfolding of the gatefold, the reading of the liner notes, the intense study of Storm's enigmatic imagery while listening to the music is a lost familiar feeling that can't be beat.

credits

produced and directed by
producer
executive producer
co-producer

Roddy BOGAWA
Orian WILLIAMS
Rob ROTH
Chris BROKAW

associate producers

Brian EMRICH
Chris HOOVER
Theron KABRICH
Jim MARCOVITZ
Rick MINGEE
Misoon WHANG

editor
director of photography
sound recording

Karen SKLOSS
Benjamin SPETH
Encke KING
Thomas TORRES CORDOVA
Leslie MCCLEAVE
Roddy BOGAWA

production assistance
additional camera

post production assistance
sound design / mix

Encke KING
Vincent TESE

original musical score

Chris BROKAW
The Hours

film stock
dailies

KODAK 500T/200T/50D
DUART

A PIECEMEAL FILM / FALLEN CINEMA PRODUCTION

85 mins. / color / 2015



biography

Director / Producer Roddy Bogawa studied art and played in punk bands before turning to filmmaking. He received his MFA degree from the University of California at San Diego where he studied with filmmaker Jean-Pierre Gorin (Jean-Luc Godard collaborator of the Dziga Vertov Group), filmmaker/cinematographer Babette Mangolte (Chantal Akerman and Yvonne Rainer), and film critic Manny Farber. At that time, he made his first two short films which have screened extensively in festivals, museums, and national and international art galleries.

In 1991, he directed his first feature, the experimental narrative *SOME DIVINE WIND*. A mixture of fictional and documentary material, this expressionistic film focused on the paradox of assimilation while trying to hold on to one's cultural perspective. The film was selected for the Sundance Film Festival (Dramatic Competition), the Mannheim International Film Festival (Germany), the Asian American International Film Festival (New York), the Hawaii International Film Festival, and the Fukuoka Asian Film Festival (Japan). *SOME DIVINE WIND* has also shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the 1993 Biennial Exhibition of the Whitney Museum of American Art and has been broadcast on New York WNET's Independent Focus and WDR First German Television. His second feature film *JUNK* was praised by film critic Amy Taubin as "everything indie film no longer is" and was screened at the Museum of Modern Art, New York Underground Film Festival, Chicago Underground Film Festival, Asian American International Film Festival and Exground Filmfest in Wiesbaden. More recent short films have been featured in the New York Film Festival, Oberhausen Festival Internationale, the Black Maria Film and Video Festival (Director's Choice Prize), the 1995 Biennial Exhibition of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Guggenheim Museum, the Cinematexas Short Film Festival and Chicago Underground Film Festival.

His previous feature film, *I WAS BORN, BUT...*, a personal history of punk rock with performances by Joe Strummer premiered as the closing night film of the New York Underground Film Festival where it won the Festival Choice Award and was reviewed in *Variety* as "a welcome addition to the Underground Canon". It went on to screen in dozens of film festivals and museums including the Museum of Modern Art. In 2013, he was the subject of a mid-career retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art titled *IF FILMS COULD SMELL*. A book of about his work of the same title will be published by Kaya Press in 2016.