Gianni Jetzer: I find it striking that your works are very often linked with mass-media or commercial products. Are they media ready-mades, or inventions of your own?

Olaf Breuning: I like to choose subjects that I come accross in everyday life. I take them over, make changes, form new combinations. So it's not just a cut and paste job. More a kind of remix. All my subjects are references to the world out there, I mean to fashion, advertising, films, etc. They are also visions that have not been internalized or fantastic dream images like the Surrealists produced.

GJ: Scanning's a word you hear a lot from trend-hunters now. They mean looking at magazines and fanzines for hour and hours. Is systematically looking at current image production part of your work as an artist as well?

OB: Up to a point, yes. I even try to see things in an unprejudiced, almost mechanical way, so that I can look at new visual material as openly as possible. I definitely don't want to have a world view or a filter that would distort the way I see things. The life-style idea, which is everywhere nowadays, is far too restricted. I deliberately keep my input as broad and as open as I can so that I can interpret things in new ways.

GJ: How do you make your choices? What are the images that stick?

OB: I'm looking for visual language that has some sort of charisma and can make its presence felt amidst all the visual codes and statements. In brief: I select the strongest visual stimuli. This can be a vacuum cleaner or a particular model's make-up. Sometimes these visual stimuli are linked with products and then I try to let the goods into my creative language. What fascinates me about the way commercial messages are put over is the pragmatic element, the fact that being comprehensible is such a big deal. It's language that's accessible to anyone. You often see clips on MTV that can move people emotionally in a really simple way. The best ones have something enigmatic about them. We often code things too much in art. Not many people know about iconography and can get through to see what a picture's actually saying. I think this coding is completely unnecessary.

Story-Telling as a Reality Scan, Interview with Gianni Jetzer