

PRESS RELEASE

## MALL OF ANONYMOUS®

BERLIN, GERMANY 17.07.2023—According to Wikipedia, a shopping mall (or simply mall) “is a North American term for a large indoor shopping center, usually anchored by department stores. The term “mall” originally meant a pedestrian promenade with shops along it (that is, the term was used to refer to the walkway itself which was merely bordered by suchshops), but in the late 1960s, it began to be used as a generic term for the large enclosed shopping centers that were becoming commonplace at the time. (...) Many malls have declined considerably in Northern America, and some have closed and become so-called “dead malls”.

But what are we really talking about here? “The Mall of Anonymous” is an immersive exhibition conceptualized and realized by the fashion designer, musician, and artist Shayne Oliver and the curators Fredi Fischli and Niels Olsen. It is a show of unprecedented complexity which will merge his legacy and his future as a groundbreaking, era-defining designer with personal and more abstract matters. Technically speaking “The Mall of Anonymous” will mark the beginning of a new chapter in Oliver’s work and career.

He was the creative center of the fashion collective Hood by Air, which he co-founded in 2004. HBA with its inclusive, no-gender, street and subculture fueled approach to fashion had a key role in the revolution and redefinition of the luxury market. Since very young, Oliver was committed to nightlife and dance music (as a party guest, a performer, a musician), becoming the protégé of Ballroom-legend Willy Ninja and joining various houses. His interest and taste in music has broadened since, his work remains strongly rooted in and dedicated to queer culture. He has not been the advocate or spokesperson for a new trans-embracing, politically awake, outspoken generation, he is its embodiment.

His exhibition will turn Schinkel Pavillon into a two-and-a-half-store walk-in sculpture. Each part will represent one of the three brands that Shayne Oliver Group is about to launch subsequently until March 2024. The high-end-fashion-label *Shayne Oliver*, the collaborative project-based label *Anonymous Club* and *As Seen by Shayne Oliver (ASSO)*, a label for elevated and twisted basics. The collections will be showcased and presented through photography, film, and actual samples. Online purchase will be possible. Underlying is Shayne Oliver’s conviction that personal experience and trauma is an essential part of the creative process. The architecture of the exhibition is both a nod to traditional mall architecture and to the labyrinthic headspace in which ideas are born. Both functional and nightmare-ish. A sculpture of a mother and child split in half represents both his struggle and embrace of his upbringing and background—and the search for new families to work and live with, find comfort, inspiration and maybe even love.

Shopping malls have not only for decades been a central part of American consumerism. They were also meeting places for youth. Complex entities in which social hierarchies, the rules of attraction, economic strength were defined. A mall was a place where you went to

buy new sneakers or an ice cream, find your high school sweetheart or get beaten up. It is the American promise and purgatory, where people grow up and monsters are raving.

“The Mall of Anonymous” is an ironic take on the traditional infrastructure of consumerism, its historical legacy and its decline (the contemporary malls are digital and alas there is no ice cream dripping on your new pair of sneakers). And it is showing Shayne Oliver’s joyful ability to juggle the conceptual and the mundane in a manner that does justice to both.

There is a new creature in Shayne Oliver’s world: a three-headed, acid-green chihuahua. It refers to Cerberus the watchdog of the Greek underworld (as well as of a hidden chamber in Hogwarts school) but in his interpretation it also brings to mind (in no specific order) Japanese Kawai culture, Britney Spears’ favorite pet (or was it Paris Hilton’s?), techno flyers from the 90ties and even the hollow-eyed monster from the teen-horror movie “Scream”. All that aside, the green dog works remarkably on t-shirts and jackets. It’s a masterful example for simplicity that contains a universe of meanings and ideas. Which is probably why Shayne Oliver likes to call the little beast a superhero. And a guardian of the hard work of creation.

His work has always been deeply personal, reflecting his struggles, passions and cultural background. It resonated with a global audience precisely because of its unique and personal point of view. Today Shayne Oliver believes that not every t-shirt has to encapsulate all the topics he is currently reflecting, it can just be a convincing, previously-unseen piece of garment. “The answer to a question”, as he likes to put it. On August, 11 “The Mall of Anonymous”, Shayne Oliver will confront the art and fashion world with his next set of questions.

- Adriano Sack, July, 2023

The exhibition is funded by Hauptstadtkulturfonds Berlin and organized by Schinkel Pavillon e.V