It's not just that there is a new wave of fashion film-making using computer games engines and exploded notions of illustration to deliver uncanny surfaces and depths.

ZOE TAYLOR examines the work of REED + RADER and QUENTIN JONES, image-makers shifting the ground around bodies and brands.

Quentin Jones, Almost Human, 2013, mixed media, courtesy of the artist.
of manipulating the self to the next level.”

Toil and Trouble, Reed + Rader, 2013, V Magazine Holiday 24, Quentin Jones, 2012, commissioned by Neiman Marcus and Target

quentinjones.info

Dubstep Dinosaurs 3D

Reed + Rader’s new interactive work,

Kenzo Pre Fall, Quentin Jones, , 2012, commissioned by Kenzo

Do You Like Scary Movies?, Reed + Rader, 2013, V Magazine

communications, the academic Nilgin Yusuf writes: “It allows filmmakers to create images of fashion that speak, move, ... and a reason for this proliferation of fashion's moving image.” Yusuf notes that the British Fashion Council has, “wit-

Describing how fashion film has re-energised fashion

tives that would be impossible (or at least very difficult) in a real-life shoot.

also allow for dynamic camera movements and perspec-

tal St Martins. She says that the methodology of working out problems through logic has been useful when solving visual problems. This sense of control is no more evident

Cambridge before gaining an MA in illustration at Cen-

Jones was raised in London and studied philosophy at

and Matthew Rader met at Pittsburgh Art Institute and, after collaborating for a few years, became Reed + Rader in 2005. ... to produce large-format Polaroid photographs. By the time Polaroid ceased film production in 2008, Reed + Rader had de-

Now based in Brooklyn, the artist couple Pamela Reed

of Reed + Rader, celebrated as among the most fun and

velopers. This manipulation of games software to suggest fantastical narratives epitomises the recent fashion films

Unreal Engine

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nomic and technological change. Excited by the possibili-

culture's aspirations, fashion's fantastical images, stand-

am reminded of the ideas of the fashion theorist Caroline

appearing both in the pages of magazines and online, I

with the 'made' or illustrated image, forging distinctive

video. We hate that.” And all three juxtapose photography

status quo of fashion film, to take a more imaginative and

vankmajer (known for

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fine art and pop cultural references – ranging from the Czech stop-motion animator Jan

Some have suggested that it is Jones's combination of

big players in the fashion film world and a trendsetter in the emerging field of digital fashion film, Reed + Rader are known for their experimental approach and willingness to push the boundaries of digital media. They have collaborated with a range of clients, including luxury brands and fashion magazines, to create a wide range of films that have gained critical acclaim. Their distinctive style is characterized by a fusion of narrative and visual elements, often with a focus on the human form and the way in which clothing and...
"We feel like we're on the edge of a future where gaming engines aren't just used for games"

Brave New World, Reed + Rader, 2014, commissioned by V Magazine

FLOWERS, Reed + Rader, 2014

"CGI environment for some sort of story. Fashion films are just the beginning for us."

ZT:

What are your favorite video games?

R+R:

All time:
Super Mario World, Unreal, Fallout 3, Bio-shock, Tie Fighter, Animal Crossing and Civilization. Current:
The Last of Us and Pokemon Y.

ZT:

Do you feel that referencing the games' 'look' is important to your work?

R+R:

From GIFs and videos to hand-cut-out paper collage, games have always been a huge inspiration for our work. Now that we are using gaming engines like the Unreal Engine for everything we do, it's even more difficult to separate "gaming" from what we are doing. We do have some interest in making actual games but right now we're just using the platform to make videos and interactive installations. Graphics are catching up fast, so unless it's intentional it's going to be increasingly difficult to separate photography from CGI.

ZT:

Your work often plays with stillness and movement to create an uncanny effect.

R+R:

This is why everyone calls our work "creepy". We tend to isolate movement in a visual. Sometimes it's for aesthetic reasons to highlight a certain subject and other times, especially with GIFs, it's for technical limitations.

ZT:

How do you develop ideas for characters and narratives?

R+R:

Ideas are a collaborative effort between us two. We have an ongoing idea board that we both scribble ideas on to remember. Sometimes one of us will see an idea on the board, (...) become a full-blown project. When it comes to commissions, we have multiple brainstorming meetings where we say anything that comes to our mind, no matter how crazy or unreachable due to job constraints (timeline/budget). From there, we talk characters, technology needed and what's the goal (storyline) of the project.

ZT:

What role does body-scanning play in your recent work?

R+R:

Creating 3D environments is one thing, but to really make it work you need to go through the tedious process of motion-matching video to the 3D camera angle. Otherwise, video characters just look like cardboard cutouts. The next step is 3D models from body scans. The fidelity of 3D scans these days is getting pretty amazing. You can especially see it in big budget AAA games like NBA 2K15 or The Last of Us. The facial scans are almost true to life. We've been playing around with much lower resolution scans in our work for a while. This past year, we did a project called Scanners where we used scanned bodies with a Microsoft Kinect and before that we did Squiddies with facial scans from photos.

ZT:

Can you say more about your research with virtual reality programs and your plans for future projects?

R+R:

Right now, we are wrapping up the sequel to our project Dubstep Dinosaurs. It's called Dubstep Dinosaurs 3D and should be launching in February. We've been working on it for almost a year and we've been busying ourselves with motion capture, 3D modeling, rigging and texturing – not to mention building the entire environment. Where the original Dubstep Dinosaurs was a composited video, this follow-up has a completely sculpted 3D environment along with 3D characters. This project is so many new things for us and has been a long time coming, so we're excited to get it out there!