

Fashion, Ink



Perhaps best known for the ruckus he caused after juxtaposing Anne Frank's face with a certain expletive on a T-shirt dress in his Fall 2006 collection, aleXsandro Palombo is a proudly controversial, fashion-focused Italian artist. And his cheeky-chic endeavors aren't restricted to the runway. In 2010, Palombo will make a stir with the release his second collection of sharp-witted fashion cartoons. Titled *Humor Chic*, the book cimples images and graphic novels, each of which feature satirical caricatures of fashion's obsession with celebrity, politics and, of course, itself.

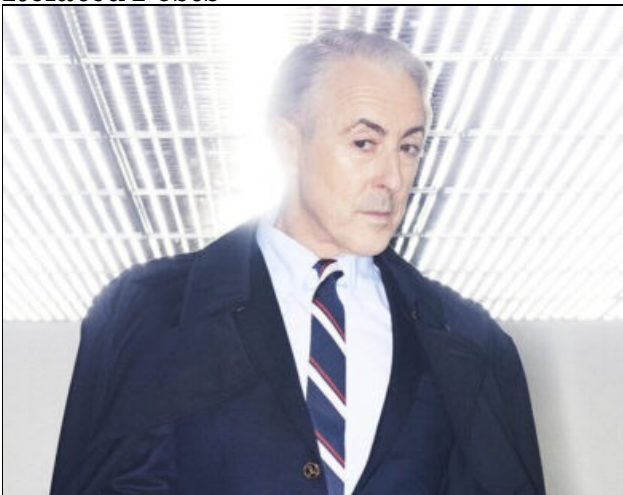
Palombo describes the book as, "a regular meeting point for everyone who shares my incurable sense of humor and a vein of poetic folly; an illustrated talk show that reveals reality and raises it to fantasy, dream and magic." Nowhere is this clearer than his story, "Karl's Journey" (above). In this mini saga, fashion's most eccentric sage is shown gallivanting about Paris in his signature white ponytail, blacked-out sunglasses, and a smartly stitched jacket. He visits Le Tour Eiffel, hops on Le Metro and strikes a pose in front of a billboard that reads "Karl Forever." Lagerfeld is also stalked by a pair of impeccably dressed extraterrestrials who eventually invite him to stroll up a red carpet into their UFO. What could Karl's intergalactic relations possibly

mean? “Perhaps the aliens are a metaphor for society today. Or perhaps they’re the sole beings that the adorable Karl succeeds in communicating with, since he himself is a creative, a visionary and as such, an alien,” suggests Palombo. But the illustrator slyly admits, “Nobody knows where this journey will take him, not even me!”

Not all the stories are quite so sweet. Somewhere between offensive and dreamy, the hand-drawn illustrations merge flippancy with more serious social issues. Palombo gives us a peek at David Letterman playing footsie with Anna Wintour during her *Late Night* debut while, only pages away, he references President Obama’s promise to support the cancelation of the African public debt with an illustration of the uncomfortable-looking president downing an over-stuffed sandwich as Ghanaian children beg with empty plates.

Currently available for preview on Palombo’s blog, the illustrations allow viewers to experience the surreal world of political ideologies and fantastical visions in which Palombo lives and works. And no matter how weird and wacky things get, it’s trip worth taking. (RIGHT: “ANNA WINTOUR ON *THE LATE SHOW*”)

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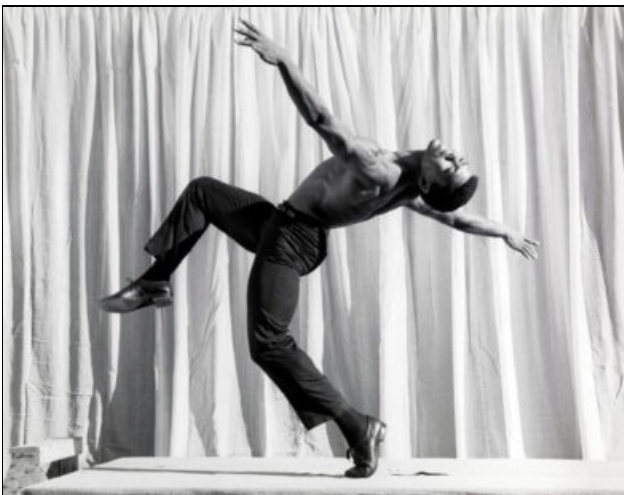
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