counts within its ranks legends such as Tony Trujillo, Peter Hewitt and John Cardiel. Antihero is known for hard living and heavy skating. Its image has been carefully cultivated to project a mystique of the rebel without a cause/anti-authoritarian attitude. McNett’s interests are in line with the Anti hero image when he states that:

when I see some 60-year old guy on a motorcycle speeding at 90 mph, no helmet, and with a week’s worth of filth on his skin grinning from ear to ear or just somebody going for it or some weird spot someone put together on the side of the road…. I’m attracted to how alive they are and relate to their characters.

The Antihero logo has become sign for the outsider, the marginal, and the pariah. Antihero is an exclusive group of professional skateboarders. This insular team has a public presence in magazines and videos. Their public image has been carefully engineered in their ads that look like ransom notes or the collages of a serial killer, as well as videos that present Nan Golden-like glimpses into a life of drinking, heavy drugs, and living dangerously.

Skateboarding has made its way into mainstream culture with events such as the X-games and Fuel TV. It is used to promote sports drinks, hygiene products and video games. Many professional skateboarders have lost their credibility amongst their peers by colluding with endorsements from these companies. Antihero’s image stands in opposition these alien corporations’ acts of co-opting the activity that defines and supports them. It’s one marketing campaign against another. McNett’s graphics emblazoned across the bottom of skateboard decks are utilized to articulate Antihero’s posture of resistance.

Regardless, what is most irksome in McNett’s work is the conflation of Norse mythology with skateboarding, and how this ties into the outset ethos of Antihero’s image. McNett states that ‘I was really drawn to the Norske folklore because of the rich characters and imagery that is conjured up when reading it ….battle magic, monsters, giants, gods, [and] adventure.’ It’s troubling considering how this Teutonic imagery was mobilized in the 30’s and 40’s, and that these same themes could shamelessly be used in art again simply because they are appealing. Historical anamnesia, as opposed to barbarism (or at least I hope), enables these messages to consciously or unconsciously be encoded into unreflective artworks and finding wide dissemination without anybody blinking an eye or making a fuss.

Mired within a 24-7 now-time mentality, where the weight of history is seen as oppressive, it may feel that it is better to ignore these documents of barbarism for the sake of one’s own health. Formally, McNett’s work has been carefully manicured to project a mystique that present Nan Golden-like glimpses into a life of drinking, heavy drugs, and living dangerously. Ultimately, the very cynicism of the blind believers in a pseudo-democracy based on political marketing and the private high living of the rich have led to the loss of some key ideologies in the name of imposing strict regulations on the economy, developing exit strategies from the military industrial complex, re-establishing basic civil rights that have been lost in this country, and demanding the single-payer healthcare system that has worked so well in every other industrialized country. These are not blind utopian claims: they all have clear precursors in other countries around the world! We mustn’t let the televised ‘revolution’ dupe us into thinking that the fundamental features of the pseudo-democratic system have been changed. On the contrary, this novel aestheticization of politics clearly shows what change really means in this system: repackaging the standard commodities of marketplace democracy so that people don’t see what they are really buying!

-Dennis McNett

Leonard Baskin, Crow

The company was founded in the early 90’s by the San Francisco based skater Julian Stranger, and that dismisses anything outside of the administered options as impossible. In the face of this cynical satisfaction with the status quo, it is necessary to affirm that real change is not only possible but it happens all of the time. Everyone is convinced that the two-party system is the only option. It is essential to foreground the presidential candidacy of Dennis Kucinich, a democratic congressman whose campaign was severely marginalized by the mass media in spite of the fact that he regularly won public opinion polls based solely on policies (as opposed to media image). His stance on Iraq clearly illustrates what ‘real change’ might look like even within the two-party system: there would be a total withdrawal of troops, the U.S. would pay war reparations to the Iraqis (like Germany after WWII) and the U.S. would not have the right to have an embassy in Iraq (a common excuse for maintaining troops in a country).

-Holly Martins

Etienne Dolet

YESTERDAY
HE WAS A
DECENT MAN
LIVING A
DECENT LIFE
NOW HE IS A
BRUTAL
SAVAGE
WHO MUST
SLAUGHTER TO STAY ALIVE

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