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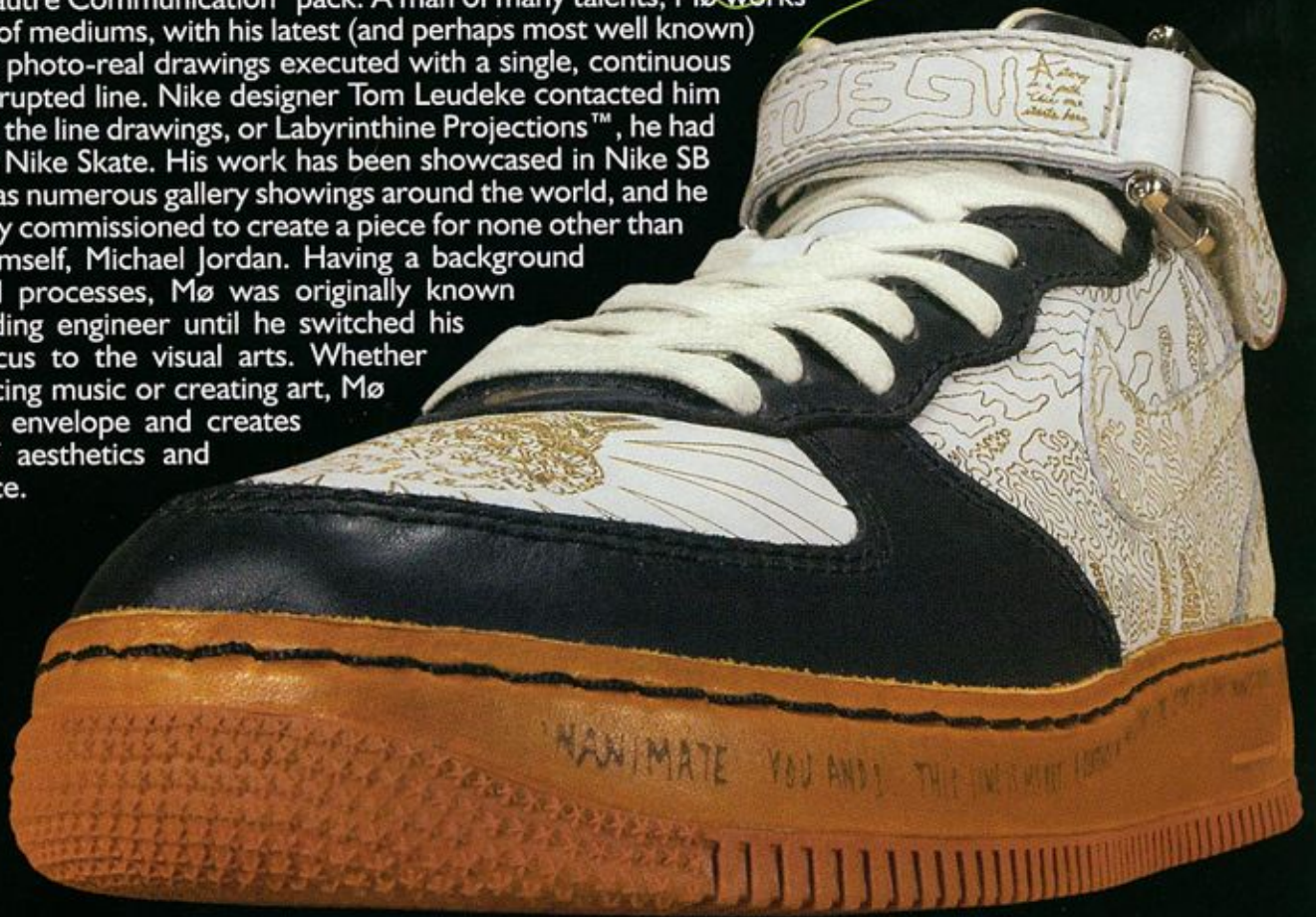
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Mø breaks down his Air Force 1 laser edition

*A story
is a path.
This one
starts here*

Oregon-based artist Mø was handpicked to work on the latest Air Force 1 in the current "Nautre Communication" pack. A man of many talents, Mø works in a variety of mediums, with his latest (and perhaps most well known) work being photo-real drawings executed with a single, continuous and uninterrupted line. Nike designer Tom Leudeke contacted him after seeing the line drawings, or Labyrinthine Projections™, he had created for Nike Skate. His work has been showcased in Nike SB ads as well as numerous gallery showings around the world, and he was recently commissioned to create a piece for none other than the man himself, Michael Jordan. Having a background in technical processes, Mø was originally known as a recording engineer until he switched his primary focus to the visual arts. Whether he's producing music or creating art, Mø pushes the envelope and creates a union of aesthetics and performance.



Mø on the design inspiration and color palette of his Air Force 1:

Mø: I was given a palette of three colors to work with, and that was pretty much the only design direction. This project is about communications with nature, how I could post some landscape paintings in it. I started exploring cloud patterning with respect to the Labyrinthine Projections™. Even then, clouds without context still looked like random forms and didn't serve the right purpose. The solution was to pull in iconic landscape shapes... a Mt. Hood, a very recognizable shape. I sort of morph nothing into very concrete shapes using this labyrinthine projection style. As for the colorway, I chose it. The black actually outlines the different discrete panels in an Air Force 1, which gives this sort of "canvas in frame" kind of effect.

Another really significant feature is the concept behind the storytelling aspect. I definitely have my story—everyone has their story—and one thing that I really like about this shoe is it allows the wearer of the shoe to actually...connect to the whole story of this shoe. The line starts on the ankle strap of the shoe. It says, "The story is a path and this one starts here." Then that line is traced continuously, uninterrupted and non-intersecting. The line doesn't cross itself, it doesn't touch itself, all of the art connects to this one line. It starts on the ankle strap and it goes down into the landscape image that's taken from a painting that I did of Sophie's Island, a wildlife refuge north of Portland. The line continues through the image, comes up around the Swoosh, connects to the eye (on the right shoe it connects to the hand) and then comes back into the Swoosh. The line continues non-stop through the portrait of Mt. Hood that has the caribou, and then eventually ends up right here on the back of the ankle strap.

Midsole:

Yeah, the words on the midsole are a distilled sense of the philosophy behind what motivates me to do this kind of art. How I've distilled my story into this art, is thru the following: *A story is like a path, it begins and then follows a course to conclusion. Any individual sentence taken from a story can be meaningful, yet together, serve a greater purpose. So it is with any single segment of the line burned into this shoe. Beautiful alone, yet only a fraction of the big picture. The universe has a story, and that story is long, complex, and physically connects all matter and energy, living and inanimate, you and I. This line is my art, a sentence in my story, the story of one man's truth.* It's dated June 1st, 2004, and that to me sums up the concept behind the Labyrinthine Projections™, an exploration of the continuity of matter and energy and how what I'm really trying to achieve with my work is trying to bridge a gap between people, both culturally and individually. I feel like as western culture progresses, we seem to be losing interconnectivity with each other and I'm trying to explore how to make that different.

Hand graphic:

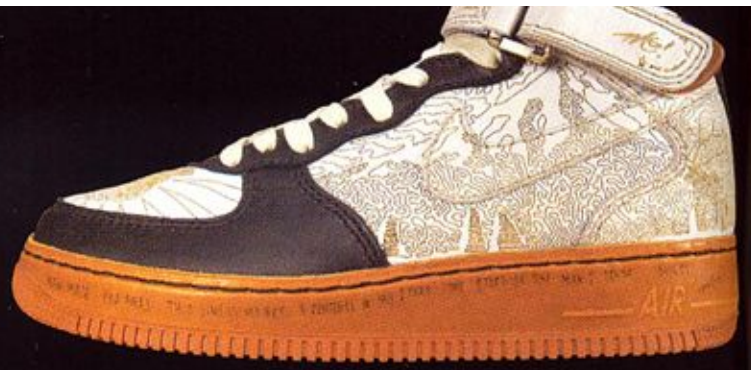
Most people think it's a peace sign, but it's not the peace sign, it's actually the gesture of benediction. It looks like the peace sign, and maybe the peace sign comes from that. Throughout human history, the hand is associated with the transmission of spirit and one cross multi-spiritual gesture is the gesture of benediction. You find it referenced in the Koran, as well as images of Christian martyrs and



saints, and the Buddha also is seen with the same gesture. Benediction is a blessing, and so to me it's the idea of wanting to show that we all have a connection to the spiritual, whether or not we choose to recognize or acknowledge it... My art is particularly steeped in an exploration of spirituality in a secular way, a non-ecclesiastical manner, so that's what that symbol's all about.

Toebox Imagery:

Most of this art would be viewable best by someone at a distance from the shoe, so obviously, that's not the wearer. How can the wearer get something special out of their experience? When the wearer looks down, he/she sees the heart and brain. I used the vamp as a discrete canvas to really drive home the disparate qualities of logic on the one side of the brain and the emotion on the other side. How we not



only as artists, but as human beings have to constantly keep these in balance, and obviously when someone is just so off on the one side than the other, it just destroys the whole perspective. I think that most of us either consciously or sub-consciously are trying to get this sort of perfect balance of being thoughtful but also being emotional, being able to feel things that life has to offer.

Origin of the Labyrinthine Projections™ style:

I started this style, actually, when I was a kid. I spent way too many hours on the etch-a-sketch, and eventually, I was in a drawing class and I was having some trouble breaking through a particular drawing of a portrait. My instructor said: "Well, why don't you just free flow, just maybe do what you did doodling as a kid." I was kind of lamenting the loss of a really special person in my life and I felt that she had this hold on my whole sort of paradigm and in doing these doodles, they started reminding me of mazes, and the myth of the labyrinth, the Minotaur and Perseus. I started feeling like I was trapped in this labyrinth of this woman's magic. I couldn't get out of it, and I was actually referencing a photograph of her doing this doodle process and trying to overcome this roadblock I was having creatively with this portrait project and then as I looked back, it occurred to me that it was a labyrinth. I was so deep in it that I couldn't see it for what it was, which was an actual image of this woman, and it took me completely by surprise that I had been doodling so intensely and focusing so much on thinking about her and looking at her picture that it just came out in the line as a photo real image of this person. It was such an amazing discovery and the instructor that I was working with at the time was floored. He definitely encouraged me to do more of those drawings, and the rest is evident in Nike's interest in doing this kind of work.

Mø's definition of art:

To me, art is a measure of culture. Not necessarily in how culture is progressing or not progressing, but art is a snapshot of what's going on in a culture at any particular given time. As an artist, I feel that my job is as an antenna to the culture.

I'm receiving messages from the culture at large, processing them and sending information back out in a way that makes sense to me, and in a way that hopefully...can be processed and communicated. ▶

