



HIDDEN TRACK

HOW VISUAL CULTURE IS GOING PLACES

SHOWROOM DUMMIES

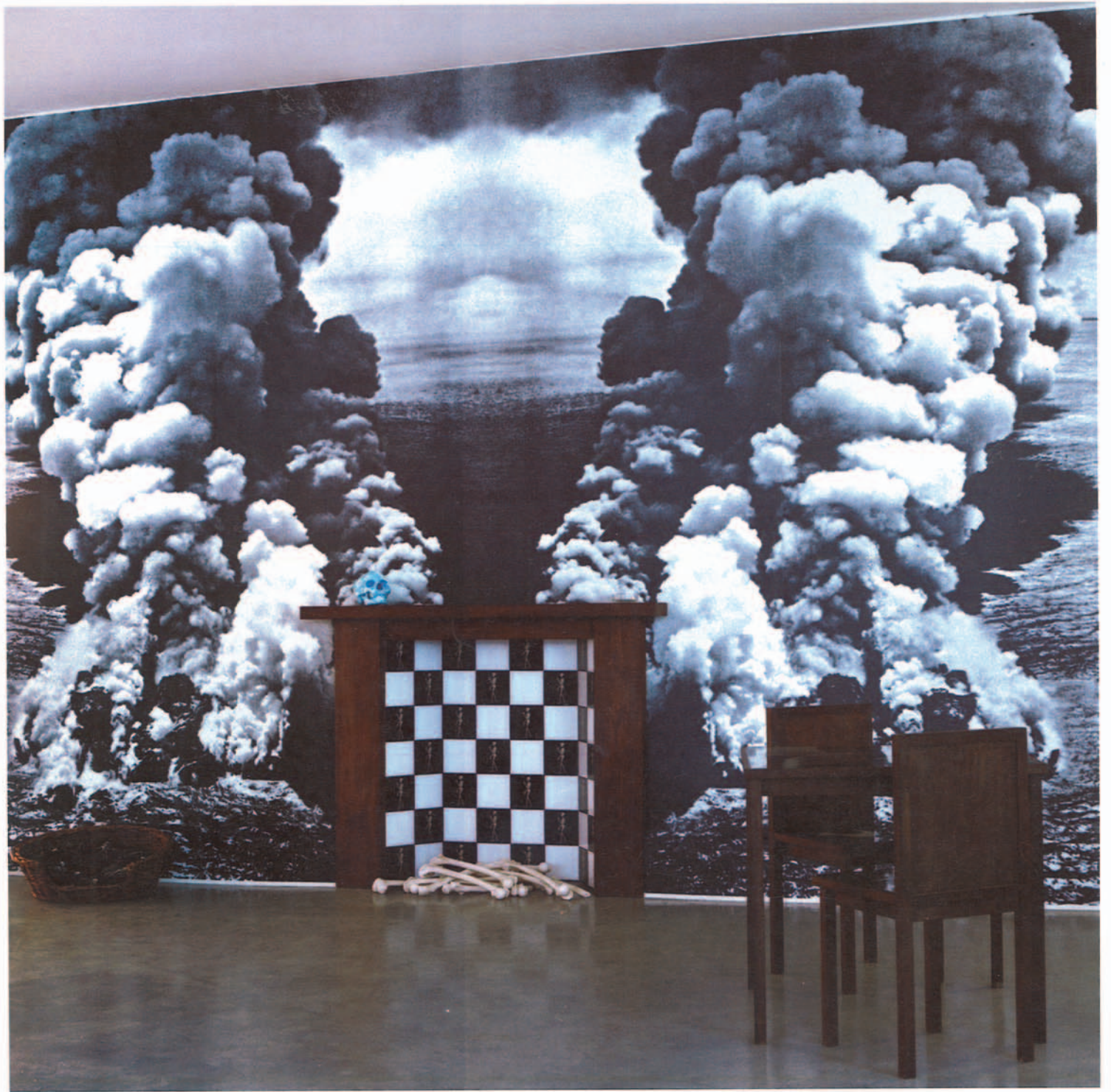
"Generally, all our designs are image led", says Abigail Lane, head of the London-based design company Showroom Dummies. In her own way of working, she often uses source material from old books, magazines and photographs she has taken, and manipulates them with the computer. "I may have a particular end in mind, but as it progresses the image may reveal itself to be better adapted to something else. For example, an image of a tornado at the end of a road was intended as a wall mural. But then it became the back of one of our screens

because it was obvious when I folded the paper roughly that the concertina effect of the panels was going to give the image depth and drama."

Although her design mostly appears to be centred around imagery, the material they are applied to sometimes proves equally as important. *"The images of stuffed animals were always intended to be behind the shiny veneer of glass or acrylic to keep their museum quality; therefore, the screen design grew up around them. Sometimes the images will then go on to work in another material.*

I can very well imagine the Fly Sky design working on a fine bone china tea set as well as the rough cotton print of our fabric." She never sees patterns or motifs as completely flat. "I always try to imagine them in the circumstances they will actually be used in, that is, in a space with other things. It is often the interaction between things that gives the images their life and dynamics by introducing some kind of story line. It can even be as simple as seeing my dog sleeping diagonally across the dog-chequered design of our blankets."







"Interior Motifs (natural histories and natural disasters)"
 Showroom Dummies Head Office
 London, UK, 2003

"The purpose of this exhibition was to showcase our first prototypes in a coherent environment. Walls were papered with skeletal bodies frolicking with their own spare parts, and a bed covered in cashmere blankets, lay beneath an electric storm in black and white. Apart from creating a thematic setting for our furniture and accessories, you can actually purchase everything we exhibit in our rooms. For example, the mural showing a volcanic eruption is ink-jet

printed on self-adhesive material with a hard-wearing protective seal to suit any situation. My interests inspire me. As they are long-term, the Showroom Dummy style is unlikely to fluctuate with fashions. I love the circus, natural history, museums and, of course, magic. One of my dream projects is to design a gambling club – everything from the coasters to the uniforms, the toilet doors to the carpets, even the money chips and tokens."

