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Lip Smackin', Finger Lickin' Graphic Designs and Photography Featured in New Book on Fast Food Marketing

"Chicken: Low Art, High Calorie" is the latest book from Mark Batty Publisher to identify and explore a sub-genre of commercial design

Contact Joel Samberg for review copies or author interview requests at 1.973.857.8070 or via email at media@markbattypublisher.com. Information on "Going Postal" is also available online at http://www.markbattypublisher.com/servlet/book_view?number=74.

New York, NY, January 26, 2009 — After receiving a flyer from a fast food restaurant that featured the suggestion "Dunk Your Dipper," graphic artist Siâron Hughes had an epiphany: She decided to make a serious cultural examination of the signage, slogans, menus and overall visual elements that distinguish chicken eateries throughout London. The result is a highly entertaining and illuminating book called "Chicken: Low Art, High Calorie," which explores the visual language and branding of the fast food industry, indicative of ideas and concepts employed in the author's home base and in urban centers around the world.

The new book, from Mark Batty Publisher, a leader in distinctive volumes covering the graphic and communication arts, is both a pictorial record and an investigate report. Dozens of amusing photos of signs, storefronts and menus are featured in the book alongside comments from restaurant workers on customer reactions to store names and sign designs. There is also an in-depth chat with "Mr. Chicken," a London-based sign-maker who has designed for several dozen fast food chicken joints in the U.K.

Hughes is a professional illustrator and web designer, originally from Wales, who studied graphic arts in London, where she began to focus on what she calls the 'rhetoric, irony and candor' of certain graphic communication concepts. That's when she first began exploring the variety of signs, graphics and menus at fast-food chicken establishments, ultimately resulting in the colorful and quirky "Chicken: Low Art, High Calorie."

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“Everywhere I went I was amusingly overwhelmed by the extravaganza of gaudy bright backgrounds ornamented with floating bits of fried chicken, chicken logos busy with numerous, incongruous fonts, and a very evident American influence,” Hughes said. “These vernacular designs, mostly done by the untrained eyes of the shopkeepers, break every rule of typography, but are ubiquitous.”

Hughes spent several months visiting fast-food restaurants with names like Chicken Inn Village, Chick King, ChickPizz, Fri-Chicks, Lick’n Chick’n, Cozy Chicken, Hen Cottage, Funky Chicken and many others. She documented their storefronts, signage, logos and menus, noting the wide variety of slogans used, such as “Paradise Patties,” “Taste Me,” “Lip-Licking Flavour,” “Best Breast in Wales” and more.

Most of the restaurants are not franchises, but are individually owned and operated establishments, many of which nonetheless borrow elements from some of the popular franchise chains.

“What started as a curious quest grew into something more personal. I have met the people who customise and adapt these unique and eye-catching visuals to suit their neighbourhoods,” Hughes said. “They are not so concerned with the theories and practice of graphic design as much as providing a service, which is actually in high demand. It was my goal to combine a study of visual language and branding with an insight into the lives of the people involved in this industry.”

About Mark Batty Publisher

Mark Batty Publisher is an independent publisher dedicated to making distinctive books on the visual art of communicating, showcasing the visual power and innovation of contemporary culture in all of its varied poses. Today, the visual comes at us from more places than ever, and its dissemination is faster and more advanced every year. Books from Mark Batty Publisher capture this acceleration on the pages of every book. Affordable, well designed, thoughtfully created, and produced to last, MBP books are artful products that readers want to hold onto forever. For more information, visit www.markbattypublisher.com



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"Chicken: Low Art, High Calorie"

Siâron Hughes

Popular Culture, Graphic Design

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