

## HINDWORD

What can I tell you about Vaughan Oliver ?

He's restless, always asking questions. He's got a filthy sense of humour, delivered completely deadpan. He cares more about football than almost anything else. He doesn't know the meaning of the word 'conventional'. He doesn't know the meaning of the word 'mediocre'. He's infuriating, inspiring, ingenious and funny as fuck. They have a word for people like him : 'artist'.

Vaughan's work reveals a giddy love affair with texture, with layers, with gradual revelations and startling juxtapositions. Most graphic Designers resent text and the way it runs roughshod over the linear purity of their structures - not so Vaughan, who lures words in and, with imperious sleight of hand, massages them into place. And if, on the surface, v23's designs might seem merely pretty or conventionally lush, a closer look always reveals the grit in the vaseline; that touch of the perverse, or the absurd, or the crashingly mundane that makes them resonate in the imagination. Searching for the sublime, you might be rewarded with nothing more than a pair of oven gloves.

Take one of my favourite images, the poster for the Breeders' album 'Pod'. It's a symphony of cerise and tangerine, a pellucid, backlit dreamscape. Only gradually do you wake to the blurred strangeness of the figure in the foreground, a bizarre, composite curve that resists assimilation.

I'll let you into a secret. This is a photograph of Vaughan himself. A near-naked, shaven-headed, visionary Mackem, gyrating in an empty room with a pair of eels stapled to his underpants.

Honestly, somebody should do a book.

Chris Sharp,  
4AD