

Esquire

Welcome to the Modern World

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by Frank Rose

ONE SATURDAY A COUPLE OF weeks before Christmas, I found myself in the basement of Woolworth's with photographer Jimmy de Sana. A native of Detroit who grew up in Palm Beach and Atlanta, de Sana is a soft-spoken young man who had three solo shows last year (in Chicago, Capri, and New York), took part in two group exhibitions, and published a book called *Submission* that shows a woman bound in a refrigerator, a man defecating into a bathtub, and another man roped across the roof of a car. De Sana gets many of his best ideas on shopping trips.

"I've actually gotten more ideas in Woolworth's than anywhere," he declared as we made our way through the narrow basement aisles piled head-high with merchandise. But as fellow shoppers crowded in, de Sana's enthusiasm quickly waned. Finally he said, "I don't know how much more of this I can take. Maybe we can find sporting goods."

"I do like sporting clothes," de Sana remarked as we made our way up to the street and across to Herman's World of Sporting Goods. He was wearing black jeans, black leather boots, a black sleeveless T-shirt, and the top of a black-and-yellow jogging suit. "They're so much more interesting than Brooks Brothers. I went through a whole period of wearing just Brooks Brothers, but I got so bored with it." We paused at a section where swim goggles, Frisbees, and shin guards all lived side by side. "All these products made of plastic! It's so attractive. And I think shin guards are real sexy. All that protection stuff..."

Later, at his art dealer's apartment, we discussed de Sana's work. His prime influences, he said, are fashion photography, television, and magazine advertisements. "I have a certain sexuality that's not used in magazines normally," he said, "although it's between the lines." I was staring at a photograph of a tongue that had apparently been pierced by an earring. "It's like—misuse of products."

"Most of my ideas come from my daydreams and nightmares and stuff," he continued. "Everyday situations that get out of hand. If anything, it's watching TV and seeing the ads for really weird products—some of those kitchen things where they do all the slicing..."

He shuddered. "Products are addictive," he declared. "I think America is really hooked."

FRANK ROSE



A CORNUCOPIA OF THE MODERN WORLD: CHRIS STEIN OF BLONDIE IN THE PEAKED HAT; THEN, CLOCKWISE, SCOTT B. LYDIA LUNCH, ANN MAGNUSON, JIMMY DE SANA, NANCY ARLEN, NICK MARDEN'S JACKET, BETH B, AND MARCUS LEATHERDALE.