

combustive motor corporation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

the Behind-the-Scenes story of the Creation of **U.F.O.** — a product of the Combustive Motor Corporation

Late in the spring of 2004, four members of the artist collaborative **Combustive Motor Corporation**, **Alex Wright**, **Jack Warren**, **Caleb Scott**, and **Chris Noble**, stumbled upon something extraordinary. For the past two months they had been tracking and documenting the work of an elusive New York graffiti artist, known only as UFO. In their research, the team came across images of another artist's work, wall murals that exhibited the same symbolic design as the graffiti pieces they were studying in New York. These crudely drawn paintings were nearly identical in shape, placement and size to the UFO graffiti pieces, depicting an anthropomorphic flying figure, an alien head resting atop some supernatural floating disc. They appeared to be part of the same figurative language, imparting, perhaps, a similar message or code of knowledge; yet these paintings had been discovered tens of thousands of miles away in a remote, mountainous region of Australia, and they had been composed some 10,000 years ago.

At this moment, tracking UFO took on a speculative reality. If this ancient cave art was meant to illustrate something specific (anthropologists believe they are portraits of the "Wandjina," extraterrestrial figures in aboriginal mythology who created the earth in a prehistoric descent from the heavens), what, then, might the graffiti paintings of UFO be illustrating?

The **CMC** team reached out to experts in the fields of astrophysics, anthropology, religion, art, politics and paranormal phenomena, among them such cultural icons as **Stephen Hawking**, **Thomas Pynchon**, **John Glenn**, **David Bowie**, and former **President Bill Clinton**. Each received a custom-made package, a box containing photographic prints of the UFO graffiti and questions of its origin, intent, power and relevance. The office of **Dr. Hawking** maintained that, although it is probable that intelligent life-forms exist elsewhere in the universe, it is unlikely that they have ever visited earth. Artist **Terry Winters** likened UFO's symbolic pieces to the visionary works of **William Burroughs**, responding with a photograph of one of Burroughs's "alien" paintings. Most of the team's communications went unanswered.

The CMC team continued in their search, determined to unravel a riddle they were certain lay somewhere within the tangled grid of UFO's geographic and, now, historic traverse through New York. By the fall, they had produced some two hundred images and had documented sightings of UFO in all the five boroughs of New York City. Following anonymous leads and tips from local residents, the team pinpointed the locations of hundreds of paintings, new and old, and developed mechanisms for predicting when and where new sightings would occur.

In the spring of 2005, the team compiled their collection of images and descriptions into a single volume and began comparing and measuring the vast number of symbolic graffiti pieces against each other and the locations and environments in which they were discovered. This study resulted in a field manual, the **Combustive Motor Corporation Field Guide to U.F.O. Classification**,



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which provided the research team with a comprehensive system of categorization, the first step toward cracking the code of UFO's elusive lexicon.

As the search continued—into the darkest underground interiors and the most restricted and quarantined exteriors of New York's manifold urban landscape—the web of UFO's symbolic map became more complicated and the variant structures of its design more subtle. Focusing on the ideas that emerged during these excursions brought about an immense miscellany of raw documentation—photos, personal journals, maps, diagrams, sketches and correspondence—all of which combined with the CMC's rich and thorough field collection to provide the 200 page **U.F.O.**, a catalog of postulation, theory and exchange all derived from the journey of four urban explorers bent on solving the elaborate riddle of UFO's communion with New York.

The **Combustive Motor Corporation** is a collaboration of New York City based artists Alex Wright, a music and culture photographer whose work has appeared in music, art and fashion periodicals as well as in national advertising campaigns; Caleb Scott, a writer and actor, who has produced and exhibited over twenty plays, short films and performance pieces; producer and filmmaker Chris Noble, whose most recent work includes a number of documentary films for Wieden + Kennedy; and Jack Warren, a painter and multimedia artist, who has recently been exhibited in solo shows in Geneva and New York.

GRAFFITI / EXTRATERRESTRIAL PHENOMENA / URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY
PB, 8 x 9.5 inches, 196 pages with 4 multipage gatefolds and a 32-page field guide insert
ISBN: 1-57687-334-X \$35.00

WHEN GOD SAID "THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME" AND "I THE LORD YOUR GOD AM A JEALOUS GOD" HE WAS SAYING THAT HE KNOWS THAT THERE ARE OTHER GODS. AFTER SEEING **U.F.O.** – A REAL GEM OF JURASSIC TECHNOLOGY – IT'S POSSIBLE YOU'LL ADD THESE HIEROGLYPHICS TO THE LIST OF EGYPTIAN AND GREEK GODS THE BIBLICAL GOD MAY HAVE HAD IN MIND.

–Jerry Saltz
Senior Art Critic, *Village Voice*

PROBABLY THE MOST INNOVATIVE STUDY OF GRAFFITI TO DATE. THE AUTHORS BRING A CREATIVITY, VISION, AND HUMOR TO THE TOPIC THAT IS ONLY PARALLELED BY THE WORK THEY ARE DOCUMENTING.

–Susan A. Phillips, Faculty Director
Center for California Cultural
and Social Issues, Pitzer College

THESE GUYS [THE COMBUSTIVE MOTOR CORPORATION] ARE LIKE THE ROD SERLINGS OF HIP HOP . . .
CEREBRAL, YET HIP ON THE DL TIP.

–Ricky Powell



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