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ISSUE NO. 22:
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Inside a secret society

LISTEN UP
Your new favourite bands

JANE Q CHENG
This cover's copycat artist



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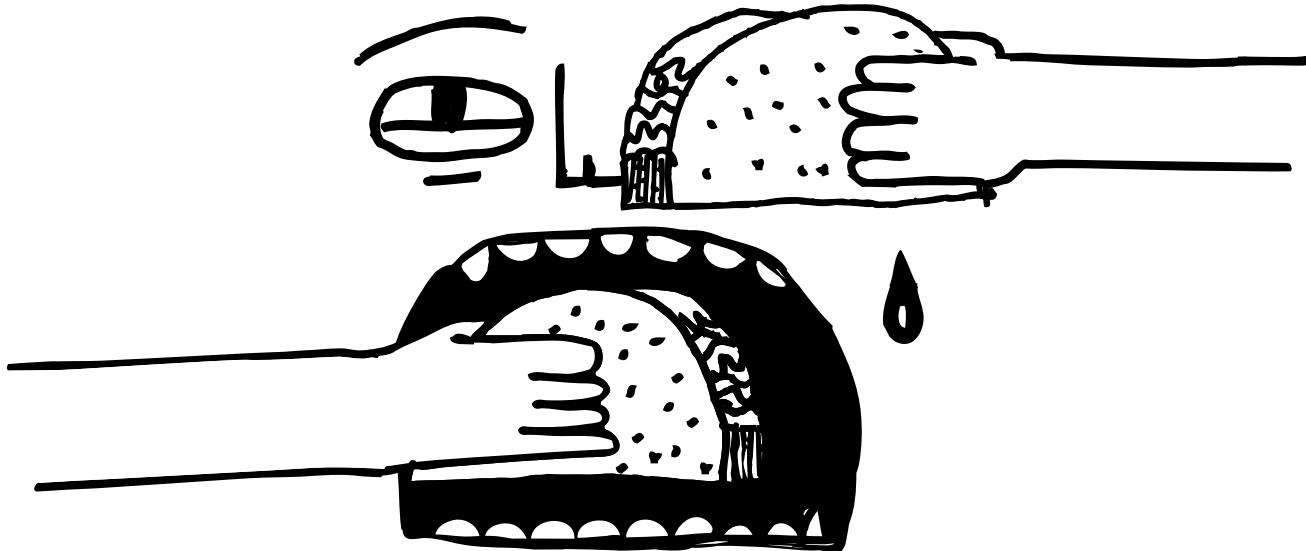
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Styling: Sora Kim
Talk: Sora Kim

We're in an age of sampling and reampling - you take images from art online for your own work, how does it feel? What are your thoughts with me studying off your work?

It's foolish to not love this idea, consider my ethos which includes sampling culture! I see art as a great ongoing conversation between works which will illusions to other works. Let's keep going! Say if I had done this without approaching you first, would you still be cool with it? DEFINITELY. My evolution isn't crucial to this, is it?

TACO TIME

Vancouver's relationship with fast food Tex-Mex



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ILLUSTRATION BY GRAEME ZIRK

Why are there no Taco Bells in Vancouver? This is a question that has fascinated me—a fast food aficionado and Vancouver native—for many years. I like everything about fast food: it's consistent and salty, and you barely have to exchange words with another human being to get it. The Paleo diet confounds me because I am dead certain that a caveman would rather be eating a Two Cheeseburger Combo than his charred haunch of elk or whatever.

"I guess you could say the food is authentic: I mean, I've eaten it, and it was definitely food."

That said, not all fast food is created equal. A&W fries are better than Wendy's, but McDonald's makes the best of all. Teen Burgers are better than Junior Bacon Cheeseburgers. Burger King is an abomination, and so is Arby's. You should never get anything hot from Dairy Queen, and you should only get chicken at KFC. If you put a McDonald's cheeseburger in your fridge and eat it cold the next morning, it's still good—trust me.

Despite my sophisticated palate, I have never eaten at Taco Bell. For much of my life I naively assumed it was the same thing as TacoTime: you know, the way that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in Canada is called *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in America. In fact, though, they are very different. For one thing, TacoTime serves tater tots with salsa in a dish called Mexi-Fries. But even more importantly, it's Canadian: the first TacoTime opened in Lethbridge, Alberta by a man named Jim Penny (probably not Mexican). (This fact surprised me until I remembered the tater tots.) The website also claims that it builds its company on

"authentic food and friendly service!" I guess you could say the food is authentic: I mean, I've eaten it, and it was definitely food.

Taco Bell, on the other hand, hails from California (also the birthplace of McDonald's)—the creation of a veteran and hot dog stand operator named Glen Bell. Its Wikipedia page is extremely long, and notes that the first Canadian location opened in 1981. For a few short and golden years, you could even order draft beer there. You can't anymore; you also can't go to a Taco Bell in Saskatchewan, PEI, or Newfoundland.

Last year, my friend Kristin Cheung told me a secret: there are no Taco Bells in Vancouver because McDonald's brokered a special deal with the City of Vancouver during Expo '86 to ban its competitor from opening restaurants here. For some inexplicable reason, this rumour thrilled me. Learning a weird historic fact about your hometown is exciting—like hearing about something cool your parents did before you were born. I seized on this secret immediately and began repeating it to everyone, without question.

As it turns out, the back-door deal between Ronald McDonald and Expo is probably apocryphal: Reddit has a thread from 2012 disputing it, pointing out that many other fast food franchises owned by its parent company Yum! Brands are easy to find in Vancouver: Pizza Hut, KFC, and (formerly) A&W. It's also true that you can drive to the suburbs and find Taco Bell in Surrey, Coquitlam, Langley, and Maple Ridge.

Maybe Vancouver didn't need Taco Bell. We had TacoTime, our own Canadian franchise, delivering tacos and quesadillas of dubious Mexican veracity to the masses. Even when I'm passing through the suburbs now, I don't bother to find Taco Bell. As soon as I realized there was no intriguing reason for its scarcity, my curiosity evaporated. But it was replaced by something else: a newfound affection for TacoTime. Like in a Taylor Swift song about a guy realizing he's really meant to be with the girl in the bleachers, I realized that I've always loved tater tots with salsa.