

Independent White Lies astronaut album cover wins Best Art Vinyl Award 2013

By Jess Denham, January 3, 2014



Michael Kagan's oil painting 'Pilot 2' for White Lies' album cover (Michael Kagan)
© Courtesy of the artist.

Michael Kagan's oil painting was judged the most creative

An oil painting of an astronaut that features on the cover of White Lies' *Big TV* has won the Best Art Vinyl Award for 2013.

Michael Kagan's "Pilot 2" was judged the most creative and well-designed artwork of the year by members of the public.

In second place was Paul Jackson with his cover of a vomiting lion and panda for Dan Le Sac vs Scroobius Pip's *Repent Replenish Repeat*, while Leif Podhajsky is third with his abstract design for Bonobo's *North Borders*.

Other nominations included artwork by designers Damien Hirst and Vanessa de Silva and records by the likes of Elton John, Paul McCartney and Daft Punk.

Post-punk band White Lies, who came 7th in 2009 with *To Lose My Life*, asked Kagan if they could use his painting for their 2013 release.

"From the beginning, the band was very sincere and I could tell immediately how connected they felt to the painting and how it was important for them to use it," Kagan said. "It has been a very exciting experience for me to see my artwork used in this way."

"I have really enjoyed how involved the band has wanted me to be. We spent some time together in NYC, and after seeing the show, I could see how the painting had really become

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a symbol of the band and the new album.

“There is a nice cohesiveness between the images used and the songs and feel of the album.”

Created in 2010, “Pilot 2” is one of a series of paintings portraying astronauts. Jackson and Podhajsky’s artworks were both designed specifically for their purposes in accordance with the musicians’ visions.

Kagan was chosen as the winner by visitors of Malmaison hotels in London, Oxford and Birmingham, where the vinyls have been displayed.

It is not the first time that a space-themed design has won the prize, after a cat in an astronaut suit for Klaxons’ Surfing the Void took home the trophy in 2010.

Andrew Heeps, the founder of the Best Art Vinyl Award, finds it “interesting to see that the public prefers such a traditional artistic technique as oil on canvas to associate with music”.

“With the music industry reporting increases in vinyl record sales for the 9th consecutive year, this traditional music format is seriously having a renaissance,” he explained. “Over a quarter of vinyl records are now sold as wall art.”

A shortlist of 50 music covers was selected at the beginning of November and the hotel exhibitions will remain open until the end of January.



Michael Kagan’s astronaut oil painting ‘Pilot 2’ was requested by the band for the cover of their third studio album. It was judged the most creative and well-designed vinyl cover of 2013 and crowned winner of the Best Art Vinyl Award.
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