

# RE-IMAGINING SPECTACLE II

by Paul Wells

Emerging as a major talent in animation through the popularity of his films online, PES has already received major recognition for his re-imagining of everyday objects. His films are mini-masterpieces of condensation and symbolic association. PES's extraordinary eye for seeing a resonant resemblance or action in an object enables him to successfully re-invent genre, and most importantly, re-imagine the material space of his narratives in an entirely original way. His two most notable films, **Roof Sex** and **KaBoom!**, demonstrate the very opposite of the Play-Doh ads by making the viewer consider the minutiae of objects as they resonate with narrative, contextual and conceptual associations.

**Roof Sex** features two chairs having sex on a New York roof. It plays with the surreal and amusing parameters of 'furniture porn', linking the often gendered nature of furniture, with its anthropomorphised legs, arms and backs, to the assumption that such furniture might have sex. PES researched material using furniture porn sites, featuring a variety of chairs in provocative positions. He taught himself to animate chairs by practising with doll-house furniture.

Having fully storyboarded the sequence, he animated **Roof Sex** by featuring a gold and a red chair. Both chairs adopt a variety of sexual positions and vigorously squeal and shout until orgasm. Later in the film, an old granny discovers the inevitably damaged chairs in her living room and hits the cat with a broom, believing it had caused the rips and tears on the chairs.



PES's skills in seeing the associations between objects is at its keenest in his film **KaBoom!** – an implicitly anti-war tract that makes comment upon the perversity of America's war in Iraq. The film features the bombing of a quasi-Iraqi, retro-futuristic city, but the appeal is in the detail and the symbolic resonance of the associative images.

The film began as a consequence of an electrical fire in PES's apartment, which caused a power surge that destroyed many of his household appliances. Removing the circuit boards from his computers, he noticed that they resembled cities when viewed from above. He then proceeded to create the city with old objects such as razors and drill bits. Glass, plastic and metal all ape modernist conceptions of past architectures. The guns that defend the city are old skeleton keys with wide barrels. Popcorn plays the part of anti-aircraft fire; a vintage-blue toy bomber, augmented with matchstick missiles with cotton wool, smoke-stream bombs the city; while the bomb is played by a peanut.

PES notes: 'Apparently the atomic bomb has a peanut structure with two compartments. I always found it ironic that while bombing was occurring, a few hundred miles away would be the dropping of care packages to those that had just been bombed, and it would always include peanut butter because it was so rich in protein. The peanut seems like the closest thing to a Christmas gift, too. It has outside packaging, and a tissue-like inner layer; it's a pretty ironic gift in the film though'. Yellow gift bows double as explosions ballooning out upon impact, while 1950s Christmas baubles



PES shoots some of his first stop-motion sequences of 'chair-on-chair' sexual activity, relying on days with clear blue skies in order to evoke the brightly lit, cubist clarities of traditional American comic books.



PES choreographs two chairs having sex on a roof. In spite of the obvious comic artifice involved, and the surreal parody of performance in pornographic material, viewers have still reported arousal and guilt as they watched the film on their office computers!



feature in the final destruction of the city suggesting not only an atomic blast, but also the effects of chemical and germ warfare. These objects, while having a literal association, are also inevitably ironic – their very commonness subverts the scale of the subject matter being dealt with. The act of war is made ridiculous by the trivial and celebratory artefacts that represent it.

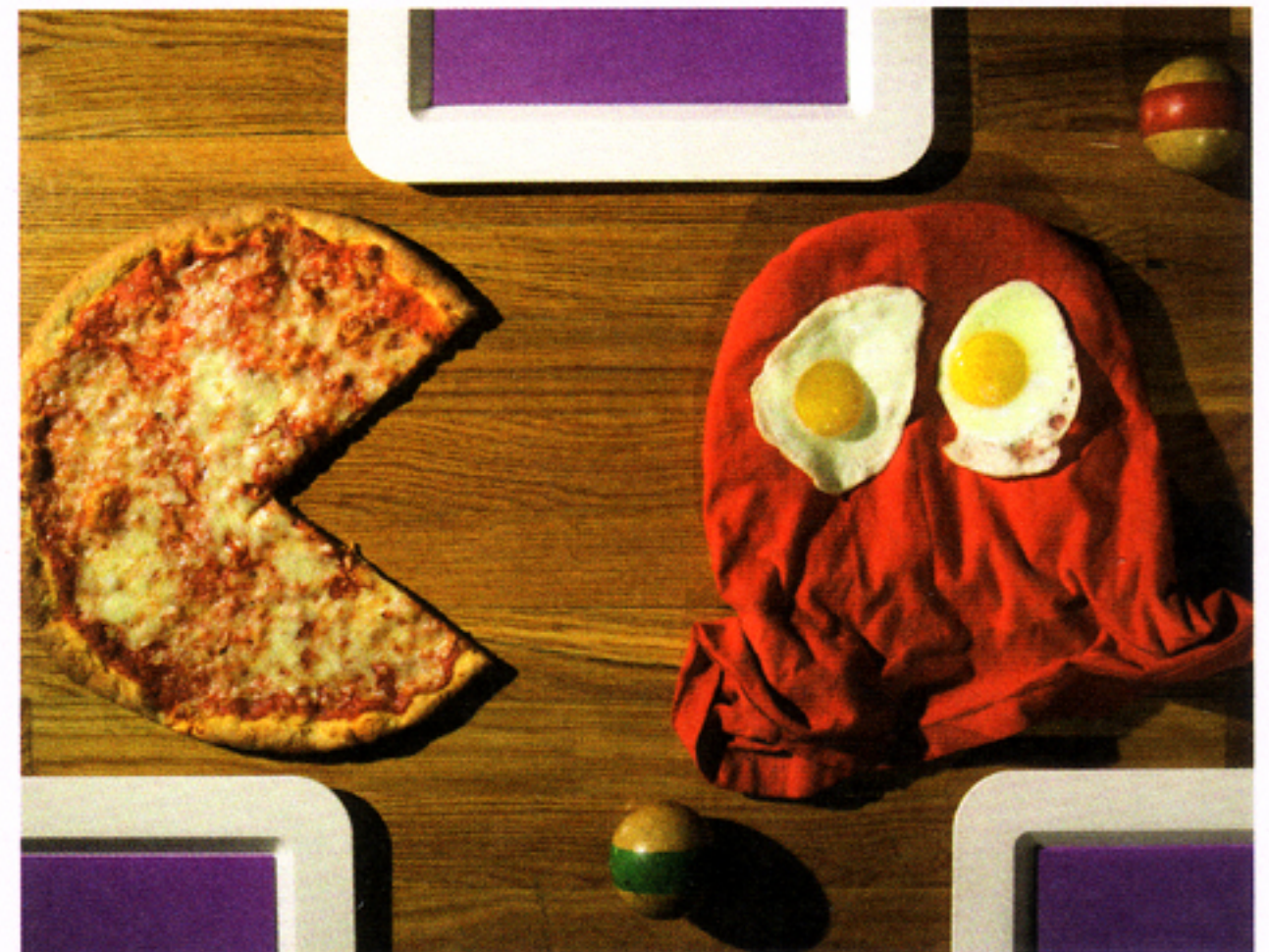
The final associations emerge from the film's title. **KaBoom!** is named after a 1970s breakfast cereal featuring sugar clown-heads, and an Atari video game with a character called 'the mad bomber', whose only function was to drop bombs. The George Bush analogy need not be overstated.



PES's retro-futuristic city made of household items, is an invocation of modernist architecture and a reference to the cliché of the minaretted skylines that allude to the Middle East.



PES's vintage-blue toy bomber, with its matchstick missiles, bombs a city-like circuit board torn from a computer. In such images, the politics of war are readily evoked. War is paralleled to a child's game; the childishness is implied in the ease with which conflict is engaged and the distance politicians have from the consequences of their decisions.



PES uses household objects and familiar materials to create his own version of the PacMan and Space Invaders games. This playfulness with objects draws attention to their taken-for-granted functions and meanings and challenges them.