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Art Is Hard: When Cover Art and Merch Designs Seem a Little Too Familiar

October 11, 2010

by Luke O'Neil

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“Good artists copy. Great artists steal.” That quote, often attributed to Pablo Picasso, has gradually edged its way into the collective wisdom through sheer force of repetition. What he meant, or what we’ve come to understand as his meaning, is that influence is the fuel of artistic creation; learning through imitation—or *copying*—is how any artist learns the trade. Young art students sit in museums for hours sketching old masters displayed before them. Musicians learn an instrument by playing their favorite artists’ songs. But *stealing*—taking something of someone else and making it your own—is something different.

When cover art was revealed for HIS NAME WAS YESTERDAY’s self-titled album, the design—featuring a man in a black suit staring into a dingy bathroom mirror at an altered vision of himself—seemed somewhat familiar. That’s because it looks a lot like the cover of SENSES FAIL’s 2004 album, *Let It Enfold You*.



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