

MIAMI

SEPT/OCT 2007

MODERN LUXURY



LOOK WHO'S TALKING

BY RICHARD MARTIN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER J. MICHEL

AGENT PROVOCATEUR: Tako models an Are You Generic? t-shirt.

STREET SMART *Creative director by day, underground artist at night—Rony Tako is a serious double threat*

Rony Tako is leading a double life. The creative director of the ad-and-branding agency Bridge House Studio, Tako creates campaigns for clients like the Flamingo South Beach and Brickell Financial Centre. When he's not at his day job, he's a provocateur who rebels against sloppy marketing and lazy art through his website, areyougeneric.org. He'd be forgiven for seeming schizophrenic.

Yet Tako hardly comes off as confused. Seated at Bridge House HQ in the Design District, the 33-year-old Miami native is as assured as a Fortune 500 CEO. He's excited about the direction his city's headed in.

"I love that culture is coming here," Tako says. "Last year during Art Basel you had four or five events happening. You have to wait until December, but when it comes you have 30 days of chaos, which is great."

As for local art, his alter ego, okat—the reverse of his family name—

is rightly proud. Tako created the early online gallery infiniterace.com, before moving on to Are You Generic? and Bridge House.

The creative director in him is all business. "My first responsibility is to the client," he says, sounding as corporate as a guy in a t-shirt, jeans and sneakers can. "If I come up with a clever design, if it's not selling apartments or leasing office space, it's not functional."

But the agitator behind Are You Generic? is equally focused. The website touts street art, Adbusters-style culture jamming and hip graphic T-shirts. The married father of two grows energized discussing plans for the site. But he acknowledges that it does make him seem hypocritical.

"It's like dual personalities," he says. "But I don't critique anything unless I really understand it. You have to know a business to be the hardest critic of it."

HOTS Independent thought, typography, stickers, Ayn Rand, doodles, the snooze button, attention to detail, Polaroids, Marc and Sara of Wooster Collective, The Daily Show, and the always surprising street artist Dr. D **NOTS** Television, censorship, big business, lousy customer service, sound bites, committees, insomnia and taking your BlackBerry on vacation