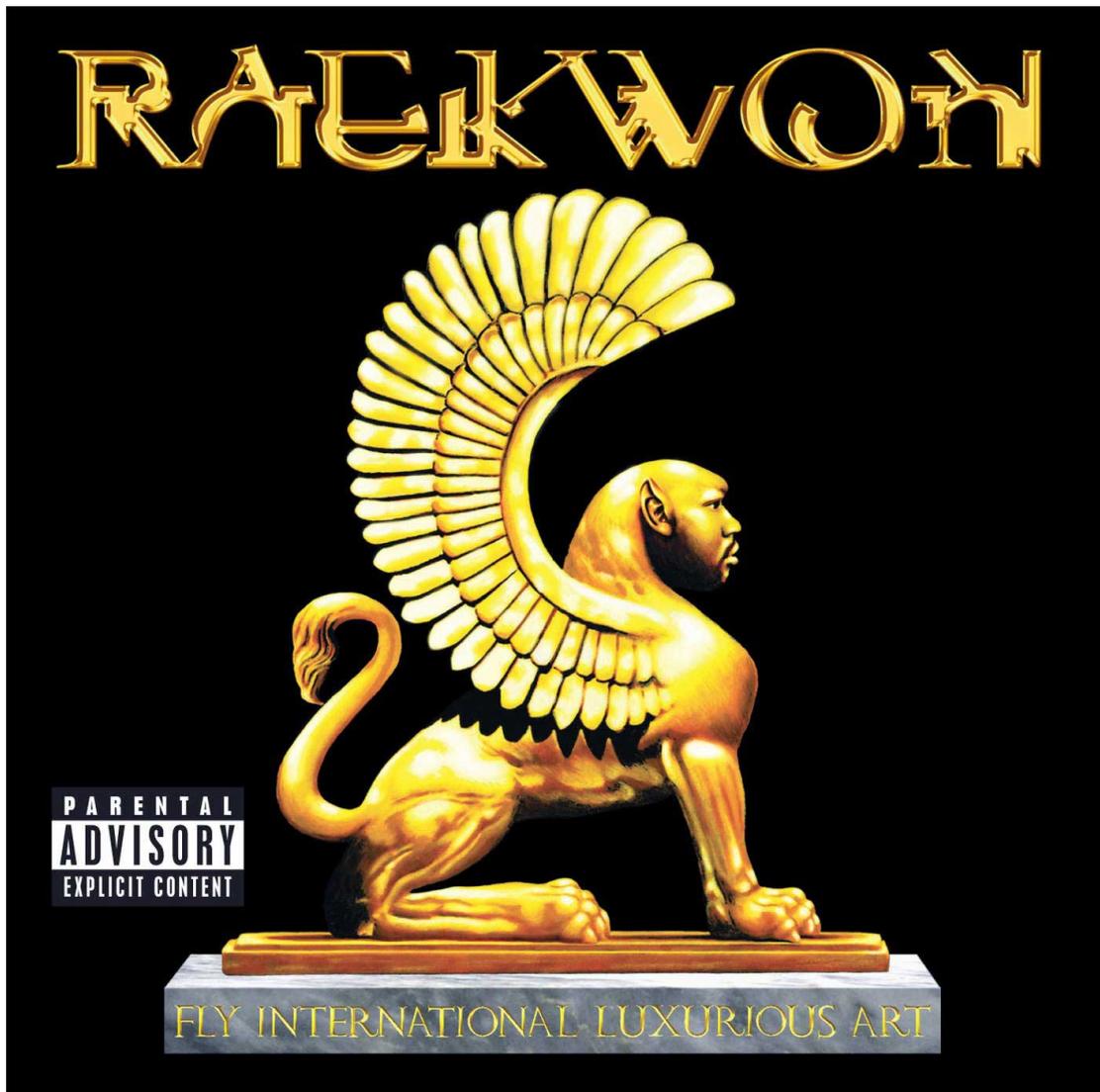


MARC STRAUS



RAEKWON – FLY INTERNATIONAL LUXURIOUS ART

JOHN NEWSOM has recently completed a two year long project with American rapper RAEKWON of The Wu-Tang Clan. Newsom collaborated with Raekwon in creating the original artwork for Raekwon's new solo album titled, 'FLY INTERNATIONAL LUXURIOUS ART.' The album was released worldwide by ICEH20 Records on April 28th, 2015.

In the longstanding tradition of contemporary music and art collaborations, beginning with the likes of Andy Warhol and The Velvet Underground, to more recent collaborations such as Mike Kelley and Sonic Youth, George Condo and

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Kanye West, Jeff Koons and Lady Gaga – John Newsom and Raekwon have created an in-depth and total encompassing work of art defining the essence of 'FLY INTERNATIONAL LUXURIOUS ART.' Newsom's artwork was brought to the attention of Raekwon through its use of bold and descriptive global wildlife and nature themes. In an era where veteran MC's are regarded as the rarest of breeds, the artwork spoke to this process of natural selection and survival of the fittest. Expanding on this original theme, the artistic process developed over numerous cover variations and motifs incorporating classical art, mythology, old master drawing techniques, and portraiture – with a high degree of detail and realism. While touring Europe in the autumn of 2013 in support of The Wu-Tang Clan's twentieth anniversary release of their debut album 'Enter the 36 Chambers', Raekwon was inspired by a small figurine statue he saw of a jeweled sphinx with the head of a man and the body of a griffin. The incorporation of the various animal motifs with the human face was something of a revelation, and gave iconic weight to the vision of the entire project. The original drawing was then created by Newsom back in New York over the span of the next ten months, with in-depth research and field studies at The Metropolitan Museum of Art of griffins and sphinxes found in various regions throughout the world, including Northern Europe, France, Italy, Germany, Egypt, Persia, and the Far East. The research and artistic process evolved to create a truly unique and individual design embodying Raekwon's enduring global vision and timeless high-luxury representation of 'FLY INTERNATIONAL LUXURIOUS ART.' In addition to spending ten months hand drawing the album's cover-art with color pencil, Newsom took an additional twelve months to complete the hand-drawn back cover and interior CD pamphlet, along with the interior vinyl artwork, while the album track-list was being finalized.

"Raekwon saw my paintings and visited my studio. He invited me on the project. We then began this real collaborative journey as artist and musician with the development of the album. Raekwon is a great artist, a real artist."

- JOHN NEWSOM

Raekwon further illuminates the project in the following interview excerpt,

EXCLUSIVE, INTERVIEW

'Raekwon Explains Getting Physical, Mystical & Artistical On FILA'

by Jerry Barrow

MARC STRAUS

On April 29th, 2015

www.watchcloud.com

(excerpt)

Q: This album cover is like something out of a Kemetic syllabus. What inspired it?

“It’s just looking at your brother as a monumental piece in the game. I couldn’t be nothing else at this point but a Griffin due to the fact of my experiences in the business and just surviving. You don’t get a lot of artists that can stand the test of time after 20 years. Everybody knows a griffin is a good luck piece, it represents overseeing what’s going on. The lion side is always there because I’m in the jungle. The industry is a jungle. But you got to be able to walk through there and have that respect that’s required of you. And the wings are the wings of life, like we always told you with Wu-Tang. So if I’m putting up the eagle, the W, you know my wings have sprouted so much that that’s how they look now. I’ve flown over many, many different places and left my mark. That’s where the wings come in and that’s me. I’m a figurine in the game. I just wanted to come with something different and I got a powerful artist named John Newsom, a very good friend of mine and he’s so full of great energy that it went perfectly. When I first put it out people were in awe because they didn’t understand but now they get it. They love it.”

- RAEKWON

Raekwon’s sixth studio album, ‘FLY INTERNATIONAL LUXURIOUS ART’ is available everywhere. [Visit iTunes](#)