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## No mere plaything

■ Anne-Rose Schlutbohm, Elsa and Dominique Le Fur on a successful commercial for the Peugeot 407 Toy.

A kaleidoscopic, surreal toy universe: wooden, tin and cardboard cars, complete with enormous wind-up keys, people slaving away to enjoy the luxuries of driving, albeit in a toy car. A young guy jumping out of a cab window as there's no exit door in this world. A Rastafarian speeding down the road in a many-coloured tin box closely pursued by a police car containing two painted police officers. A slightly anxious-looking man behind the wheel of a wooden limousine pathetically lacking a windscreen. And another man at a corner slogging away to reassemble his yellow Lego vehicle and thereby delaying the diabolical toy traffic. A gorgeous pin-up blonde having her acid-violet cardboard car recharged with enormous pasteboard batteries at a toy workshop. Some passers-by standing around, viewing the spectacle as if it was the most natural thing in the world, while a real policeman is quite desperately trying to regulate the traffic

chaos. And then, all of a sudden, a real car appears, looking completely out of place in this "Truman Show" world: the Peugeot 407 Toy. It glides through this unreal universe as if there was nothing amiss, crosses a bridge along with its toy counterparts, instantly reminding us of Luc Besson's "Fifth Element," and ends up really annoying the nice neighbour who's just parked his toy car in an impressive cardboard garage.

Who or what is this stranger – this car? The solution is very simple: it is a "real" toy, i.e. the new Peugeot 407 Toy. We are observing the jumbled toy universe from this car's perspective, are driving through the streets as if it carried a hidden camera, and once in a while parts of its bodywork obscure our view. We are experiencing the "Rebirth of the Car" live, to quote Eric Holden, Art Director for Parisian agency BETC Euro RSCG, which managed to walk away with a Cannes 2004 Gold Lion for the spot advertising the lion-logo car model.

Life isn't exactly easy for French car producers Peugeot and Renault, and the same could probably be said of their chosen agencies. That's because German car brands such as VW, BMW or Mercedes loom large as almost overpowering competitors. The VW spots by DDB Paris hit the perfect note: plenty of humour, sparkling and witty. Something of a challenge, then, for Remi Babinet, chairman and Creative Director of BETC Euro RSCG, who says that "arrogance might be called for if the competition takes first place." It's therefore no mere accident that he should have chosen Eric Holden and Remi Noël as his Art Director and Copywriter, respectively, as both of them had done work for VW, Mercedes and BMW before joining BETC. Their motto for the new Peugeot 407 Toy, a car renowned amongst car enthusiasts for featuring many components not yet found in competing makes, and therefore something of a technical forerunner, is "The car is back." Competing brands also triggered the toy car idea in the first place, as most modern vehicles feature rounded

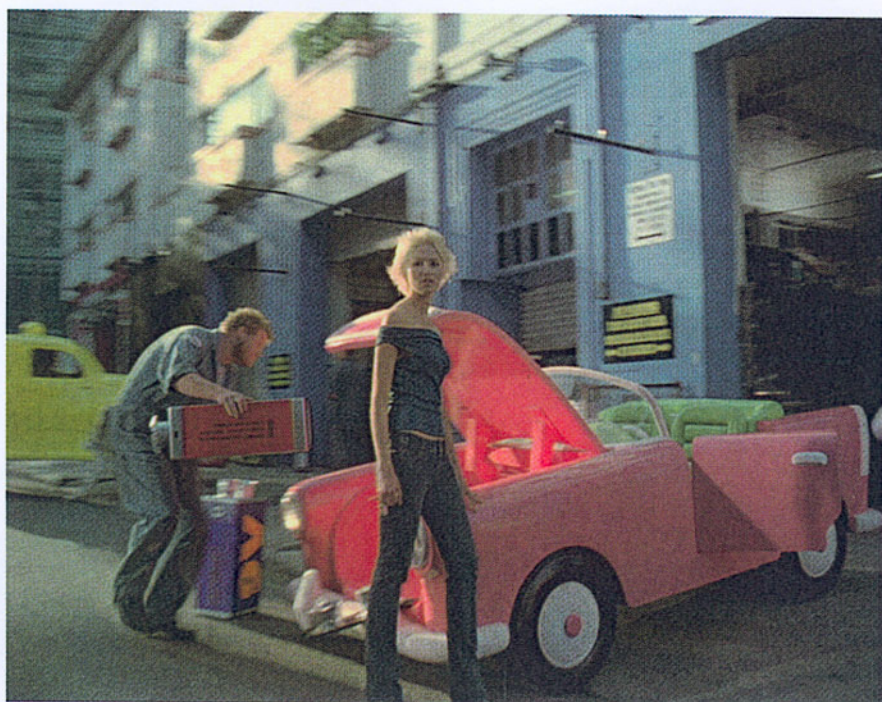




shapes or resemble veteran cars. This inspired the spot's makers to visit toy shops and study the cars on offer there. "We saw all these different models of 'toy car' and started off by buying a few of them. At first, we stuck to brands that used to be part of Peugeot, like Simca and Talbot, for purely legal reasons. Under no circumstances could they resemble any other make of car."

Then the Franco-Norwegian stage designer Jan Houllévigie used the car-toys as a starting point for his reconstruction of the spot's "real" cars. "We shot the commercial in Sydney, Australia. We decided on this location for sev-

eral reasons: there's a fair-weather guarantee, the sky is blue, there are very professional teams that regularly work on large movie productions, and then there's the city itself, Sydney! They supplied us with some of their policemen to control the 'real' and the 'make-believe' traffic. We were shooting for three months, few other cities would let us get away with that," Eric Holden explains. "And we intended to get a very colourful look for the end result, too. Sydney is a multicoloured city that served as a perfect backdrop for our remodelled cars. Although the finished spot comes across all light and joy, the shoot was certainly anything but easy.



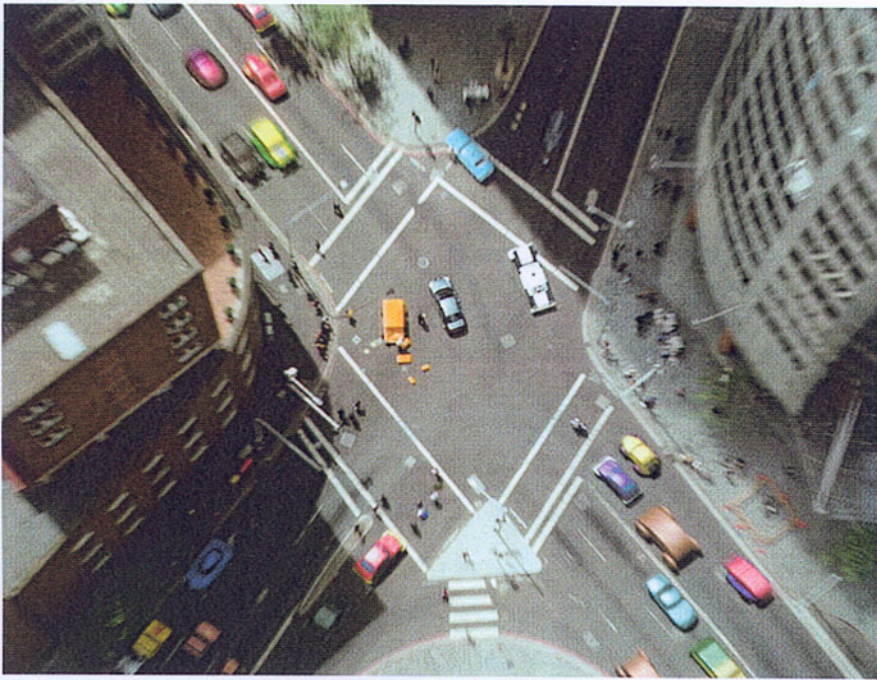
We had 20 different vehicles built, all following the same basic principle: a shell construction mounted on a cart that was controlled by a specialist driver. All of them were driving for real, even the police car. That car's driver was actually seated behind a painted windscreen, but he could observe the traffic perfectly via a roof-mounted camera."

No expense was spared in the mega-production to be shown in 80 countries. The technical team alone consisted of 100 highly qualified individuals, there were 1500 extras, and the scene on the bridge could only be achieved with the help of expensive virtual FX. While they were at it, BETC Euro RSCG shot two different movies for Peugeot back-to-back: the 407 as a saloon and as an estate car. The final budget for the commercials is put at around €1,700,000. The light-hearted end product is the result of an unusually long preproduction phase, too. According to Remi Noël, the Copywriter, "about a year passed between the first briefing and the first broadcast. As it was an international commercial, we remained in close competition with countries from our group – England, Italy and Uruguay – for about five months. Then came tests with several different consumer groups, followed by another series of tests, before our concept was finally accepted by the client. We tried to stick to a distinct Peugeot tradition with our toy spot: 'entertainment.'"

Which is a concept BETC Euro RSCG had previously started with the Peugeot 206 spot "Métamorphose," and subsequently also followed with the Peugeot 607 "Féline." The latter, in particular, required jazzing up, as the sales figures did not meet the French car producer's expectations. The saloon car had a hard time competing with German brands, so BETC Euro RSCG came up with a commercial showing it as a fearsome predator that made all other cars quickly scramble for their hidey-holes like vermin. Will this French lion now teach the Germans a similar lesson? Gérard Welter, Peugeot's Chief Designer, would probably not go that far, but he does mention the Peugeot 407's "voracious front."

He doesn't say for what (sales, awards?), but one can hardly blame a manufacturer or an agency for having a bit of ambition. There are two further





Teile seiner Karosserie die Sicht auf das Geschehen. Wir erleben live die „Wiedergeburt des Autos“, so Eric Holden, Art Director der Pariser Werbeagentur BETC Euro RSCG, die mit diesem Commercial in Cannes 2004 einen Goldenen Löwen für das mit einem Löwen-Emblem ausgestatteten Auto ergattern konnte.

Die französischen Autohersteller Peugeot und Renault haben es nicht leicht – und ihre ausgewählten Werbeagenturen auch nicht. Ihnen allen stehen die deutschen Wagen wie VW, Mercedes oder BMW als übermächtige Konkurrenz vor Augen. Die VW-Commercials von DDB Paris trafen den richtigen Stil: viel Humor, spritzig und witzig. Dies gilt als Herausforderung für Remi Babinet, Präsident und Creative Director von BETC Euro RSCG, der meint, dass „Arroganz notwendig sein kann, wenn die Konkurrenz die ersten Plätze einnimmt“. Nicht von ungefähr trifft seine Wahl auf Eric Holden, Art Director, und Remi Noël, Copywriter. Beide arbeiteten schon für VW, Mercedes und BMW, bevor sie zu BETC kamen. Ihre Devise für den neuen Peugeot 407 Toy, der für Autokenner schon viele Details besitzt, die bei der Konkurrenz noch nicht zu finden sind, und somit als technischer Vorreiter gilt: „The car is back“. Die Idee für die Spielzeugautos bekamen die beiden Kreativen durch die Konkurrenz. Die heutigen Autos besitzen runde Formen oder ähneln Oldtimern. Das wiederum brachte sie auf die Idee,

mal in Spielzeuggeschäften nach Autos Ausschau zu halten. „Wir sahen diese vielen unterschiedlichen ‚Spielzeugautos‘ und kauften erst einmal einige Modelle, wobei wir aus rein juristischen Gründen nur Marken nahmen, die mal zu Peugeot gehörten, wie z. B. Simca oder Talbot. Sie durften auf keinen Fall irgendeiner anderen Automarke ähnlich sein.“ Ausgehend von diesen Auto-Toys rekonstruierte der französisch-norwegische Bühnenbildner Jan Houlevigie die „echten“ Wagen für den Commercial. „Gedreht wurde in Sydney, Australien. Dafür gab es genug Gründe: garantiert

schönes Wetter, blauer Himmel, sehr professionelle Teams, die regelmäßig für große Filmproduktionen arbeiten, und natürlich die Stadt Sydney selbst! Sie stellte uns ihre Polizisten zur Verfügung, um den ‚richtigen‘ und den ‚gespielten‘ Verkehr zu regeln. Immerhin waren wir dort drei Monate lang zum Drehen, keine andere Stadt hätte so etwas mitgemacht“, erklärt uns Eric Holden. „Und bunt sollte es sein. Sydney ist eine farbenfrohe Stadt, unsere nachgebauten Autos passten also perfekt in dieses natürliche Umfeld. So leicht und locker alles am Schluss wirkt, einfach waren die Dreharbeiten ganz sicher nicht. Wir hatten 20 verschiedene Karosserien gebaut, alle nach dem gleichen Prinzip: ein schalenförmiger Aufbau, montiert auf einem Karting und von Spezialfahrern gesteuert. Sie fuhren wirklich alle, auch der Polizeiwagen. Da saß der Fahrer zwar hinter zugemalten Fensterscheiben, konnte den Verkehr aber über eine auf dem Dach des Wagens montierte Kamera genau verfolgen.“

Für diese Superproduktion, die in 80 Ländern laufen wird, sparte man an nichts. Allein das technische Team bestand aus 100 qualifizierten Personen, über 1.500 Statisten spielten mit, und für die Szene auf der Brücke mussten Spezialeffekte am Computer eingesetzt werden. BETC Euro RSCG drehte dort gleich zwei Filme für Peugeot: der 407 Toy als Limousine und als Kombi. Die Kosten für diese Commercials werden auf € 1.700.000 geschätzt. Hinter die-





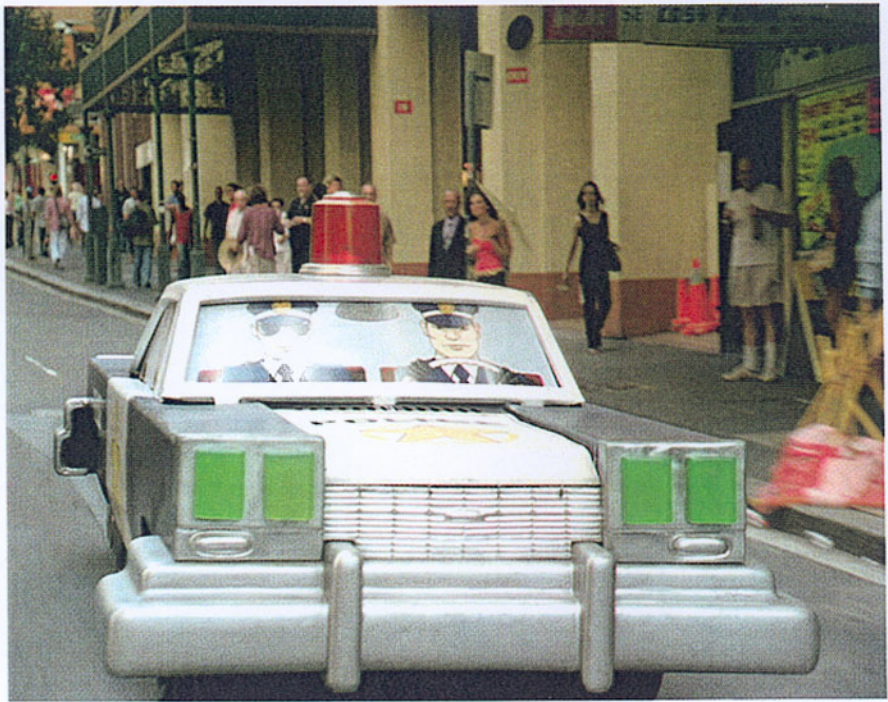
aspects providing the icing on this particular cake: the director and the music. Philip André had not only previously directed the "Métamorphose" spot for the Peugeot 206 but was also known to Eric Holden and Remi Noël through his clip for the band "Morcheeba," still a hotly-touted insider tip a few years ago. "We regularly see showreels that are really fantastic, but when we're dealing with a concrete project it's very often the discussion with the filmmaker that give rise to novel ideas. With Philip André, we could be sure that he wasn't going to come up with some kind of Walt Disney version but would turn our idea into something 'real in a real city' instead, which is what we wanted. It was also his idea to shoot the whole thing from the Peugeot's perspective," the two BETC Euro RSCG creatives explain.

After the director had been decided upon, a suitable soundtrack had to be found. This presented an additional challenge for Peugeot, as Christina Aguilera had just written the song "Hello" for the Mercedes A-Class. "We listened to 100, 200, 300 songs, ranging from the completely unknown to the very famous. We'd almost decided on a song by 'The Who' when Fabrice Broveli, our music-mad TV producer, drew our attention to a young French band from Bordeaux called 'The Film.' Their song, 'Can you trust me?' – sung in English – suited our film and the spot's international distribution perfectly." It was apparently also perfect for Peugeot: a Gold Lion in Cannes and quite sensational bids for the spot's toy cars at online auction house eBay. Who could wish for a less ambiguous answer to the song's question "Can you trust me?"

### Spielende

■ Anne-Rose Schlutbohm, Elsa und Dominique Le Fur über den erfolgreichen Commercial für den Peugeot 407 Toy.

Eine bunte, irrealer Spielzeugwelt: Autos aus Pappe, aus Blech, aus Holz, riesige Drehschlüssel, um die Wagen aufzuziehen – Menschen quälen sich ab, um den Luxus eines Autos zu genießen, ein Spielzeugauto. Ein junger Mann springt aus dem Fenster eines Taxis, denn in dieser Welt gibt es keine Tür zum Aussteigen. Ein Rasta rast mit seiner kunterbunten Blechkiste durch die Straßen,



verfolgt von einem Polizeiwagen, in dem zwei gemalte Polizisten sitzen. Ein etwas ängstlich dreinschauender Mann sitzt hinterm Steuer seiner Holzlimousine, die leider keine Windschutzscheibe besitzt. An einer Straßenecke plagt sich ein anderer damit ab, sein gelbes Legoauto wieder zusammenzubauen und hält den teuflischen Toys-Verkehr auf. Eine tolle Superblondine lässt ihren grelllila Pappwagen in einer Toys-Werkstatt mit riesigen Kartonbatterien aufladen. Passanten bleiben stehen, beobachten den Trubel als gewöhnliche Alltagswelt, ein echter Polizist versucht dem Verkehrschaos ein Ende zu setzen und plötzlich taucht da ein Wagen auf,

den es in dieser der „Truman-Show“ ähnlichen Welt nicht gibt: der Peugeot 407 Toy. Er gleitet wie selbstverständlich in diese unwirkliche Welt, fährt mit seinen Toys-Kollegen über eine Brücke, ein wenig wie im Film „Das fünfte Element“ von Luc Besson, um am Schluss den lieben Nachbarn, der gerade sein Spielzeugauto in seine tolle Pappgarage eingeparkt hat, so richtig zu ärgern. Wer oder was ist dieser Fremdling, dieses Auto? Ganz einfach: ein „richtiges“ Spielzeug, der neue Peugeot 407 Toy. Aus seiner Sicht erleben wir die kunterbunte Autospielzeugwelt, er fährt wie mit einer versteckten Kamera durch die Straßen, ab und zu verdecken

