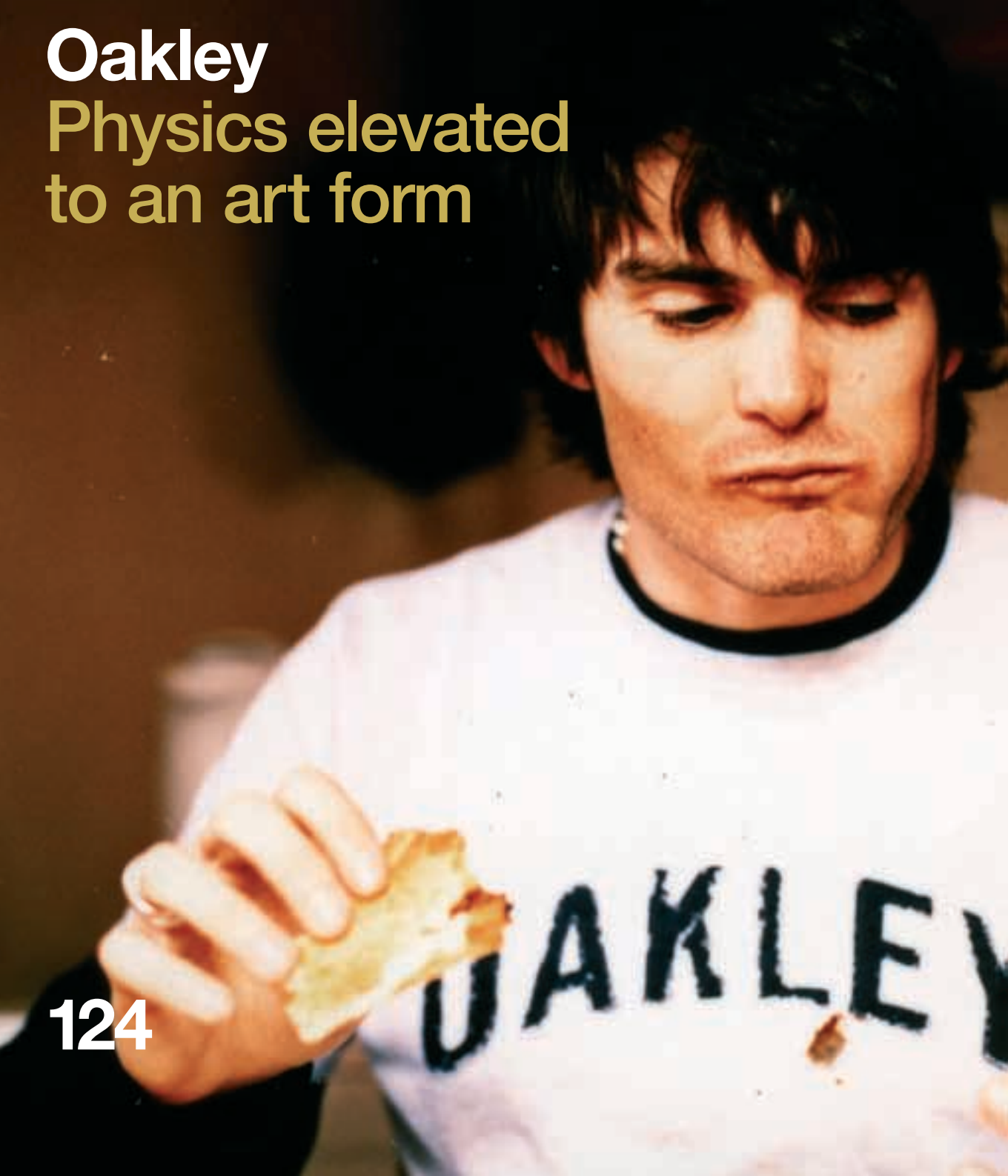


# Oakley

## Physics elevated to an art form



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**Take a single idea, a product and an opportunity. Jim Jannard, a self-confessed mad scientist, did just that when he developed a motocross handgrip like no other, using his first invention Unobtainium – a synthetic, sticky-feeling plastic, that improved performance when wet.**

The year was 1975 and the beginnings for Oakley Inc, a technology company soon to be fuelled by its distaste for mediocrity and devotion to innovation. Jannard set up the company with an initial investment of just US\$300, naming it after his dog. Thanks to the breakthrough Oakley O-Frame goggles, and by using the patented Unobtainium throughout a performance eyewear range, Jannard went on to establish the brand in motocross, BMX and snowboarding.

Oakley is currently the undisputed leader in performance eyewear. The brand has pioneered new sports technology and redefined the lifestyle market with patented optical innovations. One such innovation, defined as Oakley High Definition Optics (HDO<sup>®</sup>), represents the brand's superior lens offer. HDO maintain razor sharp clarity at greater viewing distances, eliminate distortion and light bending and provide unrivaled impact protection and UV filtering.

In 2003, the respected US aviation magazine 'Private Pilot' highlighted Oakley's technical achievements when it placed the brand's eyewear top in all three independent optical tests (involving

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65 other brands). For Oakley though, there can be no greater accolade than the success of its athletes.

At the 2006 Winter Olympics, Oakley-wearing competitors won 52 medals, 17 of which were Gold. In the UK, the brand backs a diverse portfolio of athletes; snowboarders Scott McMorris and Tyler Chorlton, surfer Ollie Adams, motocross champion Stephen Sword, mountain biker Gee Atherton, and cyclist Vicky Pendleton – a recent Gold medalist at the Commonwealth Games. Lance Armstrong and Annika Sorenstam are also long-term members of the Oakley 'family'. Establishing strong relationships with athletes endorses and legitimises the brand.

The world's first digital audio eyewear arrived in 2004. By storing up to 120 songs, Oakley Thump gave consumers cordless freedom to enjoy music on the move. The more fashion-orientated, 1 gigabyte Thump 2, followed a year later. In between these industry milestones came the Razrwire. Turning mobility into fashion, the Razrwire combined Oakley optics with Motorola wireless Bluetooth technology, allowing users to answer and place calls at the touch of a button.

Reinventing the concept of eyewear was only the first step. Housed in Oakley's headquarters in Orange County, California, were a group of engineers and designers – as well as a full sized basketball court. Their desire to invent and evolve products for the core sports they loved, led them to create high-performance watches, apparel, footwear and accessories. This passion meant that during the 1980s, when the worlds of snowboarding and BMX filtered into street fashion, Oakley could evolve organically into a global lifestyle brand.

Oakley continues to differentiate itself from traditional action sports brands by challenging consumer perceptions. For instance, the continued expansion and promotion of its lifestyle clothing lines for men and women. Incorporating slim-fit shirts, retro blazers, military style jackets and capri pants, Oakley's casual collection appeals to a wider market whilst retaining the original brand spirit and sports heritage.

2006 will see Oakley build the profile of its first ever women's eyewear collection, launch the revolutionary O ROKR – its third generation of digital audio eyewear – develop the concept of customised eyewear for the UK market and continue to use the flagship 'O-Store', in Covent Garden, as a showcase. With more than 600 patents worldwide, Oakley is today acknowledged to be one of the most coveted brands in performance technology and fashion.

