

Through the decades Hipnosis has become synonymous with the mysterious image of Pink Floyd, ubiquitously associated with creating images and graphics for album covers beginning with *A Saucerful Of Secrets*. The band was so pleased with the multi-layered photo montage, they commissioned Hipnosis to design *Ummagumma*, *Atom Heart Mother*, *Meddle*, and *Dark Side Of The Moon*.

The core team making up Hypnosis is head concept guru Storm Thorgerson, photographers Aubrey "Po" Powell and Peter Christopherson, along with graphic designer George Hardie. Again for *Wish You Were Here*, the Floyd enlisted their services - the only unresolved problem was agreeing on a single theme unifying the team's talents. Never at a loss for words, Storm elaborates: "The songs seem to be about unfulfilled presence in general," he recalled, "rather than Syd's particular version of it. The idea of 'presence withheld', of the way people pretend to be present while their minds are really elsewhere, and the devices and motivations employed psychologically by people to suppress the full force of their presence, eventually boiled down to a single theme - absence - the absence of a person or the absence of a feeling" (a theme later employed in the artwork for *The Division Bell*, also conceived by Thorgerson).



While in America, Storm had noticed the album cover for Roxy Music's latest LP, *Country Life*, was packaged in opaque green cellophane to hide the two topless women on the cover. This inspired the concept of concealing the *Wish You Were Here* artwork inside a similar black (or dark blue) shrink wrap so that the actual cover art would be 'absent'. Ideally one cover (ie. obscured by the opaque shrink wrap) for the marketplace and one for the consumer when he returned home. Ironically, and later understood by collectors, record covers with the shrink wrap intact would be highly sought after.

The title and artist would only be identified by a round sticker created by George Hardie, which would feature the album's ominous logo – two mechanical hands shaking before a backdrop quartered into the elements of water, fire, air and earth. The handshake ordinarily can be a physical, touching presence, warm and definite. However, it can also be a meaningless ritual - an empty gesture, present but absent. These also represented the sun signs of the four astrologically well-balanced band members: fire for Wright's Leo; air for Mason's Aquarius, water for Gilmour's Pisces; and earth for Waters' Virgo.