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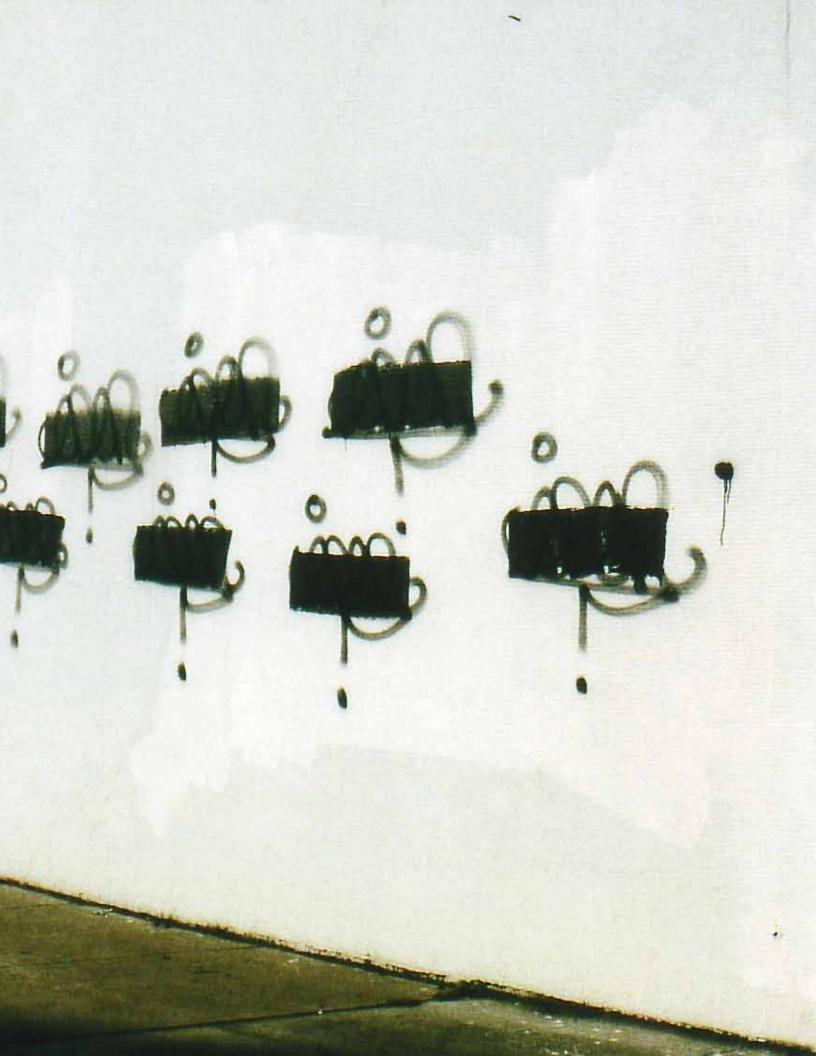
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The Magazine for Graffiti Writers, Street Lovers & Other things
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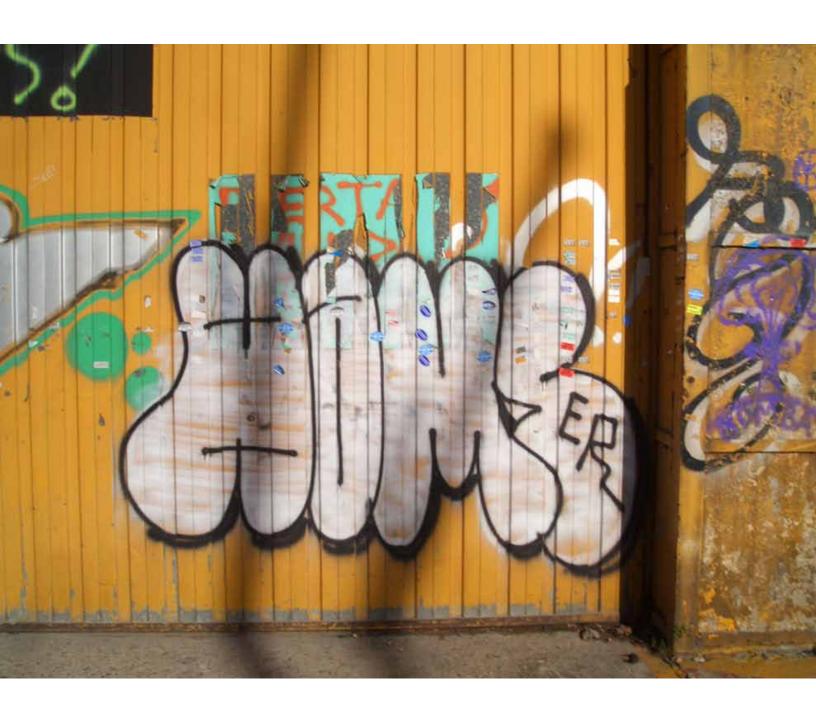






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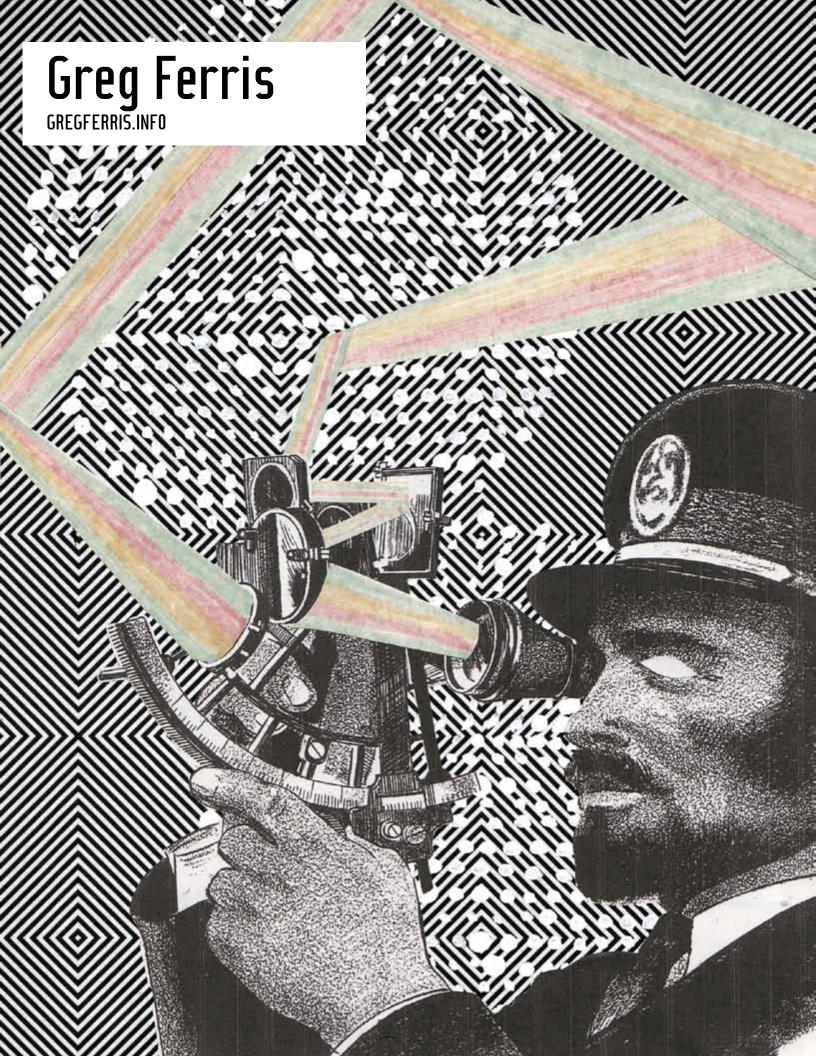
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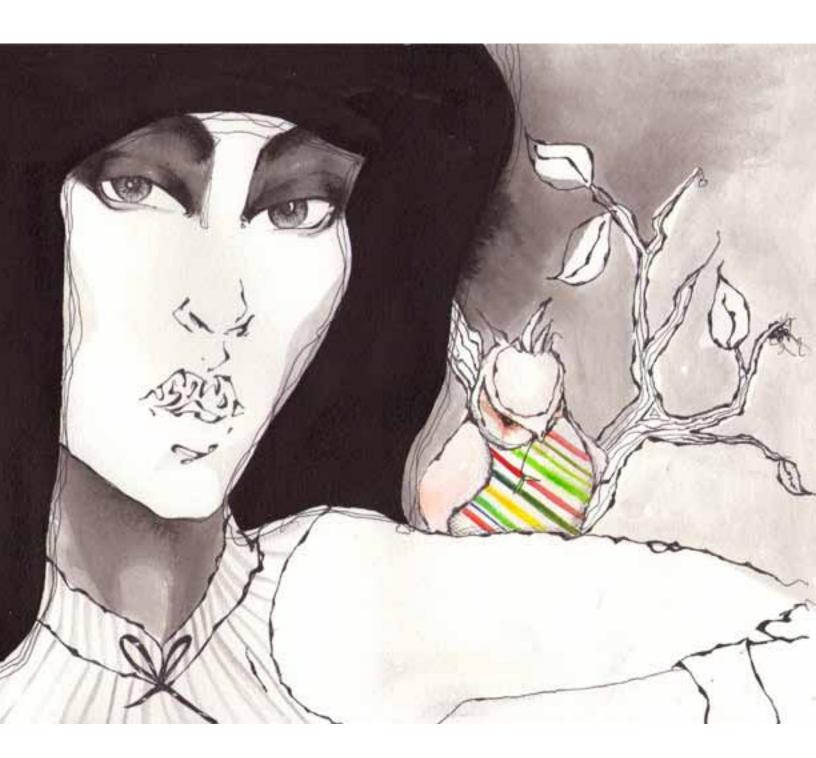












#### Answers From a Graffiti Artist, Part 2 By THE NEW YORK TIMES

### TAKING QUESTIONS Ask a Graffiti Artist

Lee Quiñones, an artist who emerged from the subway art movement of the 1970s, responded to readers' questions. Following is the second set of answers from Lee Quiñones, an artist who emerged from the subway art movement of the 1970s.

My boyfriend was a graff artist who recently passed away. It was an obsession which led to many arrests and fines and many fights between us, but I could not help but appreciate his work and come to love it. So I just wanted to ask how can this obsession/love be described? Does it ever simmer down or does it just continue to grow?

- Posted by Shelby

Sorry for your loss. Some creative minds harness an immense amount of artistic stress or urgency more than others and this is something that needs to purge itself from within or receive rescue through appreciation. In either case, the mind always plays the tune that one testament, whether it is creative, angry or both, is not enough in a lifetime. R.I.P.

With the growing popularity of street art — whether wheatpastes, figure-based painting or site-specific sculpture — do you think graffiti's time has passed?

- Posted by Katie

Under the circumstances of the time, I think that the earlier works staged a great show that would be a tough act to follow (literally). Trains were always moving away and keeping the viewer perplexed, making for great, romantic mystery.

Now artists have to focus on the fact that their work will be subjected to scrutiny by a broader and critical circle of observers. Some artist may be developing their persona as they go, and that may pave the way for some rather interesting work. I would think that the painter Jackson Pollack experienced this very same black hole, when he executed his groundbreaking technique. As it's been suggested to me: Learn how to suffer with your own identity.

How do you respond to the miserable haters who have no appreciation for beautiful pieces of art you created and enjoy the bland, boring view that is now the NYC transit system? Do you miss the '70s and '80s heyday that was the graffiti scene in NY?

- Posted by LBZ

Apparently, they have not looked at any of my work on my Web site, documenting the past four decades. I agree with the sentiment that the 1970s and 1980s were crazy, and things were great. Now I may rejoice about that time with my peers over a drink just to toot the nostalgic horns, but it was a catalyst for where I'm at today, and I wouldn't trade one step of the journey or turn back the clock. With due respect, some

may miss the pivotal moments of their youth, but the past should not create a naval blockade that undermines the possibilities of the future.

So everyone starts to ask the "vandal" questions, the "public property" questions, typical. My question for you is, in a culture like graffiti with firsthand experience, have you thought about writing an autobiography? What is your view on graffiti as a component of expression vs. outlaw art? (I don't think Lee should have to answer personal vendettas against people who view him as a figurehead for graffiti to every kid who ever scratched on a train or put a tag up). Thank you, Lee, for your contributions.

Posted by Bonafide Rojas

I have been writing my memoirs and collecting photos for a bio book since 1979. It is a large feat to cover that I did not realize back then, but it is coming together. My book, yet to be titled, will be a tell-all on my methodology before, during and after the subway era. Keep an eye or an ear out for it in the next year or so.

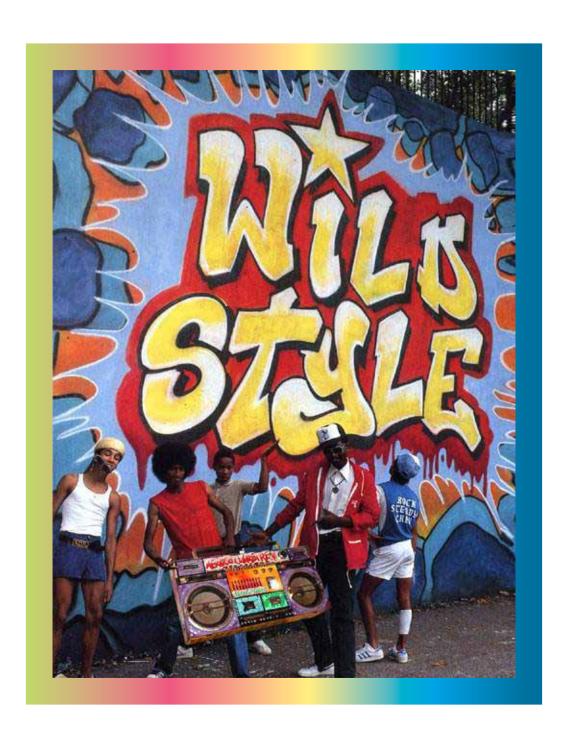
I don't see graffiti as outlaw art, but I do see it as a form of self-expression. Just go back to 79 A.D. Pompei and see the love and political triangles that were scratched onto the mud-walled alleys throughout the whole city. Graffiti artists practice their work with due diligence focusing on such elements as letter construction, deconstruction and visual commentary. As they perform their tasks repeatedly, they refine their skills and new discoveries and exchanges in art become feasible.

I had a conversation recently about the historic value of your 1982 Allen Boys piece and if it merited preservation as an iconic piece of NYC art. We talked about the logistics of municipal involvement in the preservation of an illegal piece, which opens up a serious can of worms. Do you think Allen Boys should have been preserved? If so, how does government involvement in preservation change the game? If not, what does it mean for the "legitimization" of the form, that some pieces are sold to and hung in museums, and some are rebuffed, to live on only in 35-mm and memory? Which type of piece represents the highest artistic "value"?

— Posted by Anna

I understand your concern over the destruction of the "Allen Boys" mural, since it was the last standing mural in Manhattan from the early '80s, but I think that the handball wall murals in the schoolyard of Corlears Junior High School 56 on Madison Street should have also been preserved. "Howard the Duck" (1978) and the "Lion's Den" (1980) were entirely spray painted murals – essentially the first large standing pieces of street art, measuring 30 feet x 25 feet. "Howard the Duck" was illegal, the first of its kind, and it also spearheaded my fine arts career above ground. Due to the positive outpouring of kudos in the community, the school principal gave me a handwritten permission slip to complete the second side of the handball wall in 1980 with the "Lion's Den."

In 1981, Keith Haring told me he was inspired by my handball walls, and asked me how I was able to complete the murals. I had painted several walls at this point and gave him pointers on how to go about it. He knew I was considering painting a mural on Houston Street. When I decided not to paint it because of a broken section of the



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wall, he asked for my blessing to paint it in my place and produced his iconic neon mural. This led to his creation of the 1986 "Crack is Wack" handball wall on the Upper East Side off the F.D.R. drive. Check the mural section on my Web site, leequinones.com.

What is your view on Banksy?

— Posted by Miles Classics

I was impressed by his piece that appropriates Nick Ut's Pulitzer Prizewinning photo of young Kim Phuc running in terror in 1972 Vietnam. He took the image and added in depictions of symbolic American characters – Mickey Mouse and Ronald McDonald – as her escorts, holding her outstretched arms.

The creation of public murals raises a lot of issues. I'm not a fan of the term "permission walls." It's a question that requires more time, space and a deeper discussion about the scope of painting walls than space here allows. There are environmental concerns, costs and political issues raised that are unique to each project. I do believe community-based murals can have a positive impact.

I've been writing for over 19 years and have been fully legal for about 10... I miss the adrenaline but not the court fees. Growing older kind of soothed The Itch – and I enjoy legal painting, but it's definitely not quite the same. Nowadays it seems like we have a lot of legal walls, graff for pay, commissioned murals and other "legit" manifestations of this previously illicit art form. Is it still graff if you get paid for it? Or if you don't have to worry about running from the cops? I wonder how you're transitioned from night missions to gallery painter, and your thoughts on the illegal aspects of the graffiti experience.

#### - Posted by BETNYC

The transition was a long a difficult path for me. The romance I had with anonymous night painting was at odds with the critical aspects of formal studio painting – and both stared me in the face, after I had my first major exhibition in 1979 in Rome until 1984, when I finally cut my ties with the IRT #5. An emotional hard place and a rock for sure it was.

One comfort I have while painting in the studio is that the subject matter contains a dynamic rhythm or attitude that has bled over from the train works. It's always self-evident in the under painting, which has made the transition more forgiving.

I had the pleasure of meeting you a couple times in the past, always been a fan, and an ex-writer ('70s and '80s) turned fine artist myself. The way I see it, graffiti was invented by the urban youth, making various statements while lacking guidance, materials and any role models other than the ones they created, it was a self-made movement. Graffiti turned into a beautiful art form with more than one renaissance, and continues to live on and inspire despite the inevitable commercialization of it.

What are your opinions of adults with art degrees who only start writing after they leave college trying to emulate the scene you and others created as teenagers?

- Posted by Adam

Subway graffiti was a youth movement, which had many of the same elements that attracted young people to punk rock or other forms of teenage rebellion throughout history. We acted as if we had nothing to lose, with our daredevil moves, in search of our props. What unified the subway graffiti movement was the reward of the calculated, end results – painted, beautiful trains. The challenges of pulling off a completed masterpiece were considerable in the dark, dank yards and the conditions often life threatening. That is where the line is drawn between street artists and post-graffitist, which are two different entities that borrow from each other. As usual, I don't know where my allegiance lies.

Your whole cars are legendary. What was your most important (favorite) whole car, why, and how long did it run in service?

— Posted by Ket

Most important: Classified. Favorite: Skunk works. I will divulge that at the end of my subway tour I proposed a married coupled double whole car painting with Fab Five Freddy, utilizing the signature loaf of bread shape of the cars back then, but we never created it. Fred was to execute a "Wonder-Fred" loaf car and I was to execute the ever so locally loved "Taste-Lee" loaf whole car. It never stops running in my mind to this day — endless service that can never be buffed. A great idea never goes out of style.

When people talk to you about your work (in person, not on the Internet or other anonymous ways), what percentage is positive?

— Posted by Page One

They are very positive because we probably are sitting right in the studio where they can't fathom that such a phenomenon could ever be linked with vandalism.

Your work is amazing. I've seen your work from when you first started back in the days, and I have always admired your work. Kudos to you. As for those who consider your work vandalism, well it's apparent they have not seen your work.

Posted by Grace

Thank you much. And thanks to everyone expressing their viewpoints on this forum.

What was you relationship with Jean-Michel Basquiat? Was there any cross-pollination between your street art and his studio art?

- Posted by Lawrence D.

Way back in 1979, a painter from Britain by the name of Stan Peskett generously let us share his vast downtown studio along with Fab Five Freddy, where we were able to create some of our first studio paintings. There was a massive collaborative painting between Basquiat and I that we created for one of the parties thrown there. Basquiat's discussions with Fab and I were extensions of his writings on the streets, but I honestly always felt too detached to even connect the dots of his commentaries. Genius in the making in what is revered to be some kind of a radiant urgency.

# PHOTOS BY GORDON GERKANH













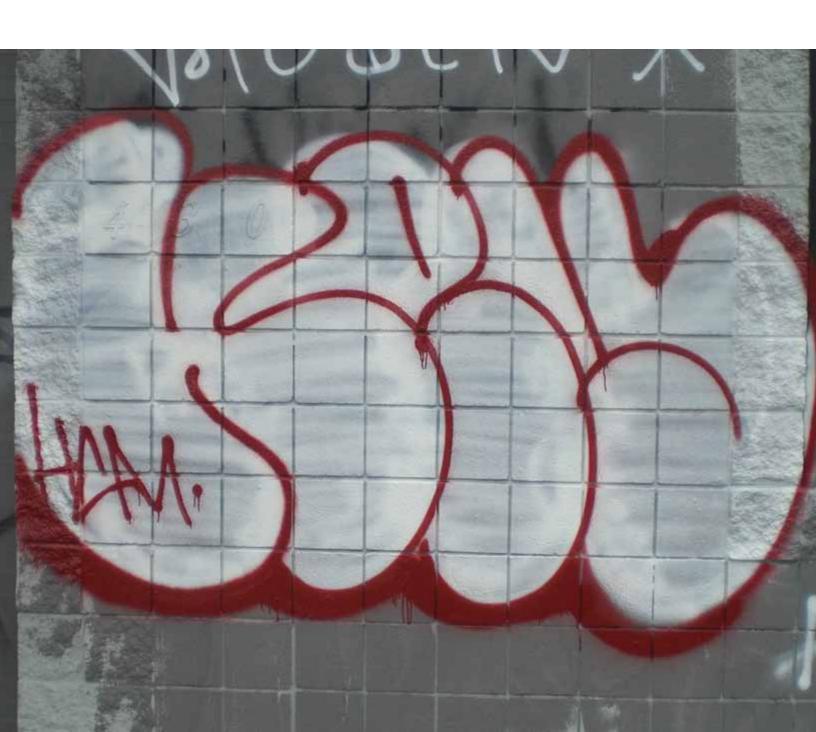










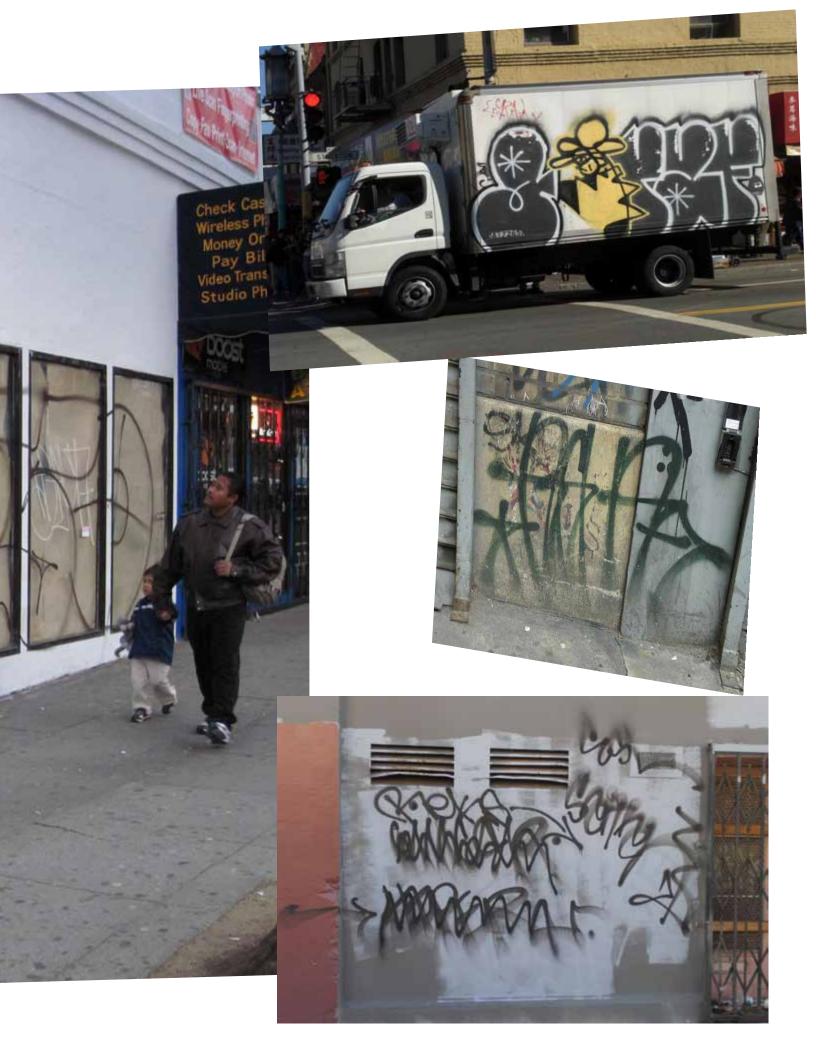












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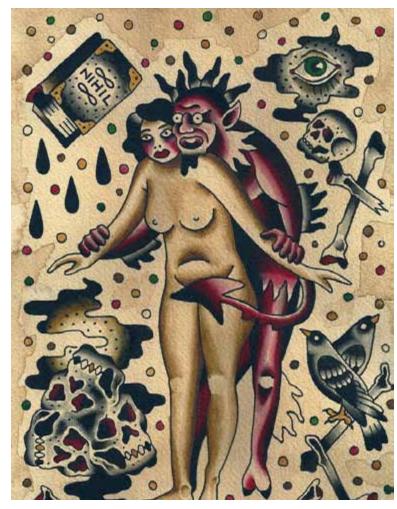
















Why do you stop writing on the street, and painting with big letters? Your canvas stuff is really boring and not interesting to me. Sorry for that.

- Posted by Winston

Apology accepted. Take a deeper look inside yourself and just maybe you might discover that life's ingredients, cycles and callings are not just made up of a can of Campbell's alphabet soup. It's a bit narcissistic after a while, I might imagine.

I'm seeing some religious graffiti on the E and B subway lines. Do you know anything that?

- Posted by Tom Delane

Pray is back! LOL.

I'm crackin' up at all these ridiculous questions, so much hate for something that I personally consider beautiful, right down to the smallest tags on bathroom walls! Ignore the nonsense! I have no clue what makes people think you can be held responsible for graffiti being done 20 or 30 years after you were a king in the game.

Do you feel perhaps graffiti can and does live on as a subconscious revolt against the sterility of city life? Against the autonomy of the blank walls on the streets and the ugly sound barriers along our highways? Can you appreciate the folks still painting freights, making the wait at a train crossing some what enjoyable for someone waiting the 20 minutes in their car to get across the tracks?

Related, would you agree that there's little to no difference between having fill-ins/tags/throw-ups/stickers/wheat-pasting smeared across a city or having a barrage of advertisements for, let's say, the latest "Twilight" movie (ugh!) all over the place? What difference does it make? Anyway, keep on keepin' on and doing whatever it is your heart desires. No restrictions on life!

— Posted by Verner

Yes, graffiti lives on because it's the accessible, alternative lifeline from an individual voice, or in the case of a crew like the Graffiti Research Lab, a collective. It's a voice that's always simmering on the side burner as conscious rebellion.

On freight trains – any graffiti artist worth his snuff knows the trick to creating an enduring freight train. I'm not at liberty to indulge that information here, but my book may.

When I rode my bike to Florida, I passed through the heart of the Bible Belt. I was struck by the church marquis, some of which had incredibly catchy, humorous phrases. My favorite was "Aspire to inspire before you expire." While I'm not a religious practitioner by any means, this sign gave me backwind. Later on the route I saw a yellowed, sour sign posted to a telephone poll that read, "We buy ugly homes." To me this was deflating — degrading insult to the shelter or nest. Painting the town with and words and imagery is all product placement, isn't it? The difference is that some messages are meant to suede, some are meant to soothe and some are meant to mislead.

I would like you to come to my neighborhood and see the horror that graffiti is: messages and branding for drug dealers, thugs & other

criminals. Young working-class and poor people are being mislead by individuals such as yourself. Would you please provide your home address so I can send a team of threatening young people to spray paint ugliness all over your house? Then let the tax payer foot the bill for the city to clean it up? Then have them put it on again and again?

— Posted by Sherpa Garang

I would like you to come to my neighborhood and see the horror that negative advertising is: messages pushing liters of beer that make you more of a man, liters of sugar that make you sweeter and lower if life is bland. Young out of working class and poor people are being misled by bigger individuals such as your local dark side of capitalism. Would you please provide your home address so I can send a team of lazy, obese young people over for a fast food dinner on your dime? Who is going to fit the bill for that societal cost? Then they'll put up on us again and again.

I wish we could get a link to a Web site that shows e.g.'s of your work. Also, I have to wonder if these haters would feel the same way if they felt they could relate more to the artists themselves, or the images they produce? Would they be as upset if someone like Picasso or Rembrandt arbitrarily began painting on public/private properties?

- Posted by akira

I have a range of work posted on my Web site, including whole cars, murals, studio work and commissions. Picasso eluded the Nazis, Rembrandt eluded the indoctrination of organized beliefs, the Masters of today will elude the ignorance of haters.

Mr. Quiñones in your mind, what constitutes art?

— Posted by Casey

Silent Thunder!

My girlfriend asked me to have a graffiti artist graffiti her name on regular piece paper (8×11). She would like the colors to be pink, black and purple. Would you happen to know a good artist who can assist me?

— Posted by Lakesh

Check out the artists on the Web site www.at149st.com.

I work in Kingsbridge and there is this amazingly old mural that reads "Wild Style" (Jerome and 196). I taught at the high school there (walton hs) for three years and no one has ever touched this mural, but the walls surrounding it are replete with tags, etc. Is there a special something that old graffiti murals have that alerts new graffiti writers that it is a sacred piece and should not be touched. in other words, how is the "sacred" in an art form that uses/manipulates public space and the ephemeral transmitted?

— Posted by Yago

Mutual respect for a voice. Paved roads over indigenous trails of some kind of mind. I am abstract this morning. LOL







Hi,

Please find attached five of my photos which I think may suit your magazine. In order to put the photos into context, I have written a little about each one:

Wangara, Australia: This photo was taken in an underpass whilst making the two-hour trek from Wangara market to the train station. Perth seems to be full of a lot of relatively non-artistic graffitti; yet I enjoy its simple and often nonsensical nature.

**Swansea, Wales:** This is one of a serious of photos which I took of my boyfriend whilst in Swansea city centre at night. I like how he is in the darkest part of the photo.

**Perth, Australia:** This photo is of a wall that has been graffittied in a very 'high-class' area of the city. Of course the only reason why it hasn't been scrubbed off is because the artists were given permission to create the art. I like how my boyfriend's hands are positioned perfectly so as to make it seem as though he is actually part of the art!

Guangzhou, China: I was travelling alone in China when I sat to rest outside one of the many tourist sites in Guangzhou. A local man who spoke no English sat next to me and somehow we managed to communicate through the use of my dictionary, hand-gestures, and drawings. Less successful, however, were the Chinese characters he wrote on his hand, which he insisted upon me understanding. Unfortunately though, despite all his insisting, I didn't understand what he wrote. I took this photo so that I could later find out what it meant (apparantly it means something about studying and China... so ironically there is every chance that he was telling me to learn Chinese.... IN CHINESE!).

So, a little about me... I'm currently in the worst job of my life: I'm working as a receptionist in a Uranium-mining company in Perth, Australia. I'm given very little actual work to do so I sit at the front desk each day dreaming of better things. At the moment my mind is set on teaching in Central America in April. I have taught before in Thailand and found the experience to be extremely fulfiling. I have been nurturing a passion for photography ever since I started travelling two years ago, the same time as when I bought my Cannon 400d slr. Travelling has meant culture-shock, new experiences (both good and bad), and discovering new ways of seeing the world: all of which have lead to being increasingly inspired by the world around me. As I mentioned before, I have not had any form of education or training in photography. It is simply something which brings peace to my life and which helps me to better enjoy my surroundings. Ever since I really started to get into photography I have seen the world differently and find beauty in things that before I would never have even noticed.

Anyway, enough of the sentimentality! I hope that you like the photos that I have sent to you. This is the first time that I have submitted my photos to any publication and so even if you don't publish them I would immenslely appreciate any feedback so that I know what I can do in order to improve my work.

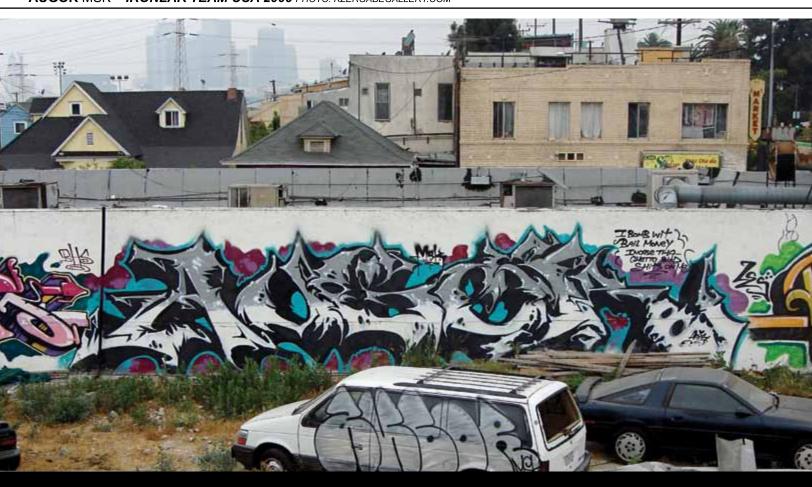
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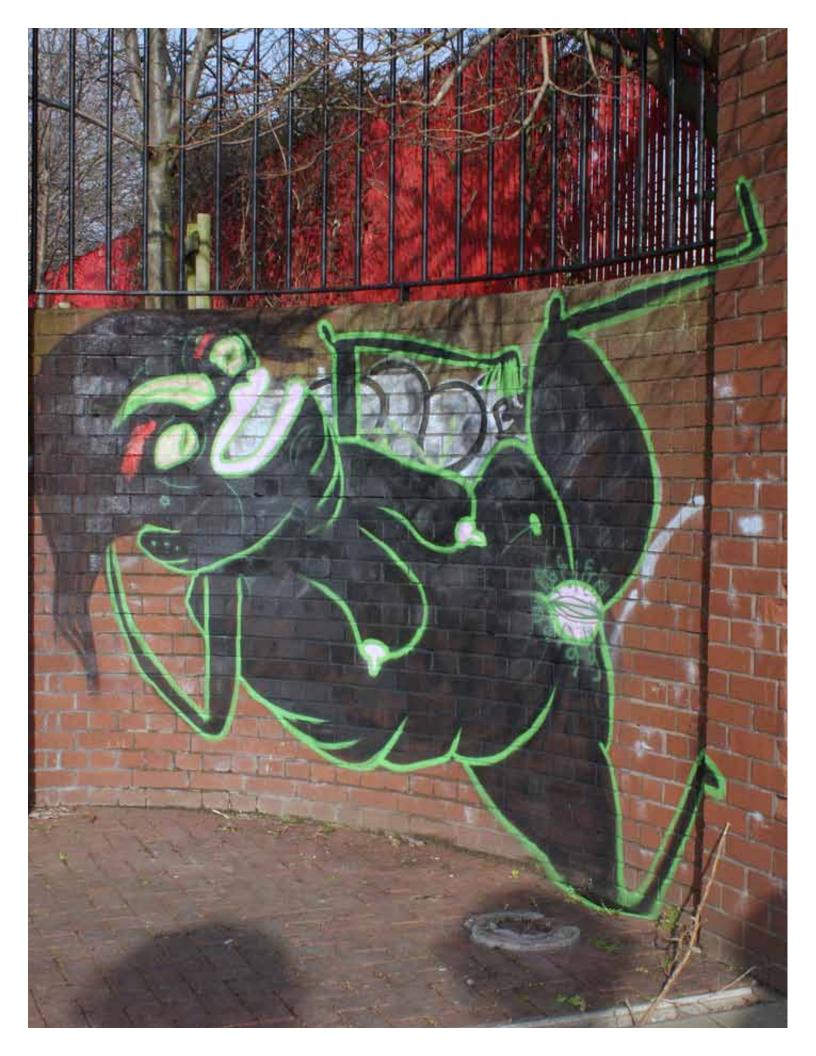
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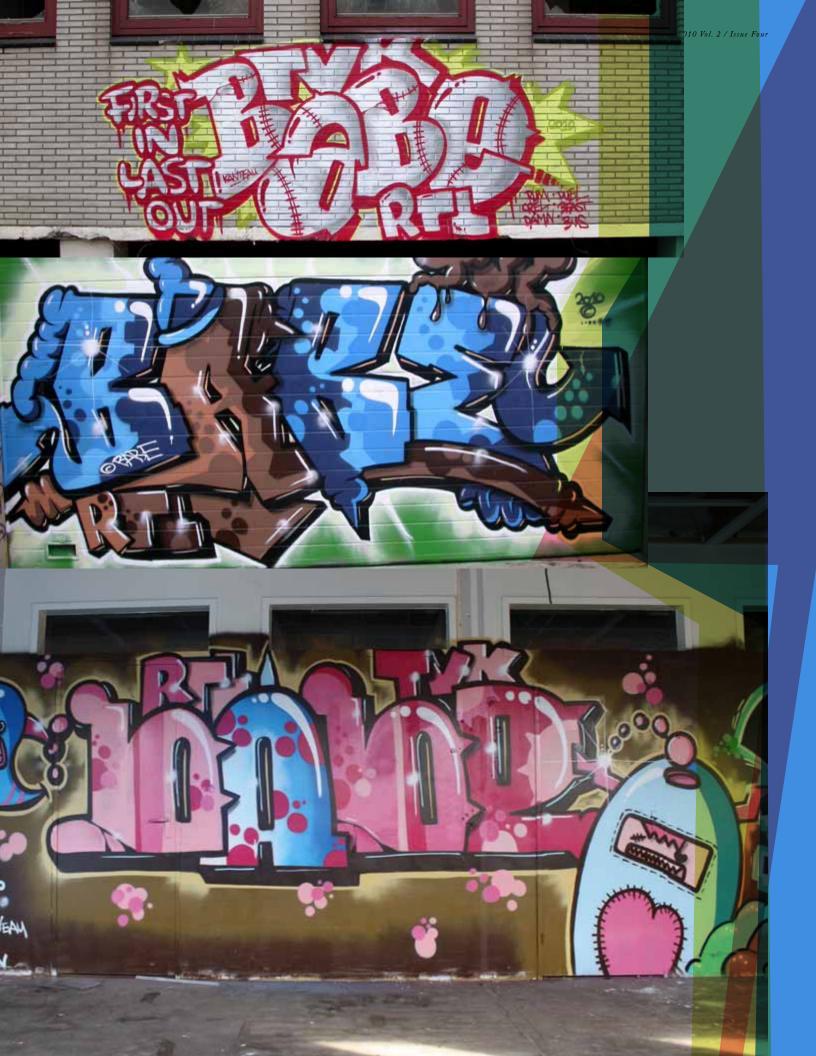




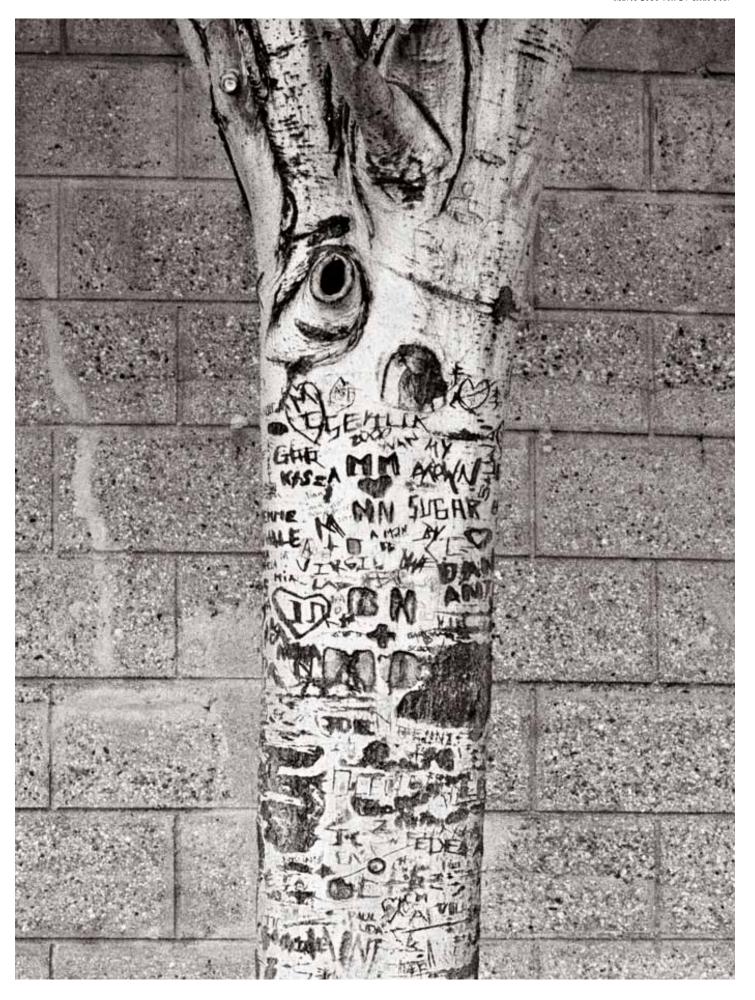




















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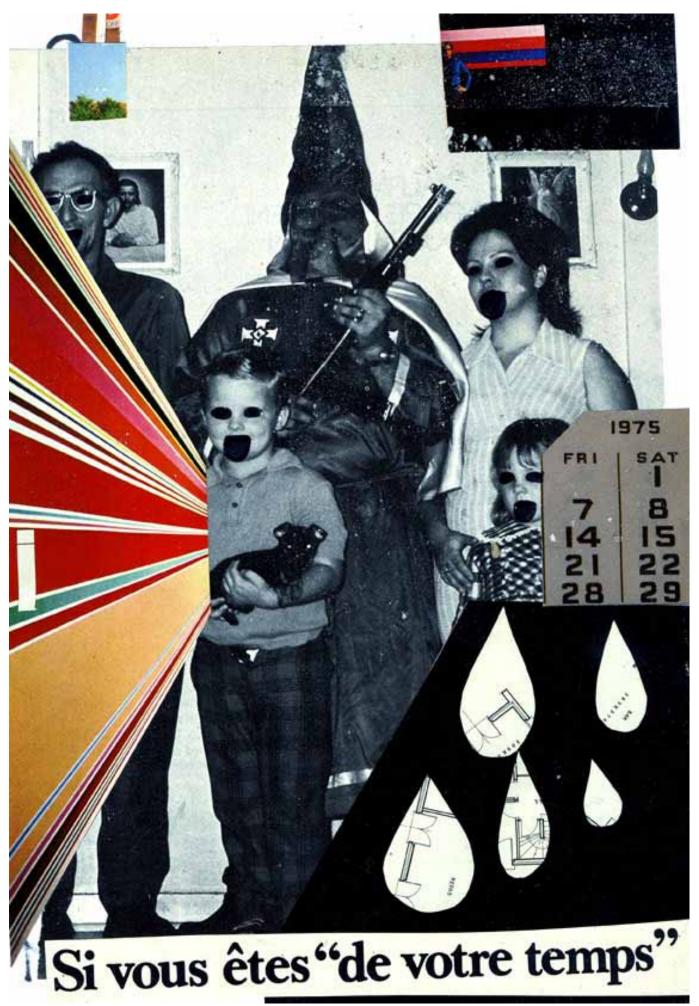


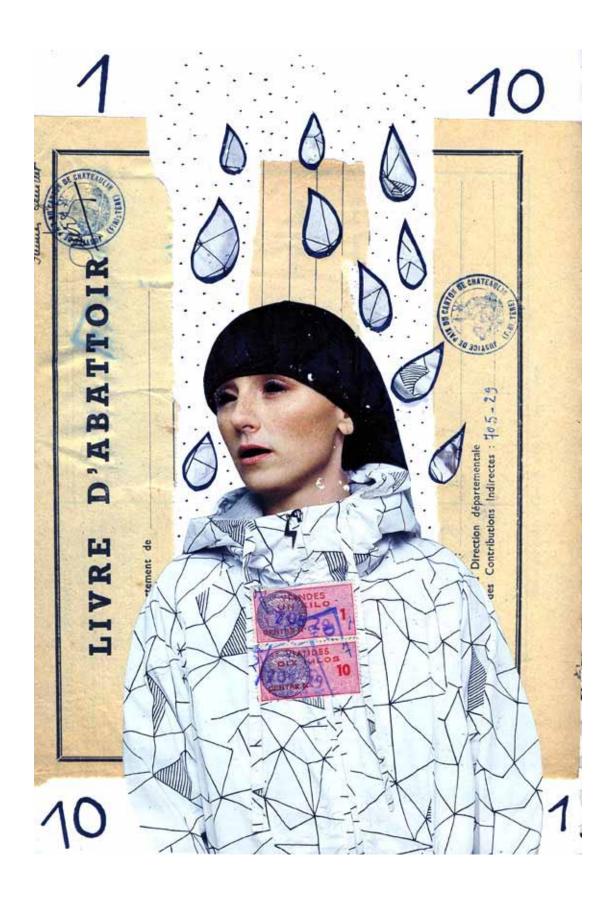








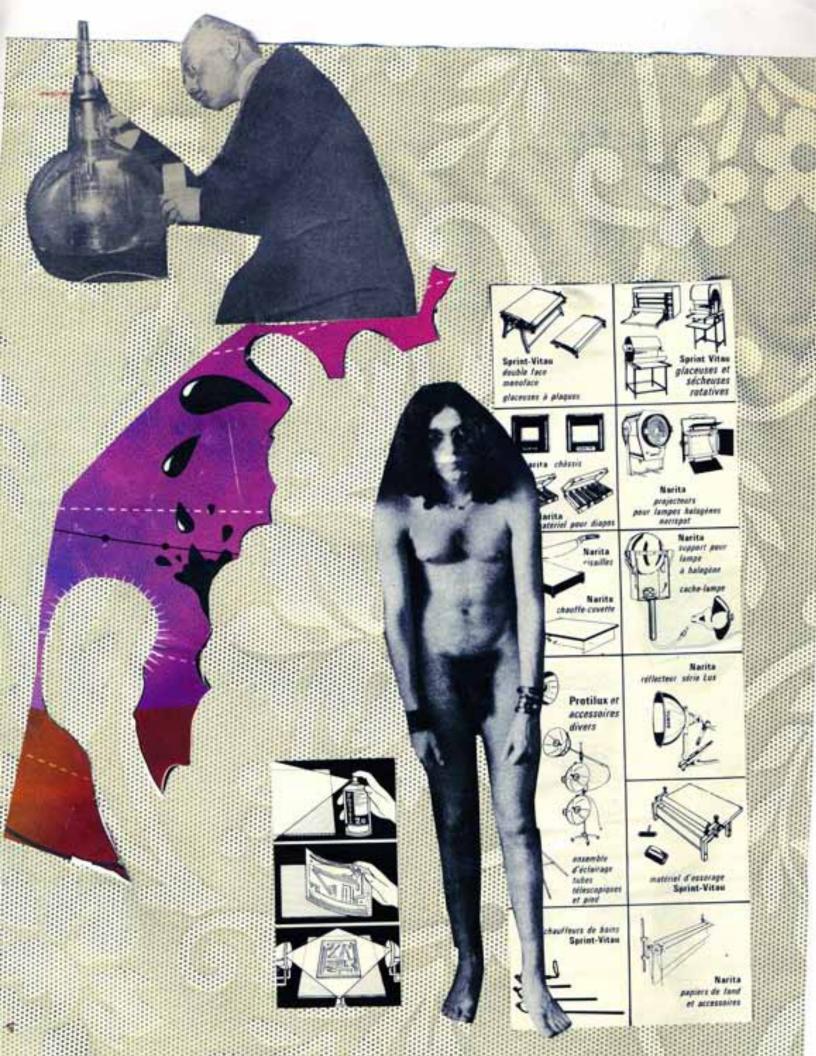














# Chris Murray









# Susie

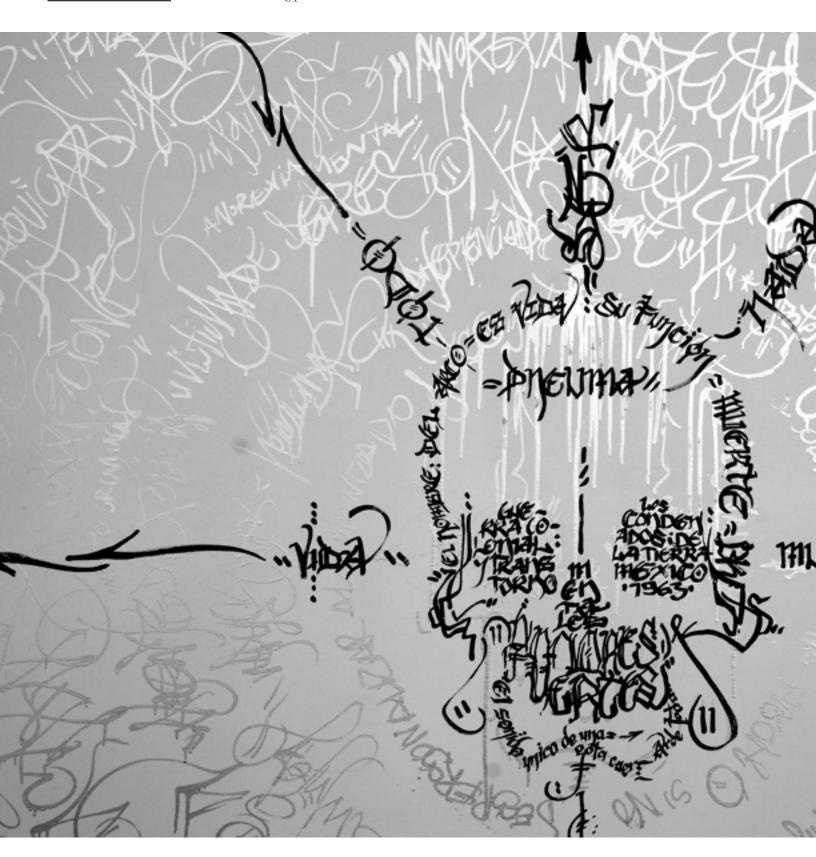






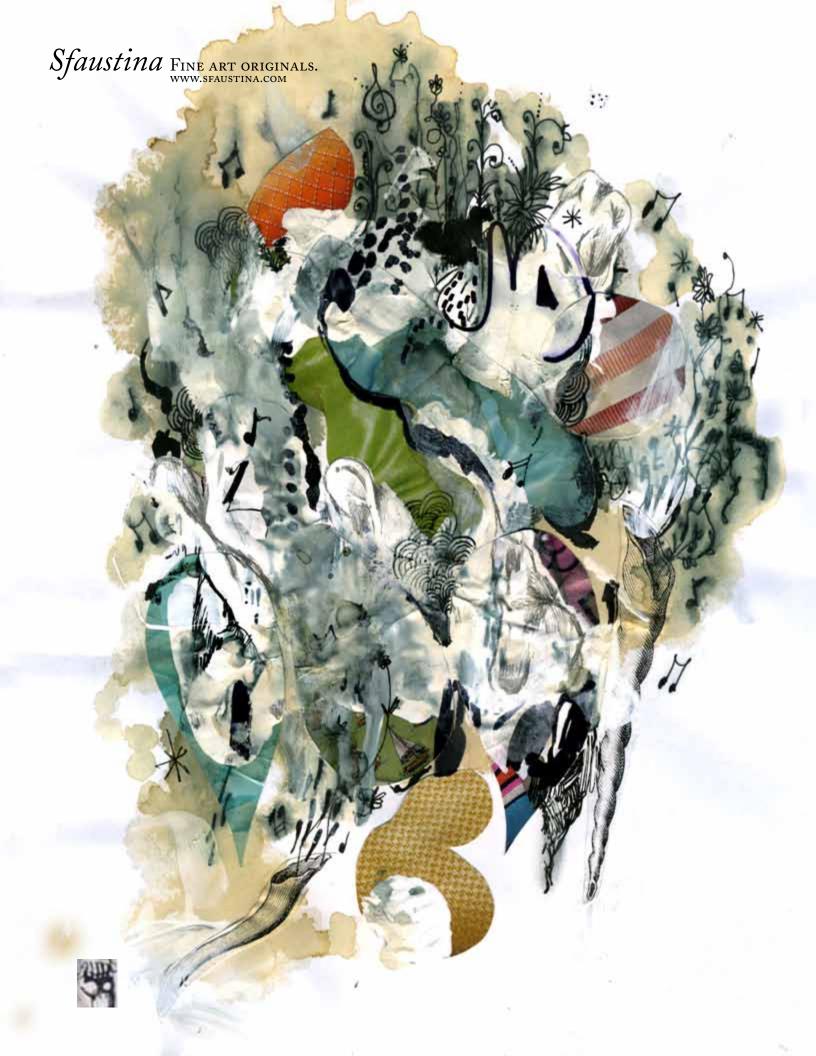


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Luz A. Martín

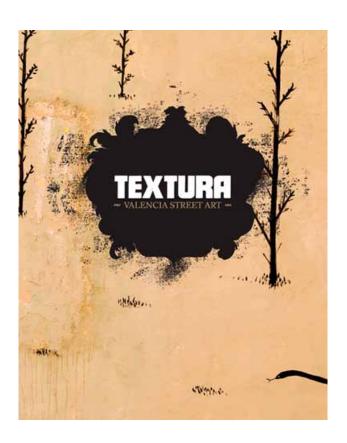
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#### \*\*\*\*

Valencia is Spain's third largest city and is a hotbed of vibrant street art. Photographer Luz A. Martín, a native of Valencia, has been wandering the streets of her hometown capturing the artwork that brings the walls, alleyways and buildings to life. Utilizing rain gutters, window frames, doorframes and other such urban surfaces the city's street artists work their images and designs into the city's surfaces in a way that makes them seem like they've been there all along. Martín has fixated on this specific quality of Valencia's streets and her photographs of graffiti textures are as interesting and visually compelling as the photographs of the pieces in situ. Including many photographs of these street art textures, Textura doubles as a pattern book, making them available as royalty-free images (click here to download the images). http://markbattypublisher.com/textura/

Luz Martín's photographs have been published in such places as The New York Times, Time Out London, El Pais, El Mundo and The Herald Tribune; in 2007 her photography book Campanas Vivas was released, celebrating the centuries old ritual of ringing bells in Valencia.













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All thanks & love goes out to those who have passed the word, contributed to, and simply enjoyed Bloodwars!! Blessing Always.





