

VINCENT WILLEMS VALÉRIE WILLEMS

STREET

ART

TO

THE

stichting
kunstboek

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VINCENT'S STORY

My interest in graffiti dates back to the 1980s, when I got a taste for hip-hop and rap culture, which slowly made its way here from the United States of America. Style Wars, a documentary released in 1983 exposing the rich subculture of hip-hop that was emerging and developing in New York City in the late '70s and early '80s, was another great eye-opener. The main focus of the documentary was on breakdance and graffiti. Getting hold of the documentary itself and snippets of American hip-hop music wasn't easy at the time, as we didn't have the internet, but we made our own recordings and swapped cassette tapes with friends. Once in a while we got lucky and could order something directly from the United States.

Inspired by the documentary, my friends and I wanted to try our hand at graffiti. Armed with our first spray cans, we tagged and left our marks on a lot of walls and other objects. As there weren't any legal walls in those days, the police also took an interest in our work. We were caught red-handed and taken to the police station. Luckily we didn't get fined for vandalism, but we got a community sentence which consisted of removing all of our tags or painting over them.

Unlike some other artists, I didn't really have a talent for graffiti, so I didn't pursue it. However, some of my friends from back in the days kept at it and are still making stunning art. I found a new passion in photography and since living on the edge is always more fun than colouring between the lines, I got interested in urbexing. Urbex photography is all about exploring and capturing abandoned sites, cars, airplanes, and buildings. These are the playgrounds for many graffiti artists, so I still keep track of how they evolve.

Even though graffiti and street art are two separate art forms, they are intertwined. I like following both scenes and in my opinion Belgium has some of the finest artists in the world. They certainly deserve more recognition. Over the years I took a lot of pictures of their work. After the release of my first book, a book about Belgian street art and graffiti was high on my wish list. A year and many miles later, I am ready to finish this book.

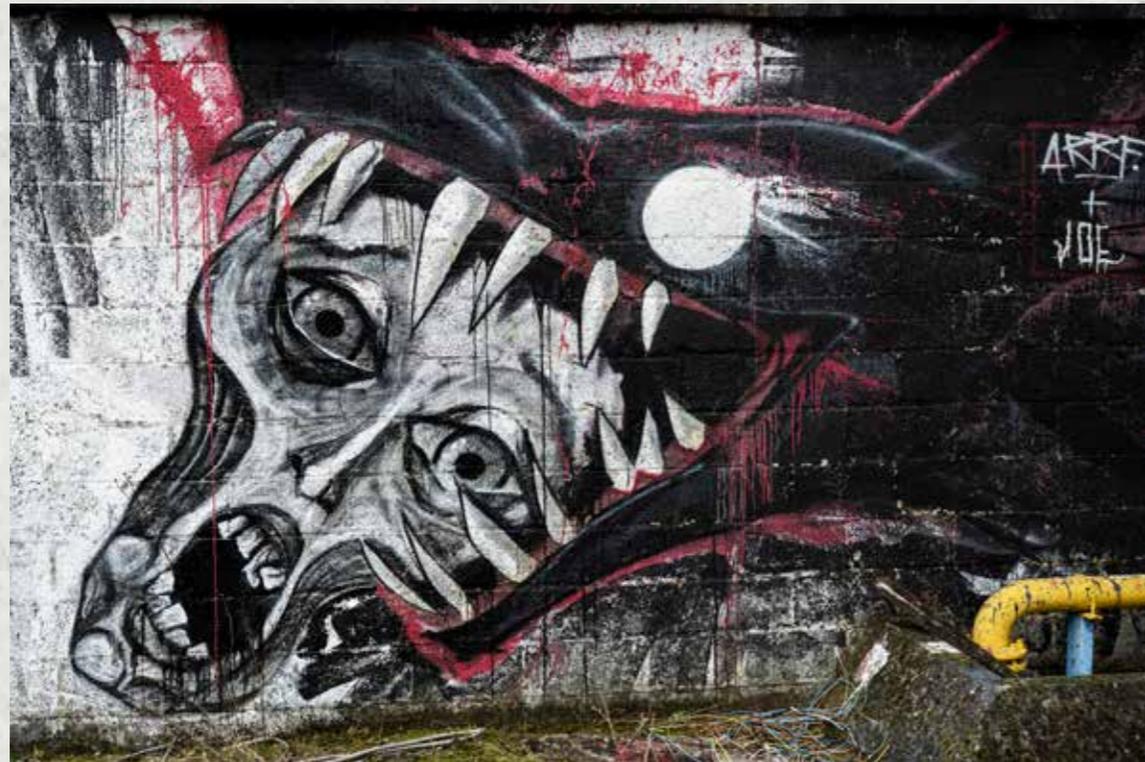
ARRF

ARRF/Arrf the Wolf (Home town: Ghent) has been practising graffiti since 2008 under the name Avoid. In 2018 he changed his alias to Arrf the Wolf.

The Wolf (both the artist and his recurring character) is a welcome guest in Ghent. Although Arrf the Wolf likes to collaborate with other artists from his graffiti pack, he differs from his congeners.

His territory is not limited to Ghent. The wolf can be admired everywhere in Belgium in various formats and poses.

The cuddly wolf with sharp teeth prefers to keep out of sight and lets his art speak for itself.



Collab Keep Punching Joe | Secret Urbex Location | Gentbrugge



Scheideleen | Antwerpen





Secret Urbex Location | Laarne



Secret Urbex Location | Laarne



Afrikalaan | Gent

DJOELS

Djoels (Real name: Julie Bouckhuys - Home town: Egem) has been drawing and painting for as long as she can remember. According to her mother - her hero - she was born with a pencil behind her ear. At the age of 12 she found a few spray cans in the garage, and she started practising graffiti on the garage wall. It didn't take long before she got into portraits. Djoels is a terrific tattoo artist who won the Ink Master competition on Spike TV in 2017. This victory gave a boost to her career.

She's known for her works of Stefaan Degand and Julie Van Espen. Photo realism is her cup of tea and so are the photo compositions she creates. She likes to make certain parts transparent in order to fit everything together.

A few of Djoels' works can be seen in the cells in Ghent's police station where minors sometimes have to spend a couple of hours after committing a crime.



Meenseheirweg 78 | Roeselare

Alexandre-Louis Vanhovestraat | Ronse







Kasteelstraat 17 | Ledegem



Astridlaan | Lichterveelde

DZIA

Dzia (Real name: Dzia Krank - Home town: Mechelen) obtained his Master in Visual Arts in 2002 (Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp). He started tagging when he was 15 years old and has been into graffiti since 2005. Graffiti is all about freedom as far as Dzia is concerned. Since 2012 he focuses more on street art.

The artist is inspired by nature. Respect for animals and nature is important to him. So is having a unique graphic style. Typical for his work are his abstract and geometric lines. His work is very spontaneous, and he paints in situ to make sure the original idea stays true to its form.

He takes pride in his work 'Golden Eagle' in Bodo (Norway - UpNorth Festival), but it disappeared in 2022. It was one of his first murals, and it had a big impact on the town. People should know him from his work of the foxes as well.



Rondestraat | Leuven



Alfred de Taeyestraat | Willebroek

P72-73 Konterdamkaai | Oostende

Parking P1
Station - Zee (B)



Parking P1
Station - Zee (B)
↓ ↓ ↓





JAUNE

Jaune (Home town: Brussels) is a stencil artist. He's inspired by the working class; that is, those who actually make our society work. The artist is making a living out of his art, his passion.

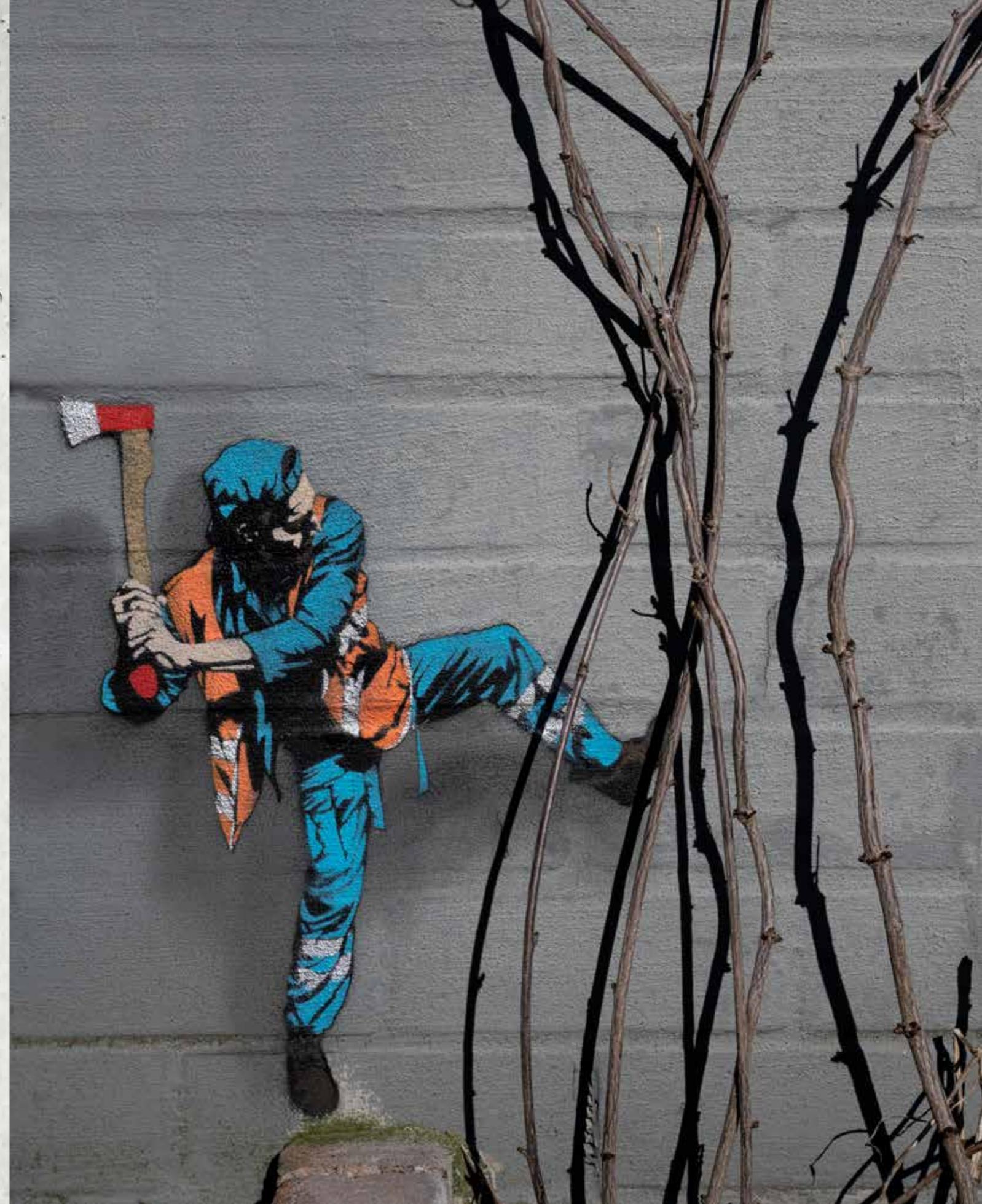
He now has more than two hundred different characters, a lot of vehicles, plenty of architectural elements, etc. Jaune is proud of the works he did in Ostend for the Arts Festival 'The Crystal Ship'. As he was invited four years in a row, he created over 80 murals.

In 2014 he was painting for the 'NuArt' Festival in Stavanger (Norway) when he saw a house full of graffiti, including a penis tag. The owner was glad when she saw Jaune painting because she didn't like the tags, especially the phallus. The artist, however, stuck to his original plan: he wanted to paint a character who seemed to be painting the penis, so he covered all the tags except for that one. Fortunately, the owner was happy with the final result!



Klein Gent | Dendermonde

Oostendestraat | Torhout





Hoedenmakersstraat | Torhout



Hofstraat | Torhout



KEEP PUNCHING JOE

Keep Punching Joe (Home town: Ghent) caught the street art virus around 2015 when his roommate Kiuw asked him to go paint something together. It all started at Inter-Beton (a now-gone concrete plant). His artist name was inspired by a song of the same name by Daniel Johnston, conveying raw emotion. The double meaning ('Keep punching Joe.' and 'Keep punching, Joe.') is also nice.

He looks for raw emotion but adds humour, cynicism, and self-mockery. Classic painters such as Munch and Bruegel can inspire him, but so can a film still, a video clip, or an image from current events. The dark side of life is put away too often, especially when it comes to street art. According to the artist, we should embrace it and do something with it. He makes use of a recurring character called 'Joe'.

One of the unwritten rules is to paint wherever you want, but with respect. Don't paint on churches, graveyards, statues (except for King Leopold II), historical buildings, houses, cars, old graffiti, etc.



E40

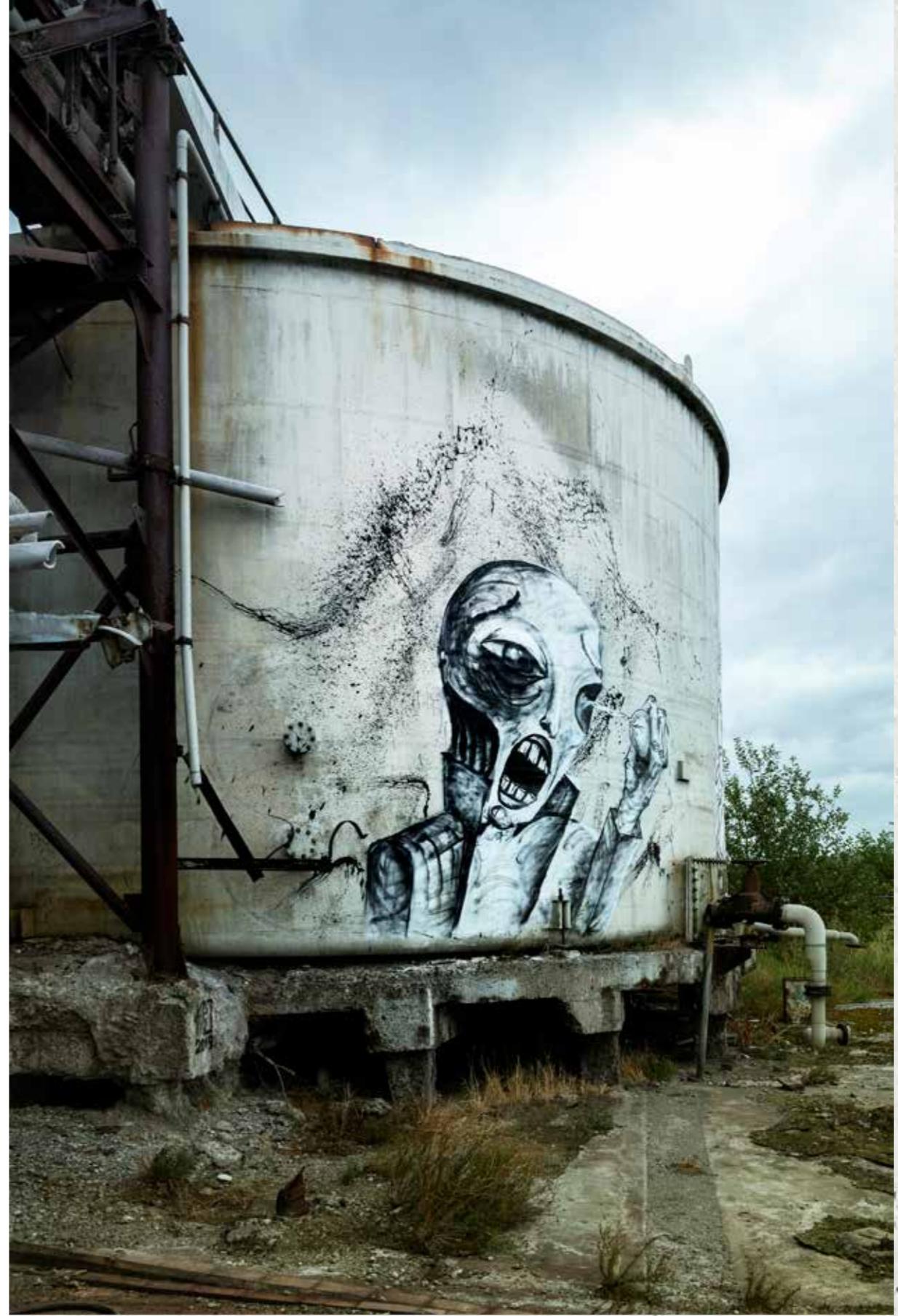
Scheldelaan | Antwerpen



Secret Urbex Location | Gent



Secret Urbex Location | Gent



Secret Urbex Location | Gent

ROA

ROA (a cosmopolitan born in Ghent) has been painting murals all over the world. These travels have changed his way of thinking and being, and it's a great way to meet new people. He mostly paints black and white, large-scale wildlife, often depicting the animals' inner physical structures and body systems.

He usually portrays the native animals of the country/location (a black swan in Bruges, rats in New York City, elephants in Bangkok, etc.), and also takes the environment and architecture into account. Painting native animals is not what he did in 2014 when he was invited to participate in the 'North West Walls' project. The stack of containers on a field that is only used a few times a year when the music festivals take place made him think of freight, as well as illegal trafficking of exotic animals. Therefore, the containers served as cages, and instead of native animals to Belgium he used exotic animals.

The facade of Ghent University Museum (GUM), a science museum, shows an okapi on a pile of exotic skeletons. ROA drew inspiration from GUM's colonial collection for one of his most complex walls.



Doornakkerstraat | Gent

Vaartstraat | Hasselt





Aalst

Karel Lodewijk Ledegancckstraat | Gent





Vijfstraten | Sint-Niklaas



Biddersstraat | Brugge

2DIRTY

2Dirty (Home town: Antwerp) started in the graffiti scene when he was 9 years old. He wanted to spread his name as much and as far as possible. 2Dirty created different characters over time and is now combining letters and characters. These letters can be well-hidden, but you can always find them if you look properly.

His works are funky, colourful, and they have solid and clean outlines. The artist makes use of a recurring turquoise character. He is nearly always trying to say something with his walls: his work reflects the feelings, opinions, or experiences he had. 2Dirty painted a mural in Antwerp's prison. It was quite an experience for the artist, and he loves what he did for the inmates.

He accepts commissioned work, but he only does what he likes to do, his Dirty-style, so he will never be the artist who takes up all the commissions he's offered. The fact that he can pursue his passion in life is worth more than all the money in the world.

Secret Urbex Location





Prison Antwerpen | Begijnenstraat 24 | Antwerpen



Krugerstraat | Antwerpen

BELGIAN STREET ART TODAY

For the very first time an overview is published featuring the works of Belgium's finest street art and graffiti artists. Belgian Street Art Today contains a selection of works made by forty-nine selected artists, such as Roa, Djoels, Dzia, Jaune, Mata One, Smates, Smok, 2 Dirty, Bué The Warrior, Waf, Zenith...

Some of these artists are working around the globe and have received international acclaim; a few of them are even represented by prestigious art galleries abroad.

The selection is preceded by a brief history of street art and a never-before-published comprehensive overview of street art projects and street art and graffiti walks in Belgium. Therefore this book is a must-have for art lovers looking for insider tips and unique experiences.

For more than two years, photographer Vincent Willems crisscrossed Belgium in search of the most spectacular interventions and murals, a passion culminating in this stunning book.

ISBN 978-90-5856-702-4



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ARRF
ARTOON
A SQUID CALLED SEBASTIAN
BIRD
BISSER
BUÉ THE WARRIOR
CASE(R)
CAZ
CEE PIL
DAVID DUITTS
DERM
DJOELS
DZIA
GIJS VANHEE
JABA
JAMZ JAMEZON
JAUNE
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