

Kitchener, Boombox.net, Carhartt & CUE present: URBANSKILLZ

Walls sprayed with graffiti, is something you cannot think away from today's cities. It is interminably linked with urban life. Influenced by their surroundings, images appear, which, in turn put distinctive marks on their environment. If you travel the same journey on bus or train every day, you begin to notice, how many such sprayed pieces there are and how they change surprisingly frequent in some places.

In the last 10 years a lot has changed visually; there's a lot more styles of graffiti for one. There are artists that create a style so distinctive; it is immediately recognisable.

At the same time, we witness an increased merging of graffiti and graphic design. Graffiti does no longer just appear on city walls; but also on flyers, magazine covers and illustrations, -commercial and non-commercial. It is an art form, gaining increasing recognition. Naturally, the use of computers again spawns new styles. Publications like Blower, Scrawl, Souvenirs de Paris, Futura, etc. are good documentations of such developments. Artists like Futura2000 have proven with their work; that Graffiti is an art form that stands on firm ground also within the contemporary art context.

This year, Hamburg has been host to the "Urban Discipline" exhibition for the third time. Urban Discipline is one example of exhibitions worldwide that shows new works by a selection of international artists. Graffiti art quite obviously is no longer "simply" a youth-culture phenomenon.

As part of the four elements of hiphop culture – dj, mc, break-dance and graffiti – graffiti artists have been working closely with musicians from the start: at first limited to a hiphop context, later expanding to other musical styles. The most prominent example for the collaboration between music and graffiti is again Futura's work for MoWax and DJ Krush.

The influence of this so-called "street culture" increasingly expands into ever more areas: fashion, music, art, film and more.

Skateboarding, snowboarding, graffiti and the many hybrids in between have become so important, that one cannot any longer speak of youth-culture, without mentioning them. What used to be strictly "underground" today is often "mainstream".

Global exchange and collaboration between artists with a "street" background, has created a worldwide art form, which has become an integral part of our cultural agenda.

On one of the two last October weekends we will host an event in the big hall of the Reitschule in Bern. This event will be devoted to the cultural phenomenon described above, focusing on the urban aspect, respectively on the interaction between urban surface and the artist. Graffiti artists will not be painting on real city walls but on projected walls (b/w slides) of pictures taken in cities throughout the world. The virtual nature of the projected walls is synonymous for the global dimension of this urban art form.

Besides the "street art", we want to show the connection between fashion and graffiti art. We have witnessed an increasing collaboration between graffiti artists and fashion brands. This is often seen in advertisement, but also within collections some labels work with style elements borrowed from graffiti (Carhartt, Triiade, Boxfresh and Levi's to name just a few). Besides supporting this event financially, Kitchener will produce a video and stage an exhibition inside the shop, to show examples of such collaboration.

The actual event "Urbanskillz" starts in the afternoon, in the evening there will be a big party inside, surrounded by the surreal urban environment created by the artists throughout the day. The artwork in the hall will ideally be open to the public on Sunday also. There will be a publication on this event, released at a later stage, accompanied by a release-party.

The event "Urbanskillz" is based on an idea by Laurence Desarzens, founding partner of the online platform BoomBox.net. With innovative events and their groundbreaking live-streams of shows and parties on the Internet, BoomBox.net have become an institution, which shows the international aspect of hiphop-culture at its best.

The slide-concept show is a CUE project:

THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY URBAN ENCOUNTERS or short: CUE, is about bringing together people employing themselves in the field of the arts, devoted to a shared style or aesthetic approach, to work on a thematically defined subject. The greater theme is the urban space and the shared approach springs from the interest in club-culture as the centre of what we call urban culture.

www.urbanfields.net

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