Cultural Daily

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Blek Le Rat Culture: So What?!?

Blek Le Rat · Wednesday, November 2nd, 2016

*Cultural Weekly empowers creativity only because it is empowered by you. This essay was originally published in 2014. It is **one of 100 reasons** why we ask you to support our efforts. By considering a tax-deductible donation to support our collective cultural conversations. Thank you!*

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Image above by Shafiur Rahman/Six Oranges.

Culture: So What?!? Each week, we ask thought leaders from all walks of life to answer the question: What is Culture and Why Does it Matter?

This Week's Thought Leader: Blek le Rat, one of the most influential street artists of our time. He was one of the first graffiti artists in Paris, and is the founding father of the stencil street art movement.

Blek Le Rat with his famous image "Man Walking Through Walls." Notice the resemblance?

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"We need food to live, just as we need culture to develop ourselves."

Everybody has their own culture made up of what we have seen, learned, and loved in our lives. Some of us carry the burden of one's culture, others don't … we need food to live, just as we need culture to develop ourselves.

One of Blek's signature images, "Computer Man"

I was educated by people who had received an education from the 19th century. My father was born in 1914 and my grandfather in 1880. So, my life was shaped by the culture and events of two different centuries. In my grandparents time, in the early 20th century, only a few people had access to culture. Culture was their destiny. They would write books, play music or do some acting for the educated elite.

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Culture for the masses appeared with the arrival of the cinema. It opened the doors for the least-

favoured because it was affordable. Almost everybody has the means to go to the movies. The democratisation of culture became even stronger when music was accessible to all, first in the US and later in Europe in the 1950s. I think the phenomenon of Street Art is a good thing, along with the internet which is a great tool for artists to make their own propaganda. It is just perfect for artists because every artist's desire is to be seen by the whole world. The internet is the biggest cultural vector and radically ahead of the other media.

We are at a turning point of cultural diffusion.

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A gallery piece that was part of Blek's "Ignorance is Bliss" series

Blek's work in Paris

Priceless

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