Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Interview: Belgium's Steve Locatelli

Sami Wakim · Wednesday, February 3rd, 2016

Steve Locatelli is a Belgian artist born in Brussels. He started on the graffiti scene in the early 90s in the Brussels metro. Steve's passion for graffiti drove him to conquer forbidden boundaries and his works were often visible in unmarked territories. In 1998 the city walls have become exclusive places to let young people express themselves through this new art. It was during that time that Steve could give free rein to his imagination and develop his style.
He became a prominent figure in the street art world and his street art pieces can be seen in Brussels, Amsterdam, and all over Europe.
Nowadays, Steve spends most of his time in Artifex, a gallery that he and his wife opened in Antwerp in 2007, where he gives workshops to the new generation.

Hi Steve, could you tell us who you are, what you do, and how did you get started in the urban art scene?

I grew up in Brussels where I saw the development of the graffiti seen in the 90's. By then I was already drawing and I found the subculture of things related to hip hop, skating, tagging, graffiti, very interesting, and I wanted to be part of it! I got involved and quickly I became addicted ….it became my lifestyle!

I started with drawings on big stickers and put them up everywhere around the city and in the underground…The mystery of who the artist was and the interaction with the other writers was interesting to me.
My next level was tagging and bombing big letters…EVERYWHERE. Hehe, I loved it!

In 2000, I started painting legal walls and it felt great to paint with no stress and no rush, and the new challenge was making connections and collaborations on big walls! Those days were a great time too, my drive was to see my evolution in my works.

In 2004 I started to go with the flow of street art. I started pasting some big hand painted posters in the city's (fun fun fun)**,** but after a year of doing so, I started missing my walls and spray-cans and wanted to get back on it.

In 2007 I did my first canvas and was more and more working individually (on one wall and on my own). I think this was the best way to learn my own style and to allow it to evolve. I started to really enjoy being in my studio painting my canvases. The experience of painting slowly and more detailed was a new experience and it was a great one too. All of these experiences together, after

all of these years of playing around with my sprays, have made me who I am today.

I am still playing with paint on walls and canvas and it makes me feel like I will never grow up! Hahaha
It’s difficult to get a name in the art culture, therefore in 2007, together with my wife, we started our own gallery in Antwerp city called Artifex. From then on I got some recognition and other galleries started showing my work too. Artifex is now a gallery, artistic desk and the place where I give workshop to the new generation
Do you have a formal art education?

I am 100 percent autodidact, but I have learned a lot from my friends, going to events, making connections ……
Going to school was not my style. I didn’t like to be taught and I was always a little bit rebellious. I think you may still find some “nice” pieces that I painted on some school desks..
Where do you gather most of the inspiration for your works?

I can be inspired by anything, every day…
Skulls appear a lot in your works. Is there a reason behind it?
I like the symbolism of skulls. It is so universal, you can not tell if it was a boy or a girl or if it was white, African or Chinese person. WE ARE ALL THE SAME under it all!
Also, I always felt like a PIRATE who was taking walls in the city…and have many more explanations for it, but the book will come out soon

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