

Cultural Daily

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Russian Street Artist, Rustam Qbic, Finds a Playful Sense of the Absurd

Sami Wakim · Wednesday, June 1st, 2016

Rustam Qbic specializes in street art that seems larger than life. His paintings are saturated with lush storybook colors and are defined by a playful sense of the absurd. Popping up in both expected and unexpected locales, his murals beautify not only the crumbling walls of derelict buildings but also that of apartment buildings.

There's a stunning sense of synthesis between Qbic's art and its surroundings. His art recalls the various motifs of house and home, nature, and man's role. The juxtaposition of the familiar with the unexpected evokes a magical feeling of whimsy. A boy lounges in a boat full of houses while a man with a house for a head unleashes a flock of birds. Yet another boy rides a fish under lily pad clouds — and another man with a house for a head fishes peacefully in a creek. The theme plays over and over again.

Qbic's work almost seems to suggest that we are inextricable from our environment. Like a dream folding in on itself, it's impossible to tell where our influence ends and where nature begins.

(Source: [This Is Colossal](#))

A Special thank you for Iryna Kanishcheva for putting me in touch with Rustam Qbic, an below is how it went down.

 **Hey Rustam, how is it going? For people that don't know you or your work, could you give them a little bit of background?**

Hi. I'm fine. My name is Rustam QBic. I am from Kazan, Russia. I have a secondary arts education and have been painting murals in the streets for quite some time now.

Being an artist is not always easy, where there is little support, if any, from family and friends. How was it for you starting up?

It started as usual with a simple hobby when I was young and gradually I came to understand what I was doing. I was carried away by graffiti-writing but being art educated I was quickly tired of letters and started to deal with characters and picture stories. I was searching for my own technique. Though most probably this process will last all my life.

After training school I entered the pedagogical university. At the same time I worked as a teacher at school where I stayed in the evenings to work on my canvases. I started to receive invitations to the festivals in Russia, people started to take interest in my works. So then I could fully switch to creative work. My parents always supported me, probably because I did everything gradually. Now I have a wife and a son. They are also supporting and inspiring me.

 **How much does your art affect or influence your everyday life and are there any role models or artists who inspired you?**

My life is probably influencing my creative work and not vice versa. I was fascinated by artists but

I gradually became inspired by photographers looking at their photos of landscapes or portraits. I am greatly inspired by nature and books.

Are you creatively satisfied?

I think I will always look for something better in my creative work.

Do you like music? Is it an integral part of your creative process or just background noise? What are some of your favorite musicians? 

A couple of years ago I realized that music interferes with my work. It influenced me, my thoughts and my inner world. Music and songs impose on a person its way of life and spirit. I want to be free from it and be on my own. I don't want to hear words and ideas of a person whom I do not know. People write songs of love but they don't know how to love, they write songs about kindness but they do evil. This is all hypocrisy. There are very few honest people.

Do you think that street art is somehow dominated by men, while some claim the physical danger of workings outdoors makes women reluctant to participate?

Yes, I think that there are more men, not because of physical danger but because of hard conditions. This is hard work. There are some talented women-artists creating great pieces of art. But they are few. Probably soon there will be more.



Street Art in some countries is still considered vandalism, how is it for you to go out and paint in the street? Did you ever have any problems with the law?

From the very beginning I did not like to damage property of others. When you paint you need more time without concern that somebody will catch you. Vandalism has got nothing to do with me.

In your opinion, what is the difference between graffiti and street art?

The boundaries of these concepts are very vague nowadays. This is the subject for discussions among fine arts experts. I like to paint and share my works.

 **What are your thoughts on the way the internet is influencing the art world?**

Internet provides access to information not only about art. It can do harm to some people but it can help others. You need to analyze what you see and avoid information that you do not need. I like that a person can learn the news and events that take place at the other end of the world.

Do you travel to do street art or do you do street art when you travel?

I travel in order to paint. But I can make a pause to look around in a new place. I don't deny spontaneous painting during a trip.

What are your thoughts about what's going on in the world: The Middle East, Ukraine, The refugee crisis, The USA elections...

This is all politics, and politics is dirty. Great, pure people always avoided politics. I hope that I will not touch upon it. Times change... Tranquility replaces chaos, chaos replaces tranquility. This goes on in circles. We cannot be sure that we will live our lives without problems. Some get hurt, some get bombs. We all suffer this or that misfortune. But we suffer them in order to learn to value peace.



Have you painted in the USA? If so, how was your experience like?

I painted last year in Portland for Forest for the Trees (Pictured above). It was great! Thanks to Gage and Matt for it. I liked the city and wall on which I painted. And I was satisfied with the result. I hope to come back to the USA with new ideas.

 **What do you do when you are not creating art? What are your hobbies?**

If I am not painting, I do housework: cleaning, repairing, etc. Take walks with my family, to visit my parents or friends. I also love to read books and look for ideas for my new works.

What's next for you? What collaborations, shows or projects do you have planned?

Plans to live in the same pace, or even more.

Any words of advice for aspiring new artists?

Most importantly, do not be afraid to start, be able to analyze what you're doing. Set goals and achieve them. And ask yourself a question: "Am I worse?"



Many thanks to you Rustam for taking timeout from your busy schedules to talk to the SAUS and all the best for the future.

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