

Cultural Daily

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Street Conquistador

Daniel Rolnik · Thursday, July 7th, 2011

Jesse Hazelip creates his awesome wheat-pastes with meaning. He's a fearless conquistador of the street, having hit up the now-popular abandoned gas station at Ashby and Telegraph in Berkeley, CA before anyone else with his classic buffalo piece. Jesse and I spoke about his new body of work exploring the prison industrial complex as well as AK47's and the ultimate craigslist nightmare.

Daniel Rolnik: What's been your favorite graffiti tool over the years?

Jesse Hazelip: Kids these days have it easy. I feel like such an old man because I'm going to actually say "Back in my day...". We used to have to make our own mops and refill our own markers. My favorite pens were these small Pentel markers, that were short with a good sized nib. I would cut the round part off of the end of the nib and then cut it so it would fatten the tip. They were easy to conceal and relatively easy to refill.

DR: Which billboard campaign needs to be defaced as soon as possible?

JH: All of them!!! Seriously, I'm so sick of advertising. I especially want to trash Apple billboards, they think they are way too cool.

DR: What was your tagger name back in the day and what was your first wheat-paste of?

JH: About 20 years ago when I started writing I was putting up Blink. It was a short-lived name for me. My first posters were all political anti-war imagery around the beginning of the Iraq war. I started putting a lot more energy towards my political endeavors in 2007. I felt it was reaching more of an audience in a positive way than my other forms of vandalism.

DR: Where did you get your AK47 and what's the best weapon to own in Oakland?

JH: Ummmmmm.....I don't own an AK 47, they are hella illegal in California. But it would be a great weapon for Oakland. That or a tank on dubs.

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