20 GRANDI ARTISTI SI RACCONTANO

STREET ART

ALESSANDRA MAJ TANZA

INTRODUZIONE DI CHRIS VISCIGLIA

ARYZ • BANKSY • PHILIPPE BAUDELOCQUE • BECCA • C215 • DAVID CHOE • BEN EINE • EL MAC • EVOL • SHEPARD FAIREY • FAUXREEL • INTERESNI KAZKI, AEC • M-CITY • NUNCA • ROA • SLINKACHU • SPECTER • SWOON • ALEX VAU • VHILS

Faces of Regent Park, 2012 – Commissioned by the City of Toronto, the large laminated panels in Regent Park – which are adapted to the architecture of the context – show the faces of 12 local inhabitants.

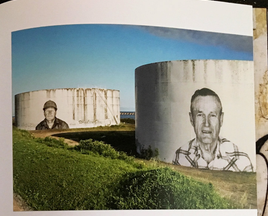
"I started when I was about twenty. Some of my friends were graffiti artists and I enjoyed watching them, but I still knew I wanted to do something else.

I started by placing large black and white photographs that I developed in the dark room, and experimenting with professional architectural prints. Even the images I photographed were more artistic than classic, they looked more like paintings. In the beginning I only applied them to metal, but then I experimented with other surfaces and I started using a sort of glue that I made myself out of flour and water which gave me greater range."

Fauxreel studied Film and Sonic Design in Carleton University in Ottawa, but he considers himself self-taught as his interest in photography started after he had finished studying. "In the beginning, I just thought it was the best way to get my work noticed in the city. My first piece of street art dates back to 2001, photos I'd taken in London, of architecture but still artistic. In time, I started really thinking about what I was doing, the reason why I was so dedicated to a particular subject, what the message behind it was supposed to be. And I realized I was particularly interested in portraits, in people being human. I analyzed myself and others. I wanted to hear their stories."

He started accepting commissions and in the meantime dedicated himself to his projects, becoming increasingly interested in public art and furthering his own vision. "I was fascinated by those people who are rarely represented. Advertising is king and, especially in North America, is dominated by white faces, I wanted to explore the more unusual characters, those whose faces lost hidden meanings, who would get others interested in who they were. At the same time, working on advertising billboards further changed my methods. I started creating street art that would make passersby wonder if it was advertising or not. I basically wanted to play with people's perceptions, push limits, go over the top." This is even how the Vespa Squarehats project was born, with four guys whose heads have been replaced by bundles of the Vespa S, a revival of the 50 Special launched by Piaggio and interpreted by the artist in a decidedly original way.

His work is aimed at the community, as well as setting new challenges. Like the Frankfurt project, dedicated to the homeless. "I'm not sure that there is always a political message in what I do, but there is certainly a reflection on what is going on, something extremely contemporary. The project I did with some homeless people who I photographed and shared in various districts of the city was a way to give them a voice, through written phrases that represented what they thought. I wanted people to share their experiences.



Gadoriki: Les portraits en papier, 2010 – These low-portraits are part of an imposing photographic project in solidarity with the workers of the Gaspesia paper mills it handles, Quebec, all of whom were laid off when production was moved to Vietnam.

New & Hard – The Pipe Wrencher, 2010 – The Wall Impressions project shows everyday people in everyday activities, such as this factory worker depicted in brown.

This is why the size of the pieces has to suit the surrounding area: they often have to be huge to be visible within the context."

He has recently moved towards colors and abstract paintings. "My photographs have always been in color, even though architecture printers printed them in black and white. In the beginning I adapted myself to this, but I enjoy working with color. Abstract art serves as a break from my social work which is extremely intense. I need to alternate to distance myself. The 'abstract world' allows me more freedom in the rhythm and form of the lines and colors; I blend a range of styles. As I said, change is vital for me and likewise I feel pigeonholed, like in a commercial production, and I'm afraid that people would only commission me for a certain type of piece. But for the moment I receive commissions based on my ideas: they give me the chance to develop and I see this as a challenge, even if it can sometimes be very harmful.