



WHAT IS STREET ART ?

Both a movement and a form of artistic expression with a short shelf life, Street Art includes all forms of art made in the public space and covers various techniques such as graffiti, tagging, stenciling, mosaics, stickers, posters and collage.

Graffiti is a wall painting created with enamel paint cans, originally intended for car paint.

After the birth of the Graffiti movement in the early 1960s in Philadelphia (USA), New York ended up becoming the capital of the phenomenon.

The works started out as a kind of spontaneous and often rebellious form of expression. People found them confusing and often failed to get the proverbial writing on the wall...

Early graffiti artists were called taggers (loners using simple tags or stylised signatures) before they became fully-fledged graffiti artists creating more grandiose, more politically engaged works based on the use and juxtaposition of various techniques and unusual materials.

The trend in recent years has been towards the institutionalization of street art, becoming an increasingly widespread feature in galleries, museums, auction rooms or on monumental facades.

For most contemporary artists, Street Art has become a lifestyle, an activity that generally stays on the right side of the law.

Internationally acclaimed artists include: Jeff Aérosol, the famous French stencil artist, is one of the pioneers of Street Art in Europe. Shepard Fairey, world-famous thanks to his Barack Obama poster entitled «Hope», Banksy, a mythical practitioner of urban art whose true identity is unknown, has become an iconic example of a street artist, whose work seeks to express political opinions.

AND IN CHARLEROI ?

Street art first scratched the surface in the late 1980s when some of the city's artists began painting the walls of the abandoned metro station in Montignies-sur-Sambre. Being an industrialised city, Charleroi was an ideal location for these creations: derelict sites and wasteland were used for artistic purposes.

Charleroi youth centres have created frescoes in various places in the city, such as the Ores (power network operator) electrical boxes and the wall of the Belgian National Railway Company station car part. These structures lead to the creation in 2016 of a «free expression» wall for local artists to avail themselves of in rue des Riviages.

Other events such as Couleurs Carolos (2011) and This Land I (2012) and II (2014) have also contributed to the development of urban art in the city centre and the Porte Ouest district.

Charleroi.

Charleroi became an open-air museum in 2012 with the advent of the Biennial «Asphalte» urban art event. During the first event, the BP522 contemporary arts centre floated the idea of working with the artist JR on the project «Inside Out/Smile!» featuring more than 750 smiling faces. In 2014 and 2016, several top names in international street art, to-

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