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BROOKLYN STREET ART

Jaime Rojo
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PRESTEL

Munich • Berlin • London • New York

Every outside surface is fair game . . .

“No one should come to New York to live unless he is willing to be lucky.” E. B. White

How can you walk through Brooklyn and not feel lucky? The creative spirit in the largest borough of New York insists that you do! Seeking to escape from the increasingly unaffordable and cramped island of Manhattan, drawn to the vibrant magnet of a thriving scene, thousands of artists continue to jump feet-first into their new jungle gym, Brooklyn. Previously industrial or run-down neighborhoods like Williamsburg, Greenpoint, Bushwick, DUMBO, and Red Hook are swelling with artists and creative people who come from all over the world, transforming everything in their path.

Street art here is the very public face of a robust art scene in these neighborhoods, not a “movement” but the cumulative effort of artists who often are in the margins of the art world, un-bossed and un-bought, kings and queens of their own destinies. It spills through the doors of home studios, non- and for-profit galleries, artist collectives, nightclubs, performance spaces, group shows, and art parties. Every outside surface is fair game for art that is ready to engage, rebuff, surprise, reflect, expand, expound, confuse, remix, and reuse.

Not limited to graffiti tags or elaborate spray-painted murals, the street artists use every material and medium, regardless of durability: paper,



plastic, plaster, markers, pens, foamcore, furniture parts, stickers, steel, plywood, photocopies, latex, acrylic, watercolors. The scale of the work is from the minuscule to the monumental, the shelf-life unpredictable and ephemeral. A work may be a cutout, wheat-pasted on particleboard; steel shapes soldered to a railing or dangling from a telephone line; a butterfly bolted to a sign post; a face tucked under a beam, or stuck on a fire hydrant. It's a stencil staring at you from a doorway or a grand-scale mural in an abandoned lot.

Brooklyn Street Art pays homage to the artists as well as their work. As artists ourselves, we celebrate the creative energy here that is so fully charged and palpable. Touched, challenged, changed, and motivated by this silent explosion of visual images, we had no recourse but to record the voluminous display and share it. We want to preserve the pieces and the moments, before they pass. By no means an exhaustive survey or scholarly discourse, this small volume aims to showcase the images and allow this creative spirit to travel beyond the walls, signposts, light standards, doors, windows, garbage cans, and scaffolding of our Brooklyn streets.

For these street artists, art is not a luxury but a necessity. The work is installed discreetly and by any possible means. No contracts are made, no agreements signed, no discussions take place. Catch it while you can, appreciate its message in the moment of discovery, a fleeting moment. The artwork, like the neighborhood, may be overtaken. But for the lucky one who discovers it, it is a reminder that in this town, anything is still possible.

Jaime and Steve



When we, as a culture, suppress, stifle, and limit, we get a world full of suppression, regulation, and limitations. But when we encourage, support, and illuminate those people and ideas that we find outright amazing and relevant, we emphasize the importance of listening to the voice that calls from within each of us. We get a world that is illuminated and supportive. We get high-quality work made with tenacity, vision, enthusiasm, and soul. Street artists bring to the world art, voices, and visions that satisfy a yearning for meaning amidst the madness of urban life.

New York City is a global destination; and within it, Brooklyn is the current playground that attracts artists from all over the world, from around the corner to the other side of the globe. The Brooklyn street artist engages in the battles over our visual environment, space, and cityscape even as economic insecurity, commercial blandness, and loss of liberties grow daily. Indeed, countless “creatives” take their visions to the streets in defense of freedom of speech and personal expression, which is being suppressed, and by these acts they hope to inspire. Refusing to accept an insipid world of gray walls, bland facades, and innocuous urban landscapes, these artists do not limit their exhibition venues to traditional galleries--many of which are dinosaurs mired in an unimaginative and vacuous art dystopia. They are passionate, committed to their craft, and challenge the boundaries of “fine art.”

This book illustrates the importance and power of letting the art by these artists be seen and their voices heard. It is easy to take for granted all of these wonderful pieces that exist in our daily landscape. This book allows this imagery to transcend Brooklyn and awaken the spirit of those who may never be fortunate enough to see these works on the street, live and direct. Let it go forth and inspire.

Garrison Buxton and Ray Cross

Garrison Buxton and Ray Cross are artists living and working in Brooklyn.







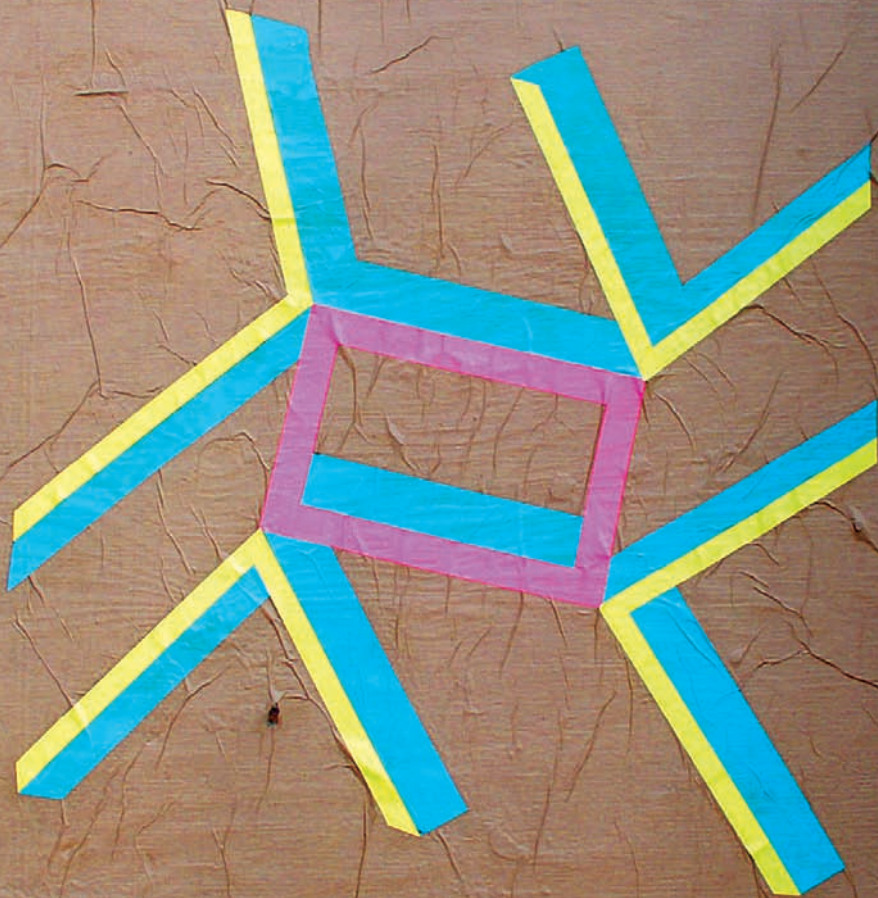
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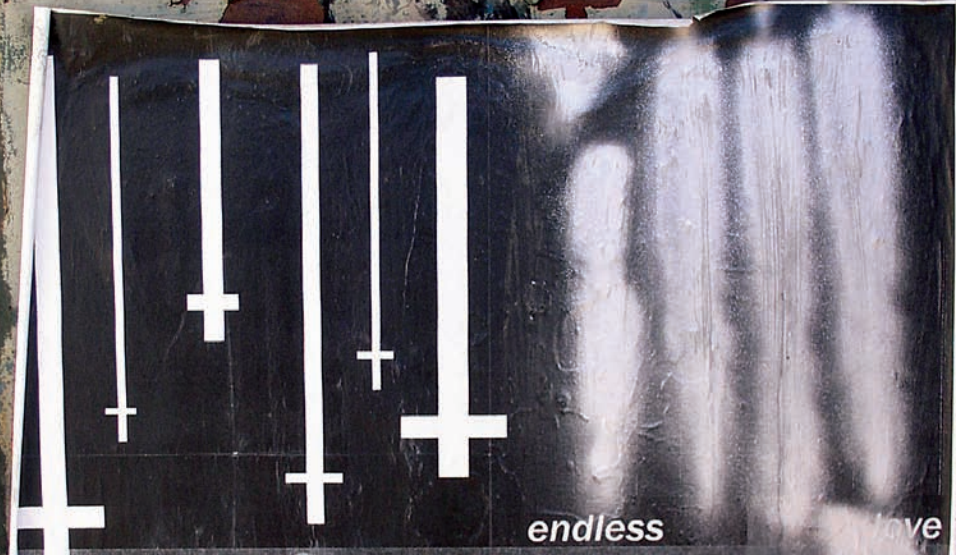
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Prestel

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