



ABOVE:

★ **PASSPORT** ★



REPUBLICA DEL PARAGUAY

Nº 085221-E

VISA CLASE TURISTA

ESTADO DE GUAYRÁ

MOBILIDAD Y ABELLADO

NOMBRE Y APELLIDO

PASAPORTE

VALIDO POR 90 DIAS A PARTIR DE SU INGRESO AL PARAGUAY

ENTRADA

ENTRADA

UNICA X MULTIPLES ☐

FECHA DE EXPIRACION 16 / OCT / 2007

FECHA DE VENCIMIENTO 16 / OCT / 2008

DEBEROS A RANCLAROS 60 b

leg N: 4118

WASHINGTON D.C.

EMBAJADA DEL PARAGUAY

FIRMA AUTORIZADA

AUTORIZADO SIGNATURE

Secundario Secretario

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS I'LL ALREADY BE GONE





ABOVE: PASSPORT

Introductions by:

Shepard Fairey, FAILE, Tristan Manco, and Marc & Sara Schiller

ZERO+ PUBLISHING

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."
Lao-tzu, Chinese philosopher (Sixth Century B.C.E)





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INTRODUCTIONS

I first encountered ABOVE's art on the streets of Paris in early 2003. His large-scale trademark arrows were painted on roll down gates, trucks and storefronts with impressive coverage throughout the city. ABOVE is extraordinarily driven. To paraphrase Radiohead, "ambition can make you look pretty ugly," but in ABOVE's case, his ambition makes the streets look very engaging. I am very impressed by ABOVE's diligence, but after I got to know him and his artwork more, I began to realize that his output is not evidence of selfish ego, but of a lust for life, a utopian life, where his generosity, and curiosity, and his pursuit of creativity and social-consciousness have led him around the world making more friends than enemies.

ABOVE made the time to act as tour guide for me and my wife and our two young daughters in a city he knows well and we didn't. The gesture made me greatly value ABOVE's friendship and reinforced my belief that what you give is what you get. The Karma Police are not coming for ABOVE even if the police vandal squad is.

Shepard Fairey / Los Angeles, California, 2011

"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."
– Ralph Waldo Emerson

As street artists we travel... we stroll through cities in the quiet of the night. We learn the intimacies of the streets that link the bustling masses with their head's down – back and forth from their daily routines. We see moments of interaction and chances to break this monotonous dance and plant a seed. Within this lies a simple hope – to get someone to stop, even if for a moment – and see something anew. It's this hope that drives us. It is an elementary desire to share a piece of yourself with the world and leave a trail for others like you.

ABOVE has been creating this trail for more than a decade. In what started as a simple gesture to make his mark in the world, he has ended up travelling globally to see this mark grow and evolve into a whole form of communication embracing cities and people everywhere. His work leaves us with a waymark, from the political to the absurd; his work tantalizes us as much as it does the artist on his journey.

It so happens in all this, that we've only had the pleasure of meeting the artist in person once and I believe we're not alone. ABOVE is a man in constant motion, like a nomad with a brush. We, along with everyone else, can only watch him heed the call to adventure and watch as stories unfold on street corners and back alleys in lands far, far away.

FAILE / New York, New York, 2011

If art is a journey, then ABOVE is an artist with a well-travelled passport. Having painted, stenciled and installed art on the streets of over forty countries and countless cities in the past ten years, his unique experiences along the way have driven and inspired his artistic expression ever onwards and upwards. With a combination of ambitious planning, recklessness and inventiveness, ABOVE has been able to undertake yearly grand tours on a shoestring, which bring to mind the literary adventures of George Orwell, Ernest Hemingway and Jack Kerouac, all giving him enviable periods of personal freedom to explore new cultures, make new friends and the freedom to create art on the streets.

A native Californian, ABOVE began his wanderlust by landing in Paris in late 2001, at the age of nineteen. It was an exciting time for Graffiti and Street Art, which was going through a period of experimentation, particularly in Paris where a number of artists stood out such as Space Invader, Andre and Zevs, who were using symbols and icons instead of the usual tags associated with classic graffiti. The use of an artist's logo was a concept that ABOVE had already adopted himself - as a teenager he started to write ABOVE but wanted something that would stand out on a rolling freight train so he hit upon using the universally recognized symbol of an arrow as shorthand. In Paris he wasted no time in painting his trademark across the city on walls, shutters and trucks, and later progressing to his signature wooden arrow mobiles, which he would sling over telephone wires. The arrow proved to be an endlessly adaptable symbol, which could be re-interpreted graphically in a myriad of ways through combinations of colours, textiles and wordplays. For the artist it symbolized a positive force, a message from the street to "RISE ABOVE."

After a couple of years in Paris, he began the first of many annual art 'tours of duty' across the States, Europe and later South America. The statistics and results of these travels are astonishing, as this book will no doubt attest. None of it would have been possible without the support of the street art and graffiti community along the way - in each city a friendly face to be an impromptu tour guide, someone to go and paint with, a sofa to sleep on, and life experiences to share... ABOVE was given local knowledge that he would then reflect in the work he created there. The whole process has no doubt given him a more global philosophy on life, an understanding of local concerns, and an encyclopedic knowledge of street art on the ground as it has evolved year by year.

Over the years, ABOVE's work has naturally changed and adapted to reflect his experiences and preoccupations. While some elements such as wordplay and the arrow symbol have become recurring themes, other styles and approaches have been developed and nurtured during his global tours. This is particularly true of his *South American Tour* in 2007, which saw him, switch to large-scale text-based murals, often with witty word games and wry humour. The typographic style also reflecting the local vernacular, hand-painted examples he found across the region. More recently he has been experimenting more with figurative stencils, which he has often combined with subversive texts.

Although his work has transformed across a decade, it has retained the same positive spirit embodied in his original adage to "RISE ABOVE." Street Art is by its very nature an ephemeral activity, so much of what ABOVE once learnt and created across the globe is now only a memory captured in the photographs here. This archive tells the story and the journey goes on...

Tristan Manco / London, England, 2011

Passion and Play

For the past nine years, not a week has gone by that we haven't received a note from our friend, ABOVE. With each email comes a tale of grand mischief and high adventure from faraway places. But what has been most important to us is that each and every correspondence comes filled with a dedication and passion that is absolutely infectious and impossible to ignore. "Commitment" is so deeply imbedded into ABOVE's DNA that he is literally an unstoppable force of nature like no other that we have encountered. Street art can be a very dangerous and expensive game, and only someone who's a little bit crazy and nuts (and we mean that in a good way) - can achieve what ABOVE has accomplished. Where most artists go "all city," ABOVE has gone "all global."

Originally from Northern California, ABOVE originally ran with a slightly older skateboarding crowd. Exposed to freight train tagging at an early age, he was introduced to not only the culture of writing on walls, but also the passion for seeing the world. At 18, after two years of painting the letters A-B-O-V-E, he decided to change his street identity from letters to objects and adopted as his moniker an arrow that, literally, pointed "ABOVE." When he was 19, he moved to Paris and his true global wanderings began in earnest.

ABOVE is the type of person who is driven by taking on the largest challenges he can dream up. His philosophy is simple and direct: To "RISE ABOVE." He told us once: "As a young adult I wanted to push my limits and challenge myself with new obstacles. There truly isn't a better feeling than overcoming a fear, challenge or conquering a personal goal. The world is a big place and loaded with infinite obstacles and challenges. I like to travel to new cities and countries to challenge myself in a new arena."

When we first met ABOVE, he was hanging arrow mobiles on which he had painted contrasting words on each side of the arrow. ABOVE was clearly obsessed with hanging his arrows and did thousands of them around the world - always associating the words on the piece to the specific public space. The arrows quickly evolved into larger word play statements that encompassed humour, wit, irony, and sarcasm, painted mainly in South America and Central America.

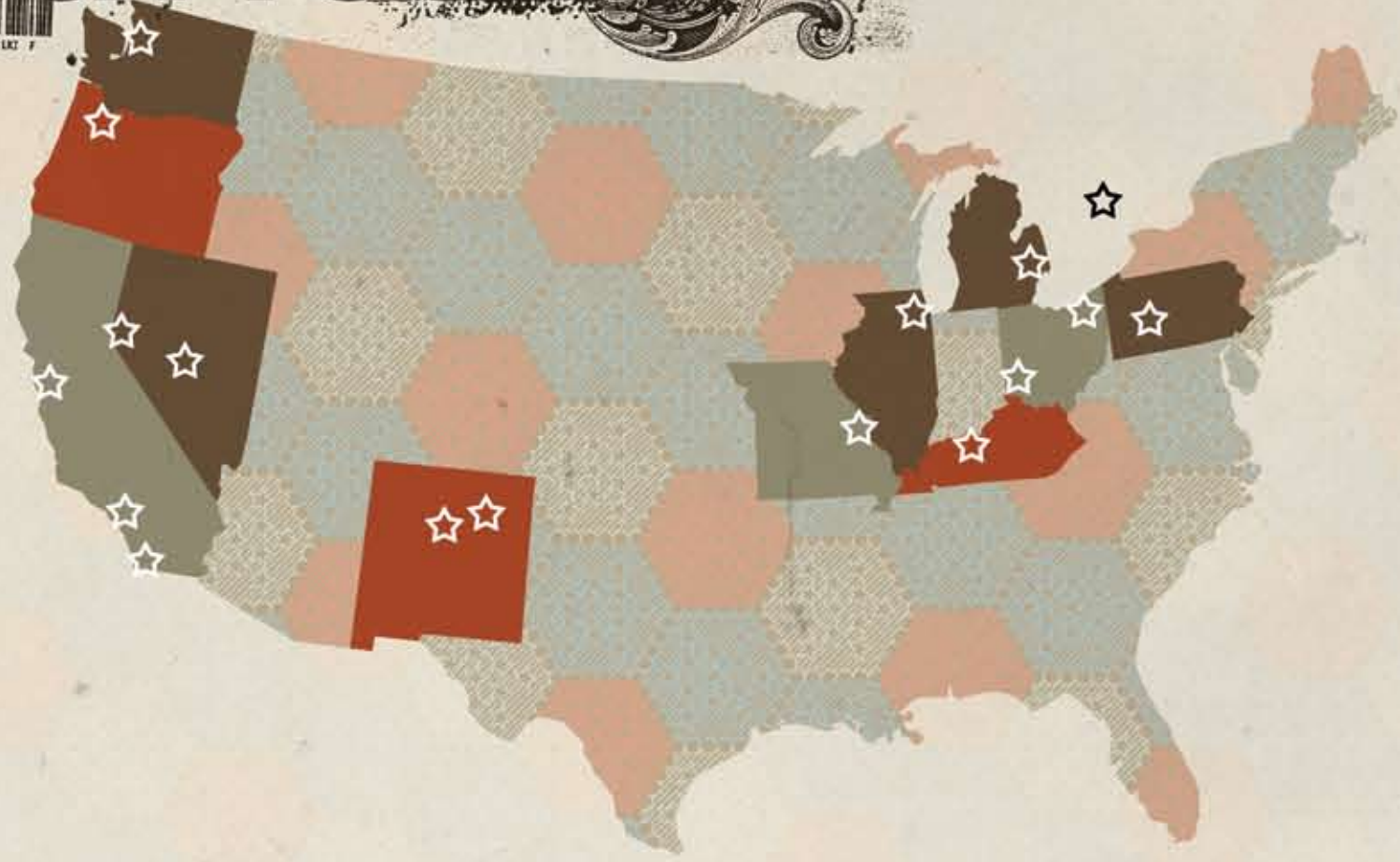
In late 2006, we invited ABOVE to participate in our "11 Spring Street" exhibition. For the show, he painted the outside of the building with his now iconic arrows. Soon after the "11 Spring Street" exhibition, ABOVE began to experiment with his current medium of choice - stencils. ABOVE explained to us, "Today, I like to mix-and-match my works depending on time, resources and city layout. Personally, I feel as an artist this is part of the creative process - having a bag of tricks and being able to adapt to your surroundings, on the spot and in a quick manner."

We expect that for as long as ABOVE is creating art, we'll be receiving his wonderful emails. Over the years, we have come to truly look forward to them, as the passion and commitment they bring is something that is truly inspiring.

Marc and Sara Schiller, Wooster Collective / New York, New York, 2011

PARCEL SELECT RTN
NEWGISTICS, INC. PERMIT N
SMAR LABRTN
PARC LRNSVC
5690

2004



LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
DETROIT, MICHIGAN
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
PORTLAND, OREGON
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
RENO, NEVADA
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
TORONTO, CANADA **(NOT THE U.S.A. BUT WHO CARES!)*
CLEVELAND, OHIO
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO
CINCINNATI, OHIO

In June 2004, I kicked off the *USA Tour* in San Francisco and ended in Detroit, Michigan three months later. At this time in my life, I was still working as a waiter in a restaurant where I saved up all my money and invested it into this tour. After working eight-hour shifts in a busy restaurant, I would come home and cut out the wooden arrows and prepare them for their future installation around the US. With my saved money from my job, I bought plane tickets, paid for rental cars and lots of gas (I added up the total distance driven in a handful of rental cars to be just over 5,000 miles). The tour was a challenge I created for myself - to see if I could rise above this obstacle and have the endurance to visit all of the cities I stared at on my map. It wasn't easy but anything worthwhile never is, so mile after mile, I drove to new parts of the United States - places I'd never previously been to. I would arrive in a new city and pull the arrows out of the trunk of the car and set out into the darkness of this unknown place. Walking about four to six hours a night was an experience in itself; the things you see at night are both beautiful and ugly and often times vulnerable. I had some interesting situations happen while hanging arrows at night but in the end of the tour, I successfully hung all the wooden arrow mobiles I had created. The tour was a big success and it gave me a feeling of accomplishment and optimism for similar future tours... around the world.





ABOVE visited me in Toledo, Ohio as he was passing through the Midwest during his 2004 "USA Tour." Before arriving to Toledo, he was hanging his wooden arrow mobiles in Detroit and came to my apartment with all sorts of crazy stories about the night before! ABOVE said the previous night while hanging his arrow from an electrical line he accidentally knocked out half a city block's electricity and was nearly electrocuted outside of the Detroit House of Blues. He said there was a huge shower of electrical sparks that blinded him for 30 minutes. ABOVE told me he felt like he escaped death with this accident and he said 'fuck it' and went to the Detroit's popular MGM Grand Casino to gamble with his money instead of with his life. Funny thing is, ABOVE hit the jackpot, winning a large sum of money playing a slot machine he said had a lot of arrows on it. ABOVE said he walked out of the casino with 1000 times more money in his wallet than when he walked in.

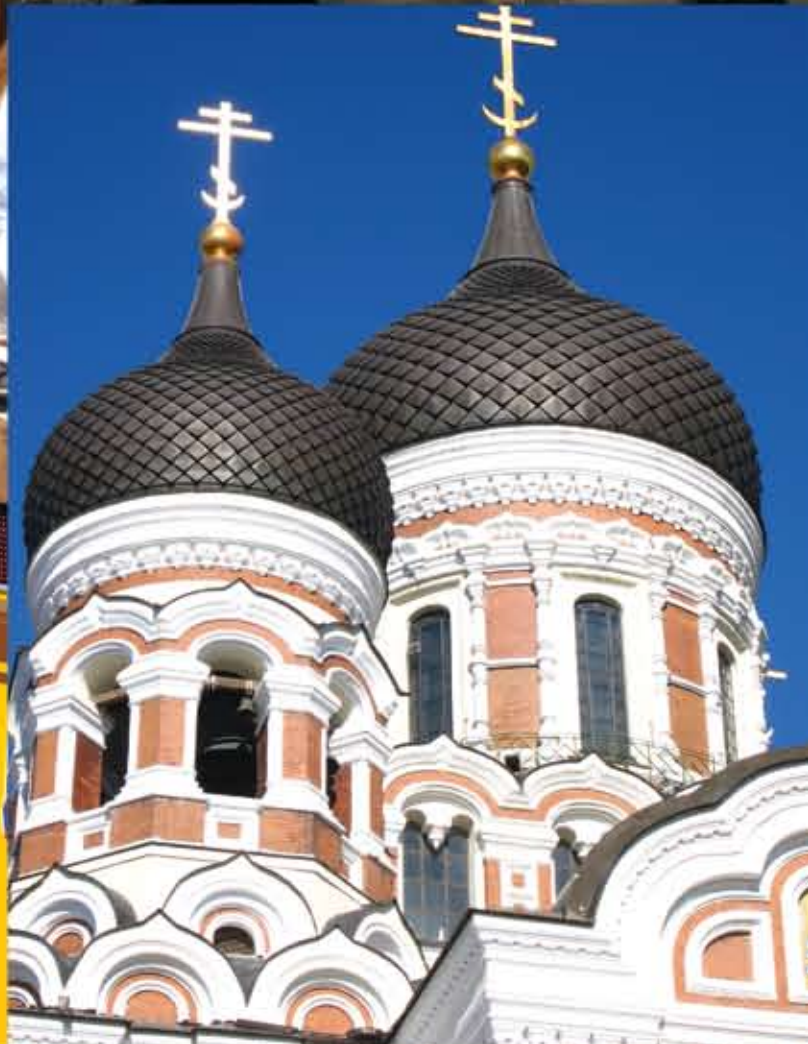
Dustin "UPS0" Hostetler, Toledo, Ohio



*Count how many shoes are hanging in the tree and win a prize.

Don't throw away your old shoes until you have got new ones.
-Proverb

SHOE / TREE
In The Middle Of Fucking No Where, Nevada





"ABOVE is the dude that's got you looking up, down and all around. He's the drug dealer of street art."

EKLIPS MSK / AWR, Los Angeles, California

Speaking of looking up, down and all around I was able to find 17 different arrows in this photo. Take a look and see how many arrows you can find.

DEAD / LINE
Belgrade, Serbia



If you search for luck you won't be able to find it - luck when it happens finds you. I was fortunate to have some good luck when this colourfully star-decorated streetcar passed underneath the arrow. I had my camera ready and the array of colours and shapes from the fabric of the arrow and the streetcar blended very nicely together.

What impresses us most is ABOVE's relentless and self-financed pursuit for new interpretations of his global concept. Most of all ABOVE's interest is to communicate with the viewer below... his clever word plays crowns all and takes him to a higher plateau.

MICROBO & BO130, Milan, Italy

GOOD / LUCK
Milan, Italy



My long time skateboard friend O.J. and I were out skating one day when he asked me if I could paint the exterior of his house with arrows. He had seen a photo of a house in Brussels, Belgium (from the previous chapter) I painted with arrows and he said he liked how it looked and wanted something similar on his house. We skated back to his house to get his truck and after a quick trip to the paint and liquor store, I had all the supplies I needed to paint during that hot California day. After I finished the painting and all the booze, we laughed about how his newly painted arrow house's property value was definitely ascending.



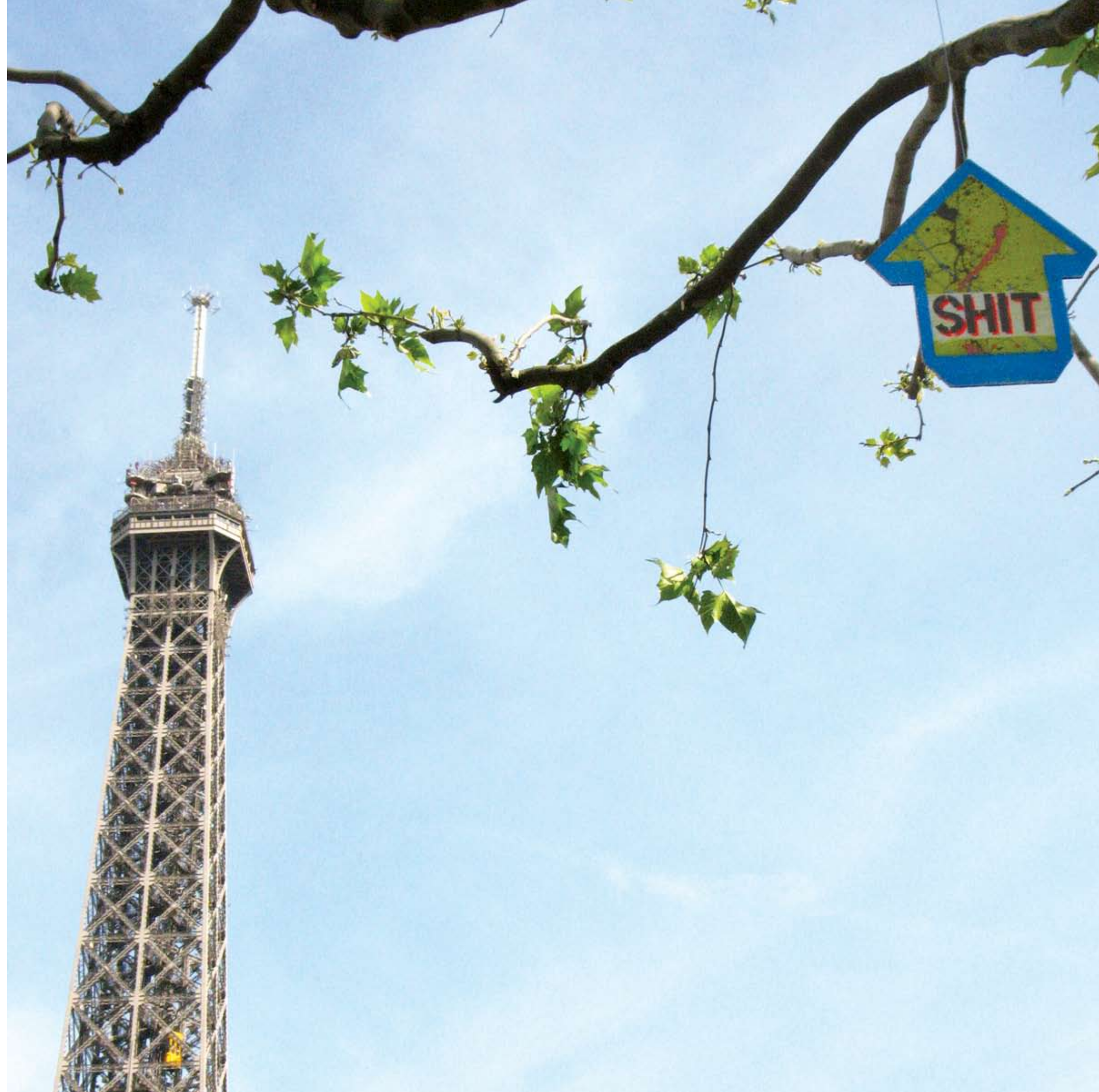


I finished this roller piece late at night in Ljubljana, Slovenia and I wasn't able to get a clean bright photo, so I returned the next day to take photos of this piece and was surprised to see a fashion photographer and this model posing in front of the piece. With my camera already in my hand, I walked up beside the fashion photographer and just started taking photos on my own. Perhaps the model thought I was the photographer's assistant but either way, she loved the attention from both of us taking her photo in front of the piece.

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."
-Ralph Waldo Emerson.

"A day without laughter is a day wasted."
-Charlie Chaplin

OHHHH / SHIT
Paris, France





Vienna, Austria

"The art of art, the glory of expression and the sunshine of the light of letters, is simplicity."
-Walt Whitman





REPUBLICA DEL PARAGUAY

VISA CLASE TURISTA Nº 085221-E

NOMBRE Y APELLIDO: LUIGI BIANCHI

PASAPORTE: VALIDO POR 90 DÍAS A PARTIR DE SU INGRESO AL PARAGUAY

ENTRADA: ÚNICA ☒ MULTIPLES ☐

FECHA DE EMISIÓN: 16/08/2007

FECHA DE VENCIMIENTO: 16/10/2007

DIRECHOS ARANCELARIOS: 660

Leg. N°: 4116

Luis Bianchi

Embajada del Paraguay

SÃO PAULO, BRASIL
MEXICO CITY, MEXICO
BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA
ASUNCION, PARAGUAY
SANTIAGO, CHILE
LIMA, PERU
QUITO, ECUADOR
BOGOTÁ, COLUMBIA
RIO DE JANEIRO, BRASIL
PANAMA CITY, PANAMA
VALPARAISO, CHILE
MACHU PICCHU, PERU
CUSCO, PERU
SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA
GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA



After the intense six-month long *Sign Language Tour* around Europe that ended in December 2006, I was exhausted both financially and physically. In April 2007, I flew up to Alaska to work as a waiter for 4-months in a high-volume seasonal restaurant to finance the future *South Central Tour* that I was already planning later in the year to both South and Central America. The previous year's *Sign Language Tour* body of work focused on using one word on each side of the spinning arrow to create a small word / play "dialog." My ambitions for the *South Central Tour* was to evolve and expand the smaller word / play concept into large painted mural word / plays that focused on typography and adding more words to make statements.

My friend and travelling partner, Ripo had such a great time travelling with me in Europe the previous year that he also wanted to join along the *South Central Tour* for the five-month duration. In October 2007, Ripo and I landed in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil and kicked off the enduring South Central Tour. Growing up painting traditional letter based graffiti, I wanted to build off of what I had learned when I was younger and travelling through South and Central America proved to be the perfect place where I could execute and paint some large word / plays. The countries we visited already had a rich history of large murals and they were free of any graffiti type stigmas that other countries I've visited already enforce. I was pleasantly surprised how easy it was to paint (illegally) in broad daylight; most of the word / plays seen in this chapter were painted during the day. The *South Central Tour* journey lasted five-months and spanned over 5,000 miles - starting in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil and ending in Mexico City, Mexico in April 2008.

This abandoned Christian monastery was very "spooky" to say the least. The former altar (seen in the photo) had abnormally long burn marks reaching all the way to the ceiling. I can only imagine that there was a horrific accidental fire, judging by the flame-scorched walls inside just about every room.

Too many candles will burn down the church.
-Italian proverb

In December 2007, I was so surprised to meet one dude, who was sleeping at São Paulo's airport floor. He was sleeping on the floor in the section for my same flight from São Paulo, Brasil to Asuncion, Paraguay. I was invited to paint a project in Asuncion and was told that ABOVE was also invited and also flying from São Paulo. I soon realized that the guy sleeping on the floor was ABOVE!

The painting project in Asuncion, Paraguay was great and ABOVE would encourage me to go out with him during the day and paint illegally. Strange enough nobody in Asuncion seemed to mind or even know what graffiti was?! Nine months later, ABOVE and I were both invited to Southern Italy for the "Fame Festival!" Once again, we had a great time painting around some abandoned places.

As I see it, ABOVE was one of the first artists to develop such a big project with his images, like a huge and massive action around the world. I could find traces of his artworks and footsteps in all the cities I went to in Europe and often in some unusual locations in back alleys and streets off the main path.

It was like a subliminal message, saying to me and reminding me to 'Look up', and be aware of everything around me.

ETHOS, São Paulo, Brasil





**YEAH
RIGHT**



**LEFT
HANDERS
ARE
NEVER
RITE**





“Dejando lo mejor para el final” (Save the best for the last)
This particular industrial zone in Bogota was under major re-construction. All of the buildings, with the exception of this building I painted, were being demolished and then almost overnight new high-rise buildings were being constructed in their former place. I left Bogotá after 14 days and the building was still standing but I can only assume that it was knocked down shortly after my departure.

ABOVE arrived to Bogotá, Colombia loaded with 180 spray cans, paint rollers and extension poles to paint high spots around Bogotá. ABOVE painted five large walls while he was here with a new style of rollers that had never been seen so far on the streets of Bogotá.

STINKFISH, Bogotá, Colombia

In Spanish, the statement *Salir de Guatemala y entrar en guatepeor* translates into English as, “going from bad to worse.” The problem is that it’s a very abrasive and derogatory statement toward the country and its name, Guatemala. (The word mala in Spanish means “bad”). Many Guatemalan citizens take offense to this phrase, so when I flew from Costa Rica to Guatemala, I already had the idea to put an optimistic spin on it. In changing the word *guatepeor* (“Guata-worse”) into *guatebuena* (“Guata-good”) the whole meaning of the phrase becomes positive.
In changing the word guatepeor into guatebuena the whole meaning of the phrase takes a new positive meaning.

This policeman didn’t bother me with asking if I had permission to paint the wall but instead asked me if I could take a photo of him in front of the painting because he was proud of the piece. *Salir de Guatemala y entrar a guatebuena* translates into English as “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade”.

**EASE
MY
TEARS**



ABOVE



**TEASE
MY
EARS**



RISE
ABOVE
MY
FEARS

on
restauraciones
91.559 91.559



Writing on walls dates back to pre-historic cavemen. Every race of humans have the innate tendency to write on walls - even our very first learning experiences as children in school train and teach us to write on the black board. Can a society really expect us to stop writing on walls as we get older?

Walking down the area of Barrio alto in Lisbon, Portugal you really see a lot of graffiti everywhere. This tagged up wall was exactly what I was searching for with the School-of-Hard-Knocks concept. The idea was to incorporate the already existing graffiti by blocking out the edges of the wall with white paint leaving a rectangular "chalk board" that was covered in tags... the next step was to stencil a tense relationship between a pissed off school teacher disciplining

one of her young students for writing graffiti on the classroom wall. I reckon that undeserved punishment is better than that which is actually deserved.

"Graffiti is an art form based on words but most people who write on walls don't usually say very much. ABOVE always takes into account the site-specific context anytime he paints a wall and figures out something to say that is both playful and thought provoking."

FAUST, New York, New York

Lisbon, Portugal



The 2010, *Mash It Up Tour* promptly started in January in La Havana, Cuba and ended ten months later in Berlin, Germany. You should be able to gather from the title of this tour that the *Mash It Up Tour* was a mixture off all my previous tours - artworks and mediums all mashed together. I've mentioned before that my body of artwork shifts and it changes depending on what part of the world I am travelling in.

Similar to that of a traveller exchanging their currency upon arrival to a new country, I was able to exchange one medium of my artwork for another upon my arrival to a new country. For example, when I travelled to Los Angeles, given that there is a ridiculous number of overhead powerlines all over the city, I wanted to hang the arrow mobiles instead of paint on walls, whereas when visiting New York City with fewer overhead wires, painting walls was the obvious choice. My global travels and being in so many different cities with unique structures is something I deeply enjoy and it keeps me challenged and explorative in how to best create within given environments.

Personally, I don't do illegal spots 24 hours before getting on a plane just in case I get arrested and mess up my plans. However, that didn't bother ABOVE the night he got arrested in Brisbane, Australia. When I was reading the police report it said that the owner of the building was named "Richard Jerks," and I couldn't help but to think that the police were making up a fake name just to push a charge on this American stencil artist that they found at 2 a.m., drunk and with three girls, doing graffiti a few hours before he was supposed to fly out of the country. My bet is "Dick Jerks" never removed the artwork from his building.

Anthony Lister, Brisbane, Australia



