



International Street Art Captured by KRONICLER

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by Pat Rogers

It started as an effort to slow the pace, to take notice of the surroundings and observe the details of life. A camera helped quell the quickness. Falling before the lens was street art. Pretty soon, random sightings became part of a quest to reveal art that reveals current times and different cultures.

A photographer known as “KRONICLER” presented a mini-survey of global street art titled “The Things That You See When You’re Looking” at Sylvester & Company in Amagansett this summer. The use of a moniker (instead of her name) is meant to emphasize that the photographs are a recording of artwork by others. The photographs themselves are not meant to become art themselves, said KRONICLER. The point is to give the street artists their due and capture their message and artistic expression before they disappear. The artist proceeds of art sales were donated to a NYC-based charity so money was not made by the photographer.

“This isn’t about appropriation or taking their art and making it mine,” said the photographer. “It’s about chronicling what was there. There’s such an incredible richness....it’s amazing how street art differs among cultures and street artists.”



“Dali” by KRONICLER, 2005. Taken in Paris.

KRONICLER has been recording street art for 10 years, she said. Photographs reflect street art in cities in the United States (New York City, Seattle and others) plus Paris, London, Istanbul, Amsterdam, Buenos Aires and locations in Turkey, Morocco, Korea, Thailand and other countries. When possible, the street artist is credited. Most of the time, the artist is unknown.



“Just Out of Reach” by KRONICLER.

While transforming subjects into fine art is not the intent, the photographs feel like portraits.

Extraneous settings are stripped away so the street art occupies the entire composition. In this way, KRONICLER isolates the art and places it center stage for onlookers to notice and appreciate.



“Ivy in His Hair” by KRONICLER, 2009. Taken in Buenos Aires.

Street art by its nature can easily go unnoticed, be missed or overlooked. Intact presentation of street art may not last long since work can be quickly altered or obliterated by other street artists or by weather or landlords or officials painting over the work. Capturing art that’s intended to be fleeting became one of the principal missions of a 10-year odyssey photographing street art.

“This is a chronicle of culture,” said KRONICLER. “It’s the chronicle of a vast journey—a recording of things that will never be seen again.”



“TAXI! AIX” by KRONICLER.



“TAXI! NYC” by KRONICLER.

No matter the culture or whether urban or not, street art is about expression, KRONICLER said. Sometimes, there’s a political or cultural message. Other times, the expression bubbles from the street artist. In all cases, the art that’s being made for the streets stands apart from art designed for commercial arenas, she said. The driving force behind street art is expression—not sales.

For instance, street art in Buenos Aires has manifested “profound cultural expressions,” said KRONICLER. One street artist penned ‘Hello. Is anyone out there?’ Beneath it were painted eyes that were cast downward, the photographer said.



“Spock” by KRONICLER.

Stylistically, street art varies from country to country, KRONICLER said. For instance, street artists in Amsterdam tend to align the art with the architecture. Stencils are not typically used, KRONICLER said. Stencils are used in Milan and the art is very political, she said. Buenos Aires is also very political and street artists use their work to protest movements and conditions, KRONICLER said. In New York City, sophistication is present in street art and artists can become recognizable from their signature styles and frequent output, she said.

London street art can be sexy and have a naughty quality to it, KRONICLER said. London street art tends to have humor with an edge, she said. Paris has a “profoundly rich street art scene,” said the photographer. It’s also competitive—she has witnessed street artists working on top of work while the artist who created the underlying piece is still walking away.

“It’s amazing what you see when you start looking,” KRONICLER said. “You really have to go out there all the time or you’ll miss it.”



“Simon Trembles” by KRONICLER, 2009. Taken in NYC.



“Monsieur Gainsbourg” by KRONICLER.

Part of the joy of recording art in the street is feeling energy of expression. The artist is compelled to make art and that infuses the work with something special, she said. “There’s a positive artful energy with street art,” KRONICLER said.



“Dripping Life NYC” by KRONICLER, 2003.

BASIC FACTS: KRONICLER presented a solo photography show of international street art in “The Things That You See When You’re Looking” at Sylvester & Company in Amagansett. The exhibition featured 180 photos portraying a range of street art styles and geographic influences. All of the artist proceeds from sales were donated to the Child Mind Institute.

Sylvester & Company is located 154 Main St, Amagansett, NY. www.sylvesterathome.com

UPDATE: February 3, 2013: Works by KRONICLER are now available at Sylvester & Co. 103 Main Street, Sag Harbor, NY 11963

INSIDER INFO: KRONICLER is based in NYC and the Hamptons.

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