



Unik
Zeray
Hard
Helsinki
Västerås



Work in Progress



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Tags by the writers we interview in this issue - Zeray (p. 31), Ida(crew) by Unik (p. 20) and Spy(crew) by Hard (p. 13)

Words from a harried editor

To many writers, graffiti is the most important thing in their life, and accordingly, the depiction of graffiti is a sensitive matter. However, the way graffiti is depicted in the media is not for the sensitive. Most of the "graffiti-is-vandalism" articles I have read in later years have contained little that I relate to as a graffiti writer.

Of course, I'm sensitive, but I would like to suggest that UP is one of the few organs of the Swedish printed press where graffiti is about graffiti. Consequently, responsibility lies heavily upon us, which our very committed readers never let us forget. Everyone, from the Transit Authority and other powers-that-be to graffiti writers, has opinions to share with us.

Some think we include too many hastily-put together train paintings, and others think we give too much space to large legal colour walls. We are often told that we only mention the old, established writers and fail to showcase new artists. Some think that our standards are too low and we publish "any old toy-piece". Many Stockholm resi-

dents think that UP should only represent Stockholm, while people from other communities think that we are far too fixated on the capital. As icing on the cake, the authorities think we should distance ourselves from illegal graffiti.

It is impossible to depict graffiti in Sweden objectively. The question is whether or not it is desirable to do so. If you want to find out about the truth, enter the real world. Magazines can never be anything more than a medium for representing certain chosen parts of reality. We show small, and, hopefully, well-chosen pieces of reality. Opinions are legion and irreconcilable. Sometimes it feels as though there are enough attitudes and opinions to fill ten graffiti magazines. Just in Sweden.

Of course, we're not infallible. In the editorial department, we don't always agree on the final selection. We've made mistakes and will certainly make them again. We will continue to disappoint writers (both those we know and don't know) and other interested readers.

But when there is only one magazine that is published somewhat regularly, we think it should deal with the whole of graffiti culture, not just one style or kind, not just one generation or one location.

We want to make a magazine that involves writers and graffiti followers, and in that I think we have been successful, if one is to judge by all the opinions that we have received on the contents of UP.

If UP is the only regularly published Swedish graffiti magazine, it wasn't the first. This distinction belonged to Kilroy, which has intermittently published 8 issues. A ninth issue is due in the autumn, and Kilroy is intended to be printed regularly from now on. It is with joy we look forward to sharing the responsibility of depicting Swedish graffiti. Of course, this will mean competing for material and readers, and our ambition is to continue being the best. We welcome Kilroy back into the arena.

Jacob Kimvall

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Legally responsible: Jacob Kimvall

Editorial Staff: Malin Fezehai, Jacob

Kimvall, Tobias Barenthin Lindblad, Magnus,

Malcolm Jacobson, Helena Brolin, Tony,

Jöns Jönsson, Alex Boyea, Robert Morell

Text: Malcolm, Jöns, Tobias, Jacob, Robert

Layout: Malin, Jacob, Malcolm

English translation: Martin Thomson

Photo: Malcolm, Malin, Tobias, Helena,

Philip and everybody who supported us!

Catering: Yanina Casanova

Ads: Tobias Barenthin Lindblad

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ADDRESS:

Underground Productions

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up@underground-productions.se

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Kropp - 2001



Chill, character by Cilos

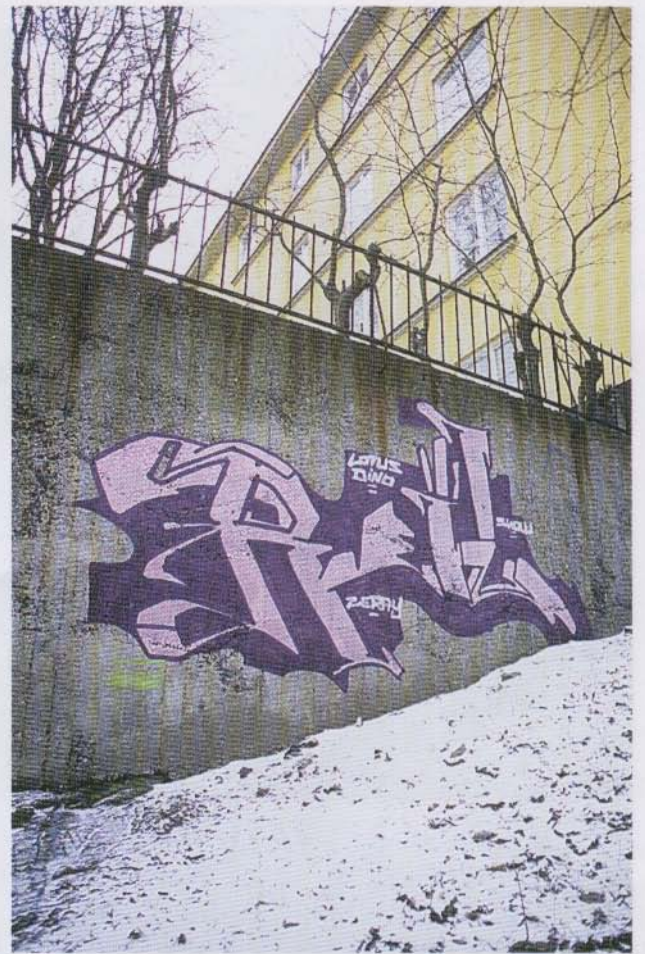


Leyk, Spy - 2001





Hotel, Illa - 2001



Reil - 2001



Gorilla - 2001



Hotel, Karma - 2001



Polar, Bor, Lake, Pomak, Asma, Obe, Nelly - 2001



Kaws characters by Candy - 2001



Tyse, character by Riza



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Kurir, Spek



Korall



Boss, Eror, Sken





Roar,Vain



Blood



Spy's - 2000



Killa - 2000



Brown



Irie, Keyz



Bite, Meo, Zupp, Losk, Noves - Norrköping 2001



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Amor, Sken, Fats - 2001



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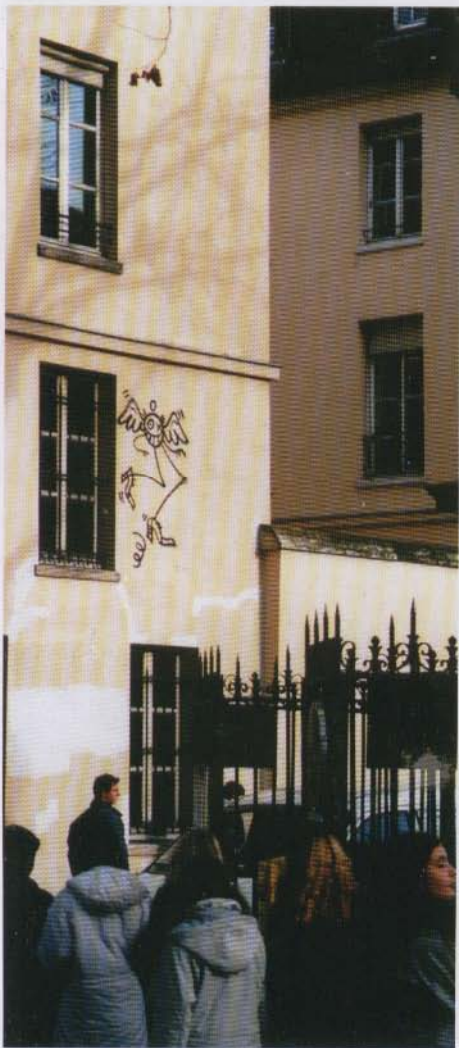


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IN THE STREET



Paris



Paris



Zerie, Stockholm - 2001



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Paris



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Stockholm



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Space Invader



Characters by Kropp, Stockholm - 2001



Stockholm



Stockholm



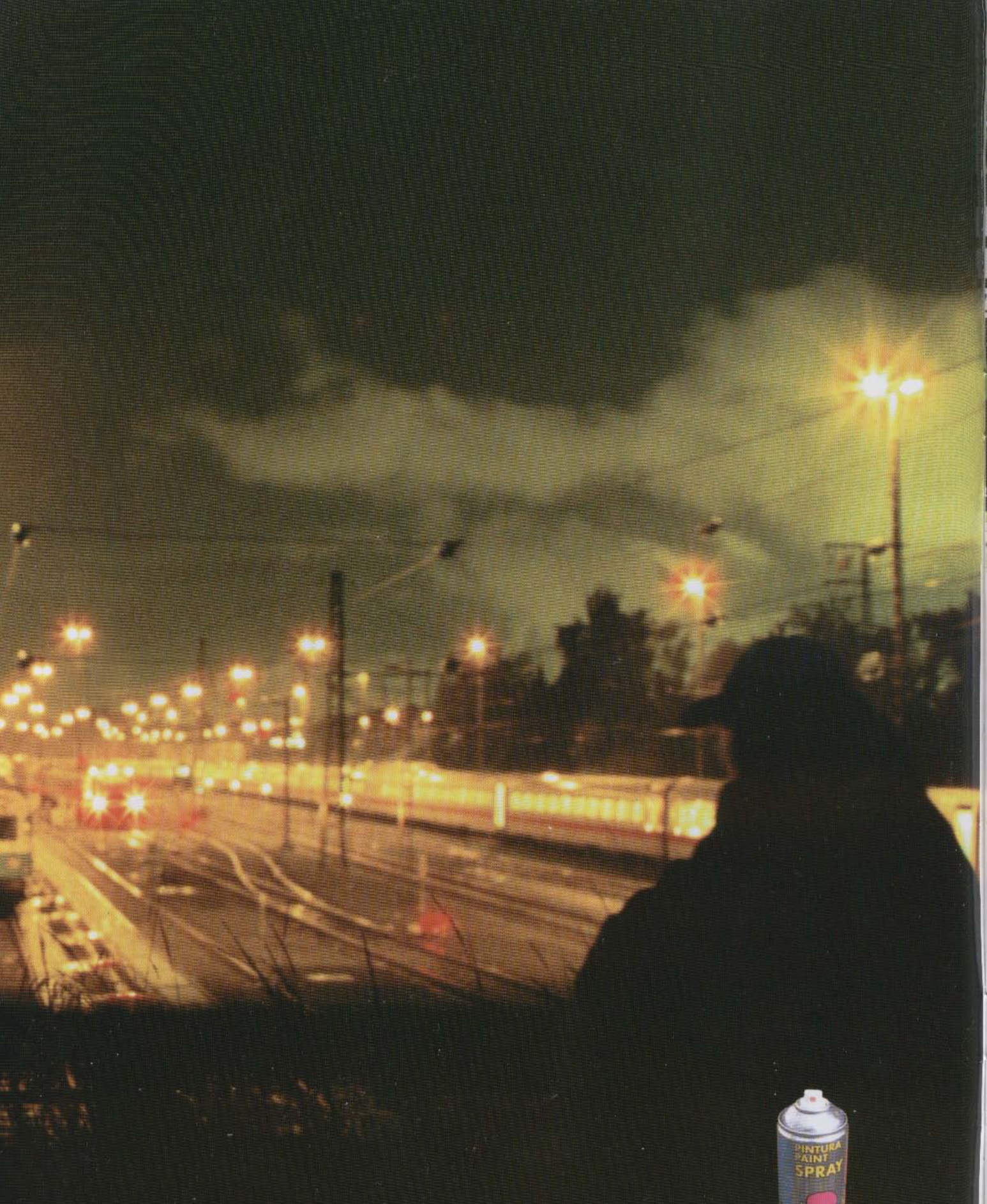
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Hard – "I see myself as an uncrowned king"

Hard is a writer who has held my attention for some time, not for his burner styles or colouring: Hard is one of Stockholm's most dedicated bombers and has appeared under many names in Stockholm. Today he belongs to the SPY crew. Hard doesn't just do tags, though. He also does a respectable amount of pieces, most of them quick and simply-styled, designed to be visible across the entire city. Hard is trying to bring his idea of what the city should look like to fruition. His interest in graffiti began in seventh grade.

"Some guys at school wrote tags, mostly at school, but later in the subway too. They asked me if I wanted to join them, so I did. I started tagging in a small way in 1993."

The reason for Hard writing tags is partly excitement and partly the fact that he wanted to get to know a guy in school bet-

ter, one who styles himself 'Merda'.

"He had the reputation of a fighter, but he was always very nice to me."

Merda was to be his main inspiration, and also Fan, another member of DMC, the crew Hard was to join. As a new writer, you have to check out the big guys too. Hard remembers thinking that Slik's tags were especially cool, even though he thought they said "Sysk". However, the greatest influences are Jazon and Weston; even though their most active period has passed, rumours about them are still around.

During the early 90's, many writers used to meet at Hötorget, a central subway station, on Saturdays. If fights arose, Merda was often involved. DMC became increasingly associated to Merda's fighting. I always had the impression that Hard is a calm and reasonable person, and I find it hard to imagine him fighting. Wasn't the fighting troublesome?

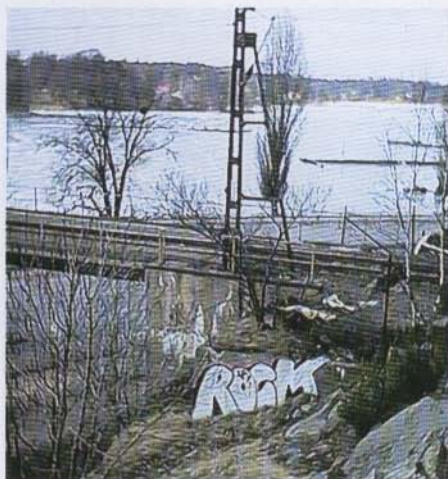
"To me, graffiti always came first. I tried to defuse the situations, not physically, but verbally. I like the personalities of my friends. Merda and I gelled."

In the Spring of 1995, something happened with consequences for Hard. Merda would never back down in a fight: it was as if a threshold was reached, a barrier would go, and he totally lost control. One night, a fight got out of hand with tragic results. Merda was arrested and disappeared from the graffiti scene. Has this affected you? "Absolutely! I shun crowds. I would rather sit at home and drink beer with some friends than go to a bar. Trouble arises too easily

over peccadilloes. People die for nothing. Hard kept on bombing, mainly in the subway, and especially on the "red line" which traverses the city. He wanted his name up, but nowadays he doesn't care in the same way:

"Now I want to be the king, perhaps not in the graffiti world but for myself. It's hard to reach the top in Stockholm, as some people seem to be on the prowl all the time, doing nothing but graffiti. That's not my lifestyle. I always have something on the side, which has been good for me. At school, all I would do was sit around waiting to go tagging in the subway. Yearning for it made me appreciate it that much more. Soon I discovered that graffiti made me feel good. It was like a friend. In 1996, I wrote in a piece: 'Graffiti's there for me, so I'm there for it'."

According to persistent rumour, Hard only goes bombing on his own. This is unusual among graffiti bombers, who usually prefer safety in numbers. Curious, I ask him if this is true, and if so, why. Hard tells me





that he used to get caught quite often in the early years. Often, excursions he had planned with others would not pan out; he grew tired of this and started to make his writing excursions on his own.

There are many advantages to this: he need not compromise with the will of others. Often, the walls he has planned to paint are adapted to one name only, and moreover, he becomes less visible, like a shadow. I ask him about the disadvantages of writing alone.

"It's harder to keep you eyes open, of course. I'd like to have a lookout. It can be tough, getting caught when you're on your own."

Most writers end up getting caught. Of course, it's nothing to look forward to, but some seem to care less about the risk of being arrested. Do you ever get nervous when you go out?

"Of course I get paranoid. I'm not a machine! When I'm doing a legal wall, I usually think to myself that I'll make the calm last into the evening."



Why do you keep going despite the almost ubiquitous resistance?

"Graffiti is like a form of meditation to me. I have given a lot of thought to what drives me, and when I read interviews with other writers I usually pick up on what suits me. It becomes my motivation. Then there's the will to go on being seen."

Is status important?

"It comes and goes. Sometimes I want people to talk about me the same way we would talk about Jazon and Weston when I was starting out. Other times, I don't give a shit. It won't change my life. My own mood defines my happiness. It depressed me when I realised this, because suddenly other people's opinion no longer mattered. I see myself as an uncrowned king of the graffiti world; I fit no category."

The city of Berlin and its individual writers are Hard's greatest source of inspiration nowadays. Busy of the RCB crew greatly impressed Hard during his visit to Stockholm in 1995, when he did several inner city pieces. With its many street pieces, new and

innovative styles, tags and burners, Berlin fascinates Hard.

"I like Bisaz from Berlin. He is a complete writer: he does wholecar burners, bomb pieces, tags, the lot. That's how I want to be, even if it takes me all my life. And it may, but who cares? Age doesn't count: Graffiti to me is like art to Picasso."

I ask Hard if he minds the fact that writing is illegal and that many people are annoyed by his work. Yes, he does think about it a great deal, but when the papers write about harder punishments and prison, he loses interest in trying to explain what he is doing, because nobody understands. He recognises the fact that it is easier to cease caring what others think and just keep soldiering on.

"Graffiti is my politics," says Hard, "My way of exacting justice. I think I'll go on for a while, at least until I hit 40. But I may not do it in the same way I do now. Adult life is already diverting me. You have to compromise."

For a few years now, Hard has been a





Rcb 1995 in Stockholm: A source of inspiration

member of KCN, K-line Connection, a Stockholm crew known for its wildstyle burners and crazy partying. Since Hard doesn't seem to be much of a party animal or wall burner, I ask him how he came to join KCN. He tells me that it had to do with personal chemistry. He enjoyed their company.

"I like to frequent different groups," says Hard. "After a few years of hanging with the 'red line' writers, I grew tired of drinking. It's fun to a point, but it can get too much. KCN was mainly a crew to hang with: some members didn't do pieces."

How is your style important to you? Do you sketch much?

"It comes and goes. Up until 1999, I sketched a lot, but then I realised that I never use the sketches, and it felt meaningless to carry on. Now I've started painting those sketches. I've always been tagging on paper too, but mainly with other people's tags rather than my own. I like imitating other people's tags, joining the letters the way they do, but outside it's the Hard tag. For me, the most important thing wasn't that it should look good, with colours and all, but that it should look cool! I will defend my style, but the place I write on is more important than the look of the piece."

But, I ask, isn't it more fun to do a piece? Isn't it more satisfactory to expend more energy on a painting? Hard tells me that satisfaction wears many faces. In the time it takes to do a good piece, you can tag twenty places, which is also satisfactory. But lately, pieces have consumed most of his energy.

I ask which Swedish writers influence Hard through their styles and attitudes. One source of inspiration is Unik's inner-city pieces. Star, T-Bag, and Klick's piece on Thorildsplan in Stockholm are some of the other sources of inspiration. Hard also mentions Spion, Irok and Skil.

As Hard has done throw-ups to a great degree, I ask him how he feels about the Swedish ability to do them.

"Not many people do really good throw-ups. They are often too ambitious. Style is important, but they have to be made quickly as well, and most importantly, be spread. VIM, Reson and Mash have done quite a bit! For myself, throw-ups went like this: to do something new, you have to do your homework first sometimes. I read a lot of graffiti books and found out that writers in New York used two-letter names for throw-ups. I thought that two letters are better than three, and came up with a new name just for throw-ups."

In order to remain active as a writer, some type of reward is necessary. You don't get paid, and you're not always appreciated, so this reward has to take on a different aspect. Is it inner satisfaction, perhaps, or happiness? When does graffiti make you happy?

"This week I've been looking forward to doing quick chrome pieces. I've already decided on where, at least a starting point. Then it'll be several pieces in a night. Before going out, I check caps, cans, gloves. I'll sit sketching for a while, trying out styles. Sometimes I'll read a graffiti magazine or check out a graffiti movie. I like old Ger-

man magazines like *Backjumps* and *Overkill* the most. I often get a couple of hours' sleep in the evening.

I set my clock, get up and take the night bus, go to the first wall and check it out. Then I write as long as I feel comfortable with it. When I'm done, I go home. I like to have a beer on the way. If it's quiet, I like to listen to my walkman while I write. The next day, I like to see my painting as a part of the city. It's wonderful. Completely indescribable."

What is your goal?

"I want to be comfortable with what I do, and keep on going for my own sake. It's really important to compare myself to myself! Especially in graffiti. It's my greatest interest in life."

Is the social part of graffiti important to you?

"Absolutely! It makes me sad that I bomb alone and seldom chill with my friends and talk about graffiti. It would be a dream to do that regularly, but I'll go on until I get tired, it's that simple."

Tobias Barenthin Lindblad





Phiy, Bluf - 2001

STOCKHOLM SUBWAY



Silk - 2001



Seiko, Beast, Bcc - 2001



Pms - 2001



Phiy - 2001





Fear – 2001



Riga – 2001



Wufc – 2001



Buffed tags by Sdk & Wufc, new ink makes tags hard to buff.



Phiy – 2001



Cde – 2001



Drone



Hnr, Msn – 2001



Pms, Pms – 2001



Ofuk, Yxa, Rilo, Nick, Ode, Love – 2001



Gang - 2001



Clan - 2001



Squad - 2001



Nick - 2000



Ode - 2000



Pms - 2001



Mafia - 2001



Posse - 2001



Ribe - 2001



Riga



Calina - 2001

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Skar, Unik – 2000



Unik



Unik



Izleys



Isley, Thick – 2000



Unik

Unik – "Better an impression than nothing at all."



Unik does all kinds of graffiti: pieces in the City area, in fames and on trains, characters, tags and what is known as Street Art.

What motivates you?

I want to find a style of my own that I feel comfortable with. I don't intend to be the greatest: I just want to have fun. Drawing is everything to me. When I'm not doing graffiti I'll be drawing my friends, tables, chairs, television sets or rockets. Hands are the most fun to draw. Graffiti, as a blend of thrill-seeking and art, is a good way to test your limitations.

At present, trains attract Unik the most.

I'm not really a train writer, which is why I want to improve in that area. I do trains because of the action. There are no legal walls in Stockholm; it's as if the opponents to graffiti want it to become more hardcore. Now it feels as if you're on the run every time.

Is there enough time to do what you want to on trains?

The challenge is to do something as good as possible in the time you have. You never really finish, the question is whether you get caught or not.

The guards wait until you have finished until they grab you, which is crazy: they're supposed to prevent the trains from getting written on in the first place.

Has writing on trains changed your style?

Yes, there is a risk of developing an impersonal train style to do something large in a short period of time. I try to be a bit more artistic.

Styles reflect different personalities. Many have aggressive styles, while mine are perhaps a bit more playful. It's a whole gallery of personalities that is being shown aboard the trains.

Does size count?

Yes. I've done a few too many small panels, but a small piece can look cheeky.



Unik – Helsinki 2001



Unik



Unik



Sad, Unik – 2001

Does it matter that the trains travel so little?

I'm satisfied as long as I get my picture. Anyway, now you can do films, too, where you really see the trains roll.

Don't films and the press create the impression that each and every train is covered in graffiti?

Yes, but better an impression than nothing at all.

Unik is remiss in documenting his work. He often goes out without a camera, and several pieces are lacking in his collection.

I remember the feeling of writing, which is the most important thing.

You paint more and more as time goes by. Where do you get the energy?

It has to do with how you are as a person. I'm a restless person. When I was a kid I was jumpy and had loads of energy, but I would calm down when I drew. When I started doing graffiti in 1995 I would be happy to do one piece. Now I want to test my limitations. I have loads of energy and ideas and I want to squeeze out all the fun I can get before moving on. I don't know how long that will take.

Is graffiti always fun?

No, but achieving a goal is fun. Succeeding with a panel. It's a lot of work: you al-

ways have to look for new locations, get cans, there are thousands of things to keep track of.

Some people think of graffiti as compulsive behaviour.

It can be. It's like a mission in life. You want to show guards and other people who try to stop you that they can't.

Hours of sketching lie behind every painting. Unik fills many pads with sketches, most of which he dismisses as garbage. He cuts out those he likes and puts them on the wall. If he brings a sketch to the trains, he eats it when the piece is finished so that no guards or policemen can get their hands on it.



Heat



Unik – Copenhagen



Sad, Unik



Unik

Is it really worth a whole day's work for a piece that takes 10-15 minutes to do?

It is afterwards. When you write in a heavily-guarded city like Stockholm, it's worth that much more when you succeed. There's more soul in a painting when you know how much work went into it.

Unik's tags are a common sight in Stockholm, and they are all different. Apart from tags, he also paints rockets and dogs on the streets of Stockholm, which some people see as a development of graffiti into what is usually called Street Art.

To me the rockets are like a tag, a brand that symbolises me. It's nice that people like Akay dig them. I don't think I belong to his school, but I'm impressed by his work.

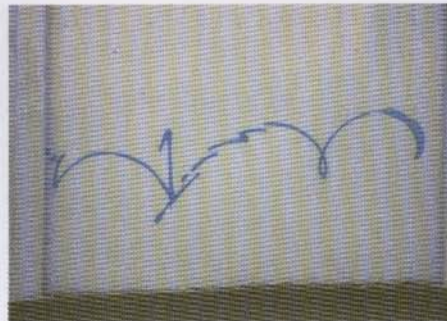
Malcolm Jacobson



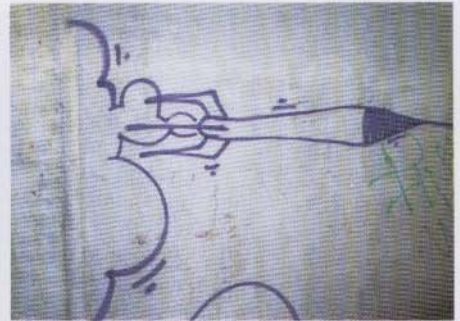
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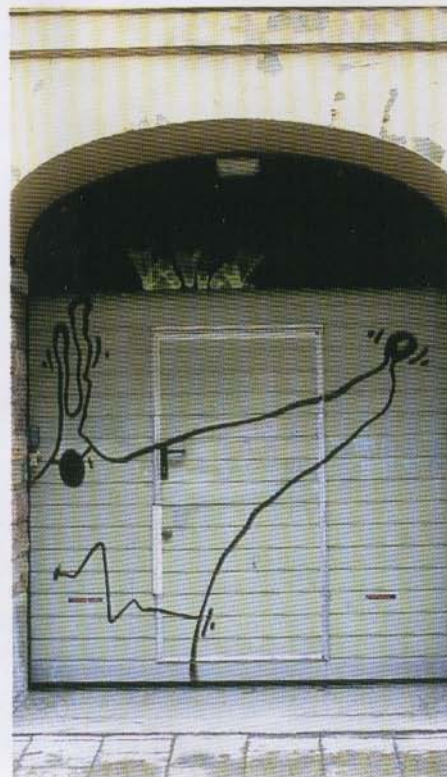
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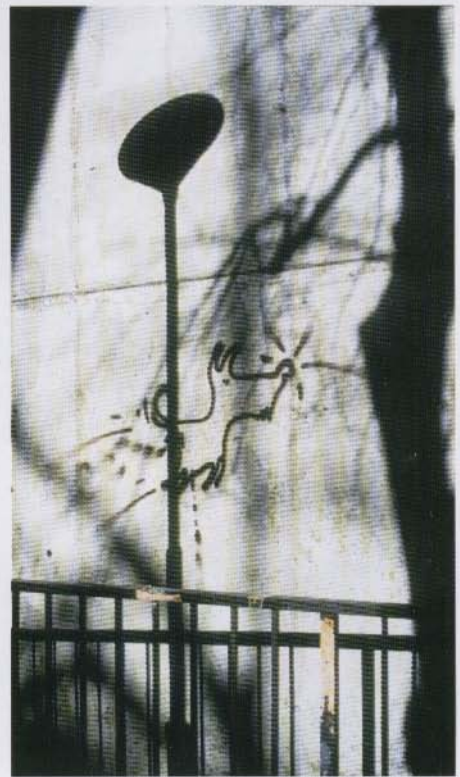
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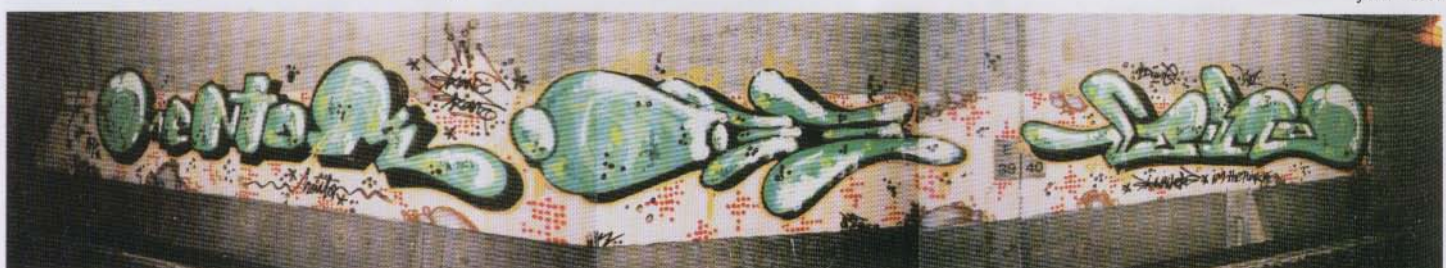
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Sosw, Ner



Jewel - 2001



Mentor, Ofee, Dino - 2001



Sos, Cake, Kräm



SWcrew – Malmö 2000



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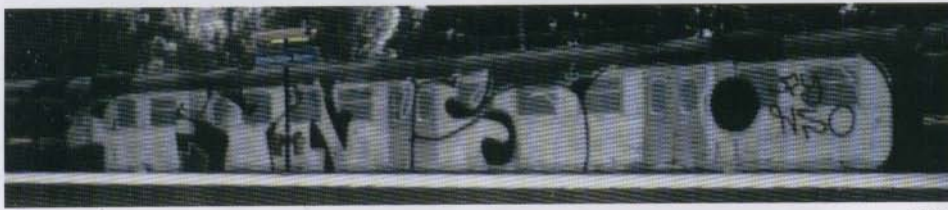
Marvel – 2001



Vels



STOCKHOLM COMMUTER TRAINS



Fynso



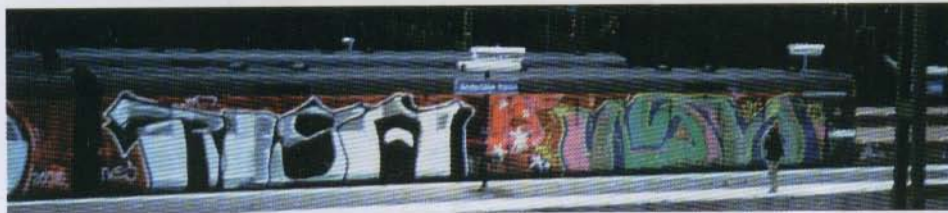
Mosak



Fy Krew



Alar



Riga, Vsn



Xxx





Pms, Pms, ?, Oidos - 2001



Fuck the cops



1005



Yxa, Xno, Punt



Hooker - 2001



Olga



Ida, Pms, Ida, Pms, Idas



Pms - 2001



Anarki i Sverige (Anarchy in Sweden) by Maes



Vab by Mabe



Bill



Ske

Cerebral Parez

The CP crew mainly hail from the Dalarna area in the middle of Sweden. Its members are Mabe, Nuek, Ske, Bill, Maes, Malf, Arom and Johnny V8. Here is Mabe's description of the crew:

"From the start, it was about trying to create a sort of snail's perspective on the letters. We were three writers pretending to be kids again.

Now we are an equipped group of eight writers who are all also involved in various other art forms.

We want to write using a naive language and we have an idea about how we would write if we were five years old.

We come from sparsely-populated areas where there are many trains and quiet walls. Mostly we are on the road somewhere between Sweden's assorted rural yards. We like travel and adventure. In the car, there is always something to be discussed or laughed at, much more than just graffiti."



Maes by Mabe, Nuek



Ske, Arom



Johnny V8



Malf

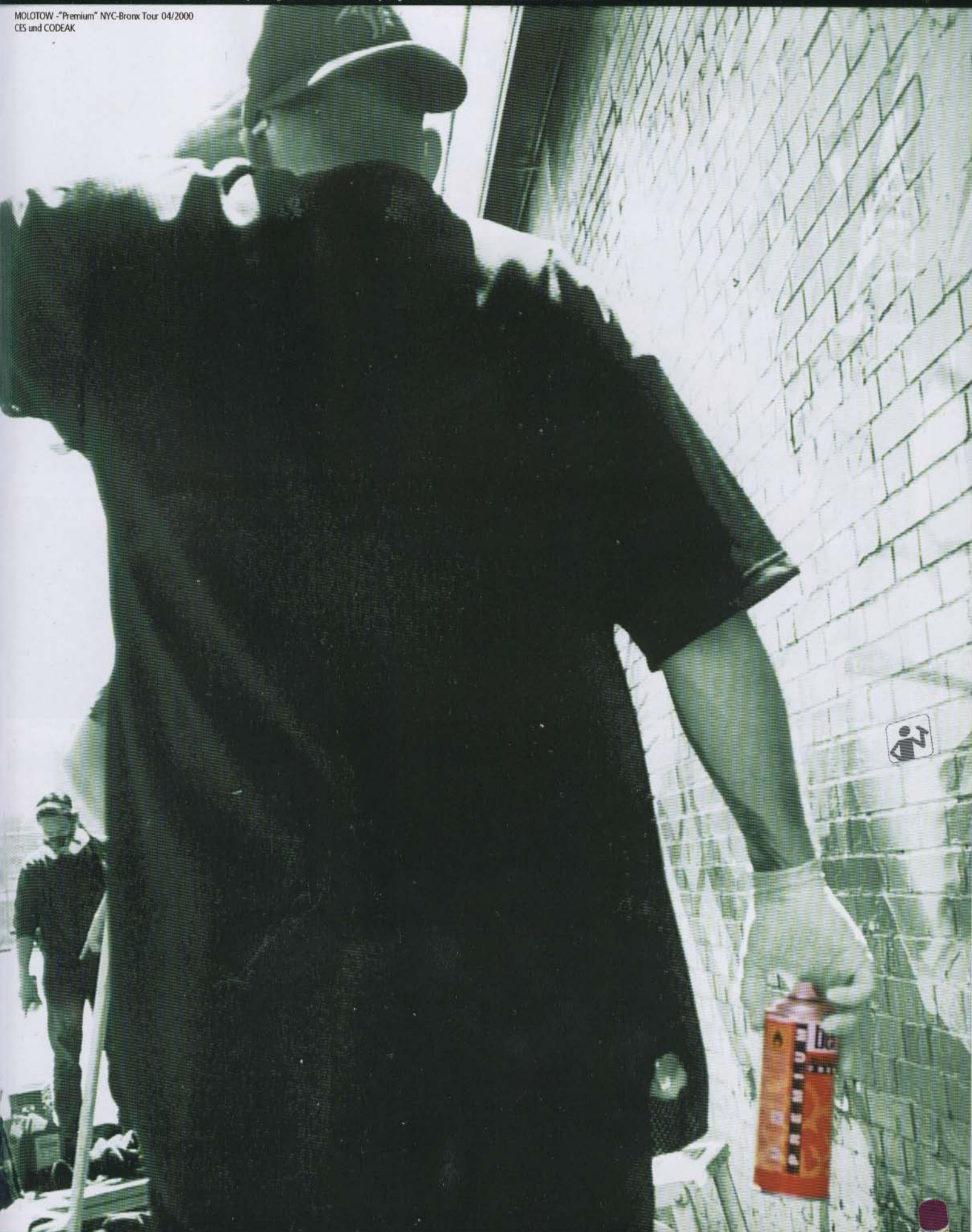


Mr AT by Johnny V8

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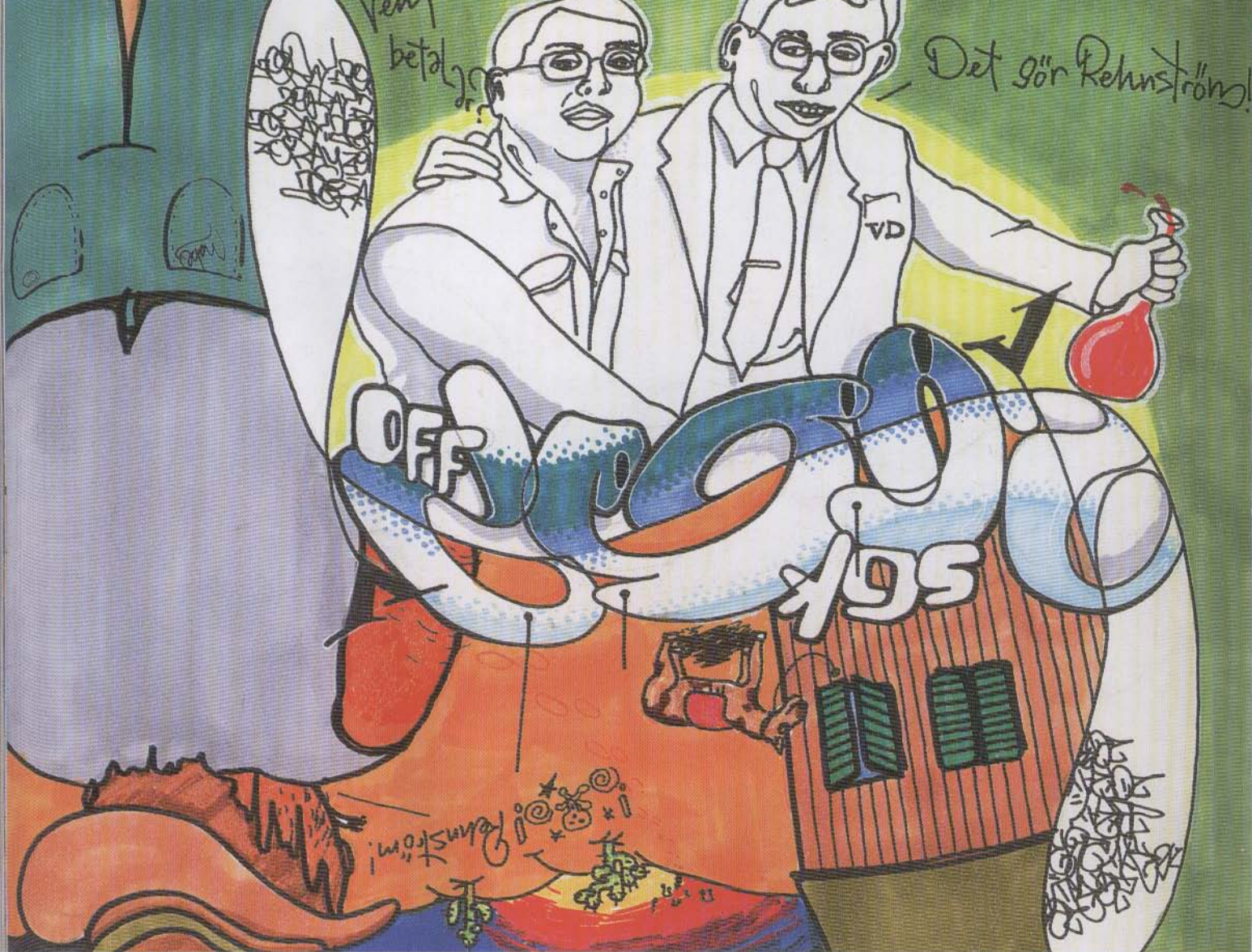
Twcs



Dekis, Cakes – 2001



Fuksh



Zeray – Sorting the Garbage

Zeray is a young writer whose tags and throw-ups have been appearing more and more lately, especially in the inner city. He has been working under other names since 1996. He only started with the name 'Zeray' late in the year 2000.

Why did you choose the name Zeray?

"I wanted to use cool letters that I hadn't used in my earlier tags. It doesn't mean anything.

What can you tell us about your style, and what inspires you?

"I don't really think about my inspirations, but of course I receive them sub-consciously. There are so many good writers in Stockholm. When I started I liked Akays old stuff. Now I like people like Ikaros and Philly. Philly has a fun style, but not one I want for myself. I like Robob, because he always

comes up with new styles. And Hotel is one of the best in Sweden. Lately Foe and Orne's styles have inspired me. They do really cool stuff! Ehso, who works a lot but still remains fresh, inspires me too. Akay and Bakteria also influence me in a different way. You want to go out and create when you see all that's going on in town. Lately my style has been all about lines, since I've mostly been doing throw-ups. The letters should be done in a few lines, even during sketching. The style is built on long lines that go across the piece and form several letters simultaneously. It's recycling the lines, like when I sort through the garbage, separating glass and papers. I used to compost, but the neighbours complained about the smell. My style is a lot like recycling, but at the same time I want speed. It has to roll!"

Did you start with throw-ups or pieces when you began recycling lines?

"Actually, I haven't done many pieces since I changed my name through Zeray. Lately I've hardly written anything, just gone bombing. It's been cold lately, but when it gets warmer. I'll probably do more colour walls. Then you also get inspired by different styles."

Zeray has written in different towns around the country. He takes the opportunity to write on trains, since he finds this pointless in Stockholm.

"Now it's so hard in Stockholm, and what's more, the pieces don't travel, so there are better ways to express yourself."

Would you rather live in a different city?

"There aren't that many other cities I can imagine living in in Sweden. Gothenburg, maybe. It's big enough and has many possibilities, but it would be hard moving to a smaller city."

What is the attitude among writers in Stockholm, as compared to other cities?

"So-so. If you look at other cities, it seems that all the writers know each other, and that's not really the way in Stockholm. But then, so many people write in Stockholm,



Zer



Zer



Reil, Zeray



Zeray



Zeray

that competition occurs and different types of writers appear.”

How about styles in Stockholm?

“Stockholm is the best city in Sweden, style-wise, no contest. The train paintings are cool in Stockholm. So many great things are done despite the time limitations. The Stockholm style is probably the best among the Nordic countries. Denmark has a few fun writers, but Stockholm has more!

I’ve seen the rest of Europe mainly through graffiti magazines. Prague seems to have a fun scene in terms of ideas, but I don’t like it when it looks too messy. The Germans have good styles and do cool colour

walls, but it doesn’t feel like they’re developing. A lot of what you see is pure wild style, which is okay but can get boring at length. It’s fun when something new happens. I’ve heard of things that don’t seem to appear in the press or in movies, like stree pieces and bombing. I’m hoping to see it for myself this summer.”

How does the future look?

“Bright. I’ll probably carry on for a while. You want to keep going as long as it’s fun. Actually it would be quite nice to grow tired of writing, because it does cause a few problems. It comes and goes. During the winter, with the cold, I’ve mostly done

bombing and fast stuff. But it’s still a blast to do colour walls. I sometimes wish I had another hobby that interested me as much but that was a bit more orthodox.”

Can you imagine devoting yourself to any other art form instead?

I’ll always be some kind of artist, but I’m not that old. We’ll see.

Jöns



Zeray – Stockholm 2001



Zeray – 2000



Zeray



Character by Pbar, Mabe, Zeray – Gothenburg 2001



Character by Ikaros, Zeray



Zeray, Hotel





Illa



Poker



Oxä, Character by Kalif

GOTHENBURG



Smöd



Ollio, Jinx



Gem



Slav



Killa



Modig



Okei



Look



Soul, Ollio, Ollio, Ollio, Ollio



Västerås by Puppet in the Västerås harbour

Västerås – Small but important city in Swedish hiphop

Hip-Hop and all it entails came to Sweden in the 80s. That's when the culture set root in Västerås, and tags started sprouting up on the city walls. Västerås is Sweden's sixth largest city, counting some 130,000 inhabitants. Stockholm is reachable by train in about an hour, and this proximity is often visible in graffiti. Many writers have felt the influence of the Royal Capital. Twenty years on, Hip-Hop continues to grow, and with it graffiti, much to the chagrin of politicians...

In the early 80s, Hip-Hop came to Västerås. Thanks to great names like Puppet and Meanie, Västerås has a graffiti scene as old as Stockholm's.

In those days, kids, among them CPT (Crime Pays Team), made their way to the Västerås quays to write. The owner of the walls in the quays gave his approval, and writing continued quite legally. This continued until 1997, when the City bought the

walls and forbade all forms of graffiti on the waterfront. The reason given was that writers would also illegally exercise their craft on their way there and back. In the happy days before the new City ordinances, writing would occur in other parts of the town. One of the biggest crews of the early 90s, HIA (Hooligans In Action), readily demonstrated this. They more or less bombed the entire city. It was hard for the police to arrest illegal writers. Anyone caught with any cans could easily explain them by stating that he was going to write at the quays, which wasn't always the case. Despite the interdiction on the waterfront, writing still occurs there among the large cranes and buildings. Personally, I think it is a pity that the walls lost their legal status. I'm probably not the only one.

A great name in Västerås graffiti is Pasha. He began writing in 1987. He says it just happened, that all his friends painted and he just latched on. He has always liked

Hip-Hop culture, but also image and form, so graffiti was the aspect of Hip-Hop that most attracted him.

What is so special about the Västerås graffiti scene? Which styles are most common?

Västerås has developed into a bomber city in the last five years. There's a lot of new-school, with Stockholm influences. You can also find some old-school, but not as often. There's very little Street Art, which I personally think is a shame, says Pasha.

Where does most writing take place?

Nowhere in particular. It's all over.

Who are the writers, mostly?

In the early 90s it was mostly the HIA crew. Then it was MIC (Mad In Crime), which consisted of Pasha, Feels, Bams and Söka. Then there was also IMS (It Means Something) and IAK (In All Kinds). Now the most visible crew is NÄU (*Natten Är Ung/The Night Is Young*).

Mind is another Västerås boy who has meant much for the graffiti scene. He start-



Puppet – 1989





Venu, Pasha



Pasha



Bams

ed painting in September of 1995, hanging onto his friends who wrote IAK. IAK was formed in 1994 by a team of friends who wanted to write together. It originally consisted of the late Swob, Dhem, Rave, Meal, and later Mind. Today it is almost only

Mind, who now lives in Stockholm, who writes IAK.

Where do you prefer to write in Västerås?

It's hard to say, but down by the station is cool," says Mind.

In your view, are there any writers who have meant much to the town?

Not one in particular, all writers are important in themselves.

The city comes down hard on writers.

The police and politicians work hard at getting on top of graffiti in the city. They have several methods to prevent graffiti, and if they catch a writer, they contact the parents, the school and talk to the perpetrator about how much it's costing society. A zero tolerance policy against graffiti is in effect in Västerås. Amongst other things, this entails that there is an effort to remove all tags and paintings within 24 hours, which may seem frustrating for writers, but that's the way the policy works. At least, that's the way it's intended; some paintings survive longer.

Evidently, those in power have little love for graffiti. Pasha relates a meeting between himself and ten elderly gentlemen from the City Council. Pasha sat defending graffiti and asked for legal walls to write on. He was told that giving legal walls to writers would be like donating a garage to an organised ring of car thieves.

Vestmanlands Lokaltidning, Västerås' only morning paper, seems to share this negative view of graffiti. In September last year, in relation to the trial of some writers, they published a series of articles that included silhouette pictures of the writers who, according to the police, were the most prolific. They also included information on the number of times the writers had been charged and judged in the Magistrates' Court. When I called to ask one of the journalists what the purpose of the article was, and what they had hoped to achieve by it, I was told that graffiti had been the object of a great debate and that the council had spent large sums of money on cleaning. In the light



lak



Mind



Näu



Imagine by Deo



Puppet



Náu



Raw

of this feeble response, I can only conclude that the paper felt it was important to show the public its point of view and slander graffiti culture in the process.

Harry Svensson is a policeman in Västerås who has long worked on removing graffiti from the city. He says there are no exact figures on the number of writers, but that there are 20-30 known writers and a number of younger people who try it for a while before hanging up their cans.

Is graffiti on the increase or on the decrease lately?

Neither the one nor the other; what's sad is that it hasn't decreased.

Not only graffiti

It's not all about graffiti in Västerås: the three other elements of Hip-Hop culture are also represented. In B-boying, we find the group One Production, which consists of seven breakdancers and one writer. It isn't a pure-dee Västerås group – two of the breakdancers are from Malmö.

Kalle of One Production has breakdanced

for about two years. What he likes about B-boying is the freedom. "There are no rules, you can do your own thing," he says.

How do you think the B-boying scene will look in Västerås in a few years?

I think it'll be bigger, but it's hard to say. It comes and goes. It was big in the 80s, then lessened, and now it's on the rebound again.

Västerås also boasts two of Sweden's most promising DJs, DJ botanic and DJ Idérik (Idérik, in loose translation, means "inspired", or full of ideas). DJ Botanic DJs for the band Lost Lyrics and has his own projects on the side. He is to release a demo with rappers from Västerås, on which he will try to use the turntables as much as possible.

Dj Idérik mans the turntables for the band The Army of the Six Monkeys. This band, which was started a year ago, has rapidly known success and met overall with good reviews. It was formed by the fusion of two bands, Westraarozé and Tetrapakk, and

consists of DJ Idérik, Ebola, Kattla, Unikum, Fronda and Kentak. Two of its members, Ebola and Fronda, also run the parallel project Efterblivna (The Retards).

According to Unikum, The Army of the Six Monkeys gets its inspiration Smut Peddlers, Meta4 and Nonphixon. Each individual member also contributes his inspiration.

Your lyrics are relatively vulgar. Is there any particular reason for this?

We like to rock the boat, to tease and to stand out a bit. But we've developed a little lately, working around themes and the like. It's not all violence and irony.



Jewel, character by Erase – 1997





Bams



Feel



Damn Rite Crew by Deo - 1988

How do you think *The Army of the Six Monkeys* can contribute to the Västerås Hip-Hop scene?

We aren't out to contribute to it, but the choice is greater; it's an alternative to Loop Troop.

What do you think Loop Troop has contributed to the Västerås Hip-Hop and graffiti scene?

"A Hell of a lot; they're the best in Sweden," says Unikum. "Personally I was deeply inspired by Promoe."

Dj Idérik concurs:

"They've meant a lot for Hip-Hop, but perhaps not specifically for graffiti. Though indirectly they have contributed to it too, as I'm sure many people have become inspired to write through their lyrics."

This is certainly true. The guys in Loop Troop create fine music that has evidently been a source of inspiration to many. It's hard to say what the Västerås Hip-Hop scene would have been like without them, but I suspect that Harry and other graffiti opponents might have had an easier job.

Robert Morell



Mic, Mind



Imz



Bino, Suer - 1999



Inte, Make - 2000



Elos, Earn - 2001



Cil, Mok, Näll, Rik - 2001



Fizle, Skam, Mind - 1999



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WARSZAW TRAINS



Image



Image



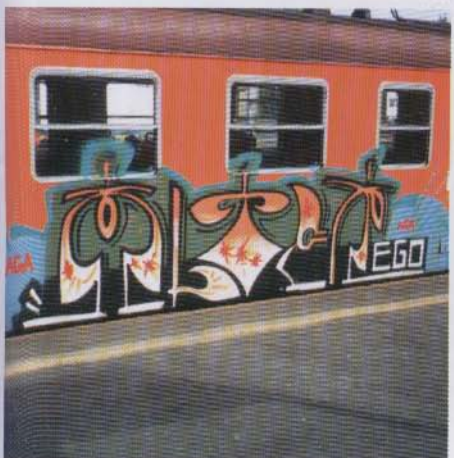
Trex



Rolke



Talone



Alter Ego



Watch - 2001



Alter



Prim – 1987



Crush



Totals – 1988



Destroy



Bag – 1990



Spsia



Deal



Nerd



Vic 20



Inside the tram – 2000



Skip



Relax



Bang – 1991



Nois



Kekkonen (Finlands President 1956-1982) by CDC

Detail from one of Helsinki's few legal graffiti paintings. In 1991, the Helsinki city council paid 30,000 Finnish Marks to have the wall at Kulosaari subway station painted. When Helsinki became European City of Culture in 2000, the powers-that-be decided to rid the line of graffiti and spent 40,000 Marks on having the wall painted white again. The paint, however, was of such poor quality that it has already begun to flake, and parts of the underlying paintings are visible again



Trama – 1990



Mofa



Lucky, Fupla – 2000

Helsinki - A City Fraught With Suspicion

Finland is Sweden's neighbour to the east, and every day ferries make the crossing from Stockholm to Helsinki. However, this transport is of secondary importance; many passengers do not even go ashore. Most of them make the trip to drink duty-free alcohol, stuff their faces in the dining-room and fuck in the cramped cabins.

Helsinki City

Helsinki was founded in 1500, when Finland and Sweden shared a union under the auspices of the Swedish regent. The Swedish king Gustavus Wasa created the city as a lynchpin of trade with Russia. After this union, Finland became a Russian province, and though the Finnish language is unique in Western Europe, Finland as a nation has existed since 1917. Today, Helsinki is a modern capital city, counting just under one million inhabitants.

Brief History on Writing and Style

As in most Western European cities, graffiti arrived around 1984, inspired in early years by the film *BeatStreet*, music videos and the book *Subway Art*.

Nevertheless, Helsinki was isolated from the rest of the European graffiti scene until the late 80s, when writers visiting Stockholm discovered the post-Style Wars experience. Though Stockholm was also in a remote corner of Europe, it still enjoyed influences and contacts with the rest of Europe, not least through the shared friendship of Slice and Snow with Mode 2. It should be remembered that before the appearance of graffiti magazines, direct contact between writers and travel were the only way for styles to spread. When Finnish writers started travelling to Stockholm in the late 80s, the Finnish style became strongly influenced



"The Love Boat" between Stockholm and Helsinki. Here portrayed by Italian writer Dork.

by Stockholm.

"When I see Swedish pieces from 84-85 I know there were writers here who could do just as well," says Eggs, one of Finland's most prominent style writers and continues: "But when we came to Stockholm in 1990 the graffiti was much more advanced."



Ozone – 1989



"Diamonds are girls best friend" by The Diamonds Crew – 1987



"In god we Trust, In transit we Bomb" Spinner – 1986



Pro Site



Sath

The Finns often travelled to Stockholm in groups on their way to various concerts and jams. I remember meeting Finnish writers for the first time in 1989. One of them had acquired some money by unorthodox means, which he spent on inviting himself and twenty or so other Hip-Hopsters to a trip to Stockholm and a Public Enemy concert.

After Stockholm, Finnish writers started travelling to other European cities, and influences from Copenhagen, Amsterdam and Dortmund quickly followed. Something clinched in 1992. Inspired by the 1970s New York style, crews like CDC, FTC and CSK started developing something of their own, a style that seems demonstrably freer than in the rest of Scandinavia, but that still retains a classical graffiti swing. I, for one, think that the Finnish style today is one of the most original in Europe.

Train Writing

Helsinki only has one subway train line, and it was not opened until 1982. Now it includes 19 stations, with one yard and two layups. Legend has it that it was two Swedish writers, Baze and Zip, who did the first paintings around 1987-88. It wasn't until the late 90s that Finnish writers started taking the subway seriously. They have mainly concentrated on the local and long-distance trains, which are still their preferred target.

Wall Writing

When Helsinki was named European City of Culture 2000, the city council decided to erase all pieces along the subway line, and since it is a short line, it has been possible to keep it quite clear. The cold climate makes it difficult to erase paintings in wintertime, but a night train travels the subways spraying new pieces with grey paint. There have never been any legal Halls of Fame in Hel-

sinki. The closest to a Hall of Fame is the Pasila Gallery, a side track for goods trains skirting the traveller train tracks. From 1987 until late 1990's, when it was cleaned, hundreds of colour pieces were made here.

Today, writers often seek out abandoned and condemned industrial buildings, where it is possible to write in peace.

The community

The Finnish scene is very hardcore and fraught with suspicion, since the police have often used informants during raids and trials. Moreover, there have never been any legal Halls of Fame in Helsinki, and anyone who finds a wall where he can write undisturbed will keep it to himself and his crew. According to Eggs, there isn't really a scene at all, just a number of hermetic crews who have little contact with each other.

Jacob Kimvall



Wicked, Main – 2000



Frizle



Waste, Fls, Mol – Helsinki Subway 2000



Msn, Main, Sgr



Love



Free Your Mind



Rocco, Apz



Cyber



Waste, Pow – 2000



Helsinki subway



Itp, Sgk – Copenhagen 2001



INTERNATIONAL TRAINS



Bsa, The – Bolonga, Italy 2001



Hulk – Belgium 2000





Buba, Sav, Charater by Gorm – Norway 2001



Kin – Copenhagen



Wiesbaden, Germany 2001



Rute – Milano, Italy



Crew, Crew, Crew – Norway 2001



Daze – Italy



Killah, Rilo, Nick, Robot, Apollo, Medz, Tonus, Tma, Atomic – Belgium 2000



Rolling Flix – Germany



Sw. Heor – Copenhagen



Sdkk – Copenhagen



Venom – France 2000



Sew – Paris 2001



Killah, Leroy – Holland 2000



Heis – Copenhagen