

# EZRA

*From the spraying up the tranquil idyll of Lucerne to shaping the world into an explosion of piercing image and ravishing colour, Ezra's dazzling work is on the rampage. Incredibly clean forms are illuminated by a spectacular assault of colour and an imagery that fuses together a surreal landscape of the nightmareish, the dreamlike, and the raw power of the street. Collaborating far and wide and taking his talent intercontinental, Ezra took a moment out from the can to have a word with LSD..*

**You've been painting for fourteen years but what initially brought you to graffiti art as opposed to other art forms?**

The fact that my father is an artist ([www.rolandpirk-bucher.ch](http://www.rolandpirk-bucher.ch)) always kind of made me being interested into art in general. When I was a kid I was drawing almost every day and got familiar with art after seeing my father paint and having exhibitions. Around 1996 I got more and more into the Hip Hop culture. Next to the music I found out about the other elements and soon got in touch with Graffiti. I didn't really know what's behind it and didn't know that much about the scene but I was fascinated by the movement and that so many people my age and a little older were into it. I loved to see how people worked together and pushed each other that defiantly made me fall in love with that kind of art.



**Your work is of an exceptional quality did it take you very long to master the graffiti style?**

In the beginning it was hard because I didn't know how to use a spraycan that well. The old cans called Sparvar were a little different than the ones nowadays as well. But after painting a couple of years I found out about the tricks and how you paint clean and small stuff and developed more ideas and my style. It was a lot of learning by doing and painting as much as I could.







**Graffiti writers and Street Artists are being called anti-establishment and at times anarchists, do you think this accurately describes the artists involved in street work?**

In my opinion the graffiti culture definitely has its roots in the anti establishment. I remember that graffiti artists often added words to their pieces and wrote critical things about the society. You still find that nowadays but not as often as in the past. As a street artist it is much easier to reach people because they have to see what you paint either they want to or not. You don't have to tell people to come to a gallery to see what you paint and think- the streets become your gallery and the reaction happens immediately.

**Tell us a little about the graffiti / street art scene in your city.**

I live in Lucerne which is in the middle of Switzerland. Lucerne used to have a lot of graffiti artists in the past but never really was the main city in Switzerland when it comes to Graffiti art these are more Basel and Zürich. In the past couple years the scene went back a lot in Lucern which is a pity. There are still people doing their thing but you don't see graffiti that much anymore. When I was younger people were painting a lot and you

could see new pieces and bombings all over the place. People were gathering at jams and a lot of productions happened all the time.

**Has graffiti been commercially excepted as an art form in Switzerland?**

I would say yes it has. Not completely but I know about the reactions of different people when I paint. Next to young people a lot of older and even really old people like this kind of art. When people catch me painting they always ask me many questions and watch how I work with spraycans. It is something people see but they never really get in touch with the person behind it which makes it interesting to them. Over here Graffiti artists go their way into galleries and lawyers and business people buy graffiti art. Even art collectors start collecting canvasses and artists get invited to big art events. Graffiti appears in the graphics a lot too. I appreciate that development but I hope that the standard always stays high and wont become too adapted only to sell.

**Are many graffiti writers breaking from tradition and creating other art forms?**

It depends who it is. I know people who follow





the traditional style and want to keep it that way which works for them. Others try to break out and mix graffiti with other directions. I think it doesn't depend if you break from tradition or not it's about the result and the idea behind it. Me personally I like to break with tradition.

### **Are graffiti writers upgrading their style to incorporate so called modern trends?**

I don't know if they do that to incorporate trends. Maybe some do but to me it's more about trying things out. Graffiti started many years ago and always got bigger and people added more different styles to it. It wouldn't be good if graffiti stayed always the same it's a movement and the evolution is a big part of it.

### **Who were your mentors in the early days?**

When I was younger and barely started with graffiti a lot of big names painted in Lucern. People like Daim, Dare, Mate, Shark, Toast or

Cantwo and many others left their mark. It was great to see their work and it motivated me and of other writers a lot. My father was and is always a big inspiration to me and we always have good conversations about art even when we do very different things. He gave me some advise when I started painting with brushes but then let me try out and do my thing. Before I started painting with spraycans I sketched a lot. Not only artists inspired me I loved comic books and cartoons when I was a kid and was always interested in art history and nature. I never really had a mentor in the graffiti world but had many friends painting a lot too so we motivated each other to go on and get better.

### **How important is placement to writers?**

Well...Nowadays it isn't that important anymore because the internet makes it possible for everyone to see what's going on. Back in the days it could be a big difference where you lived and who painted their. Once I read a line from Mode 2 and he was talking about the French and German scene. He said that they wondered in France that many new



styles came from Germany until they found out about the American soldiers who were placed in Germany and made the Germans having easier access to Graffiti photographs, movies and so on. So I think good placement definitely can help you to find out about graffiti and the learn and get better.

**Where else in the world have you graced walls with your work?**

In the past couple years I went to the USA a lot. I painted a lot in New York, Los Angeles, San Diego and some walls in Connecticut. I also painted a lot in Mexico- in Tijuana, Rosarito, Mexicali. I painted in Germany a couple times as well. Of course I painted the most walls in Switzerland.

**Do you still paint on the streets or do you prefer the security of a studio?**

I still paint in the streets. I love to paint on walls and don't want to replace it. I do my canvasses or other things more than in the past and it is a lot of fun but it is a different feeling than painting a wall. To me it's like two different categories which I love to do. On one hand the nice thing about a wall is that you can go very big and work more with other artists. I also love to chill with other writers and have a good time while painting. On the other hand I like being in the studio by myself and create



objects or canvasses and do crazy stuff which I can't do on a wall.

**You ever been arrested on the job?**

I never really got arrested on the job. The only time I got arrested in front of the wall was my first I wall I painted with a friend when I was sixteen. When I was older I got arrested because somebody snitched on me.

**Do you support legal walls or would that undermine the power of the art?**

I am in the lucky position to have walls for myself. The district I live in gave walls to me I can use how ever I want to. Most productions happen there. About two months ago the city of Lucern finally opened a hall of fame. People can go there when ever they want and paint legally. I think it is good to have something like that in every city. It's a good thing when young people have a place where they can be creative without being disturbed.

**Your work is very rich in colour, how**





## **important is colour to your work?**

It depends a little what I paint and where. Outside I like to add colours. On canvas I use less. To me it's a lot about the idea behind the painting. Sometimes it works perfectly with a lot of colours sometimes less colours express the painting in a better way. But I definitely realised how colours can influence people. And it is nice to play with that.

## **How do you choose locations?**

When I paint productions I meet friends at some hall of fame or some wall I heard of and then just paint there without knowing too much about the location. When I travel I look for walls which can be seen well so people can check out my art. I like walls which are in the centre of cities. I also paint indoors in stores sometimes so people get in touch with my stuff and it stays up.

## **How does the public respond to your work?**

Most people like it and tell me about it. There are always some people who don't like it but I do my thing anyway. I like compliments but try to be my biggest critic and always see something I can do better next time.

## **Is there a conflict or a union between street art, graffiti and conventional art?**

I don't think that there is a conflict between those directions it is more a union. I like to go to exhibitions and see other art and I also like street art and I know artists who don't



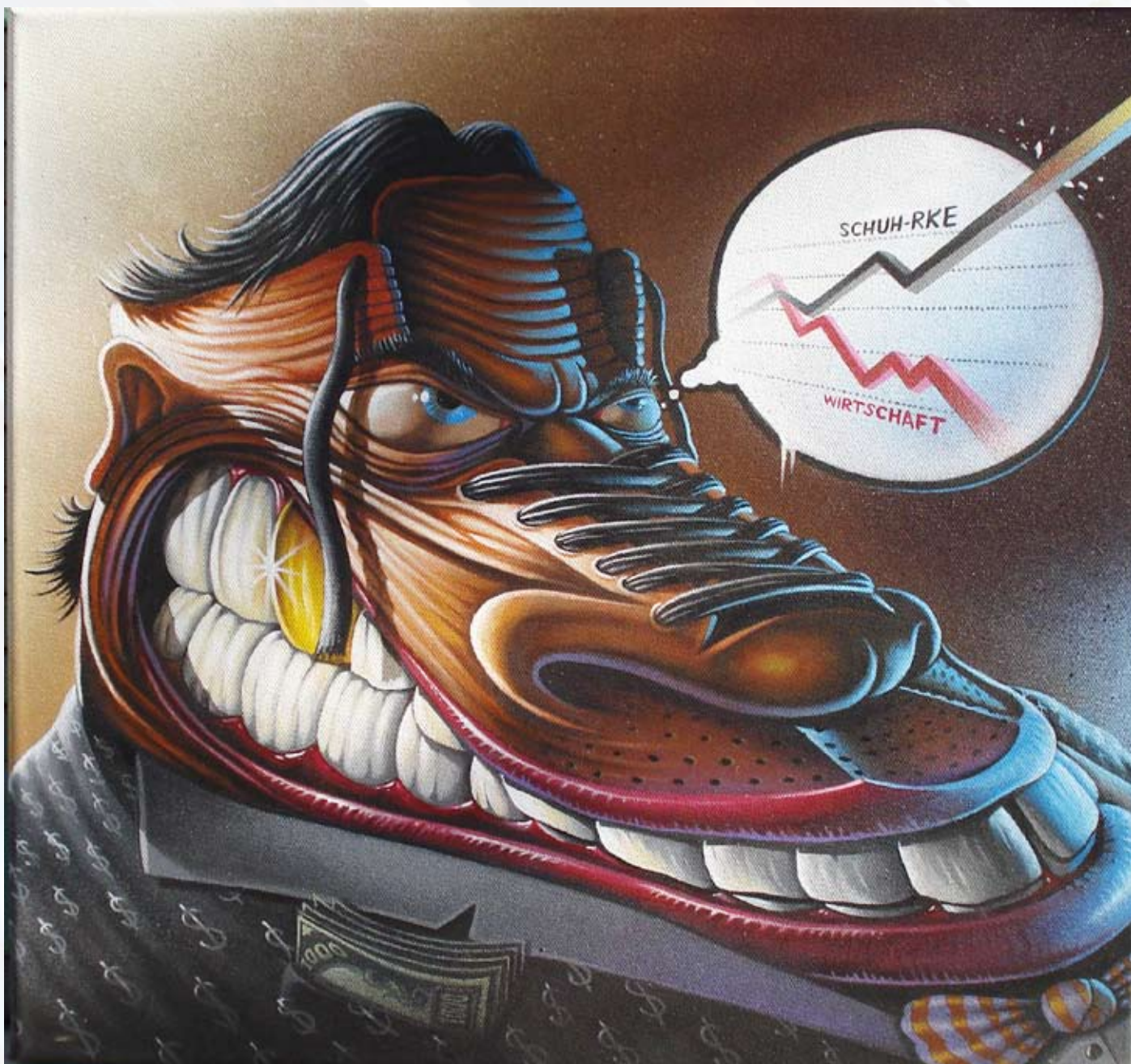
do graffiti and like to see what's going on in this scene. I know that some people think that graffiti only exists between curtain borders. But this isn't my way of thinking. To me there is no limit when it comes to creativity. The great thing about graffiti is that the network between artists world wide is very big and people travel all over the world to paint with others. Artists in the field of conventional art don't do that so often so this is definitely a big advantage we have.

## **Do you resent someone painting over your work?**

It really depends how that happens. If the person paints over my work only to damage it and to disrespect me I don't take it easy. If the person goes over it to paint a nice new wall it is the way of life in the graffiti world. I like the attitude from back in the days when people went with throwups over tags with pieces over throwups and so on and didn't fuck walls up. Respect is the keyword then nobody will get upset.







**How much influence has street art had on the resurgence of traditional graffiti?**

To me Street art is the more openminded way of graffiti. I remember when people didn't respect it when someone painted with a brush or used stencils and today a lot of graffiti writers paint with it and nobody really says anything any more. Of course street art had a lot of influences from graffiti because it was there first. But then people started changing their mind and this opened a lot of doors for writers. It is a lot easier to pan out nowadays in different directions in the graffiti scene than years ago.

**Name some of the other artists you've worked with?**

Ces, Pose 2, Chor Boogie, Dare, T-Kid, Brisk, Persue, Vyal, Pres, Libre, Shente, Threat, Kafy -HEM crew, Eysel, Kuya, Break, Ice Roc, Note, Disk, Push and so on...

**What is the central focus of artists in your city?**

I don't know that much about the central focus in general of other artists. I only really can tell about mine. But I know that many graffiti writers try to show their art in galleries nowadays.

**Is your work reactive to world events?**

I had many people world wide writing me and



inviting me to their countries. People ask me to work with me from all over the place so this shows me that my art stirs something up in this world. I had exhibitions in the past and went to events people asked me to come to...I'll see what will happen in future.

### **Does art give hope to the hopeless?**

Graffiti doesn't care where you come from only what you paint. I like that attitude and it gives a chance to everybody. And art gives you a chance to self actualise.

[www.ezraone.ch](http://www.ezraone.ch)

[www.welovekicks.ch](http://www.welovekicks.ch)

