



ON THE RUN BOOKS together form an encyclopedia that catalogs graffiti and urban art from around the world. Since 1990, the OTR team has built an ever-growing archive, eventually to be donated to the Museum of Urban Art, a project presently under development as part of the Campus of Urban Culture, which focuses on Hip Hop and graffiti culture. With every title, we digitize and preserve original material from various key artists, and bring their story to the public. All this, and in keeping with our motto: **KNOW YOUR HISTORY.**



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SABE FYS CREW



**SABE:** Painting is something I really enjoy, but the thing is not to take it too seriously. Everyone is talking about style, but for me it is better to experiment to see how far you can push it and not only do one style. When people are trying too hard to get it 'right' it gets too serious for me. I get bored when I look at big productions and everything is so clean and sharp that it looks like a commercial. The whole essence of graff is not there anymore. In the beginning it was just kids writing their names and the letters rocked, not because of how many colors were used or how straight the outlines were or how many flying cows you had in the background. It was and is about letter combinations and how original people are in what they do; how they flip the letters. And the most important thing is to have some fun and a laugh.

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FROM HERE TO FAME  
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ARTIST

# SABE FYS CREW



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# INTRODUCTION

**NOT** one to be satisfied by Sunday painting strolls in the park, Danish graffiti maestro Sabe likes to “roll hardcore”, or fall about in fits of laughter. He paints as if the world might evaporate as soon as daylight strikes. With a passion that borders on insanity, he gets up at a rate that would put an army of crews to shame. Rest assured, this is no passing whim but a lifetime pursuit, and after twenty-five years he remains active, relevant and prolific, blazing a trail of good times across the Copenhagen skyline.

Naturally, for a quirky kid interested in drawing, books such as ‘Subway Art’ and the advent of the Danish graff scene ignited his creative spirit. It wasn’t just the mad colors and comic value that spoke to him. Here were a bunch of spray paint bandits, aka kids, creating art on their own terms under the cover of night, without parental guidance or adult permission. There was havoc in the city and of course Sabe wanted to be a part of it. In no time he caught the fever and there was no going back.

Larger than life, very much like his pieces, Sabe has always been one to balk at mainstream mediocrity. From the outset he had a natural gift for causing commotion, both of the intentional and

*“Sabe is on a level that most writers will never reach. He has style for miles and thousands of pieces under his belt. If he ever quits it will be a huge loss for Copenhagen and the world. I hope that never happens but if it does the city and its writers need to honor him with a parade.”* **KET**

unintentional varieties, and clashing with all rigid thought. Known to wear crazy clothes and step to his own rhythm, his oddball taste soon filtered down into his pieces in the form of unorthodox color combinations, unusual connections and style mash-ups. An approach that has been both praised and heckled.

He came up as a second-generation Copenhagen writer in the mid to late 80s. Even in the relatively underground culture it was back then, he came up banging his head against an established brick wall. To a young writer working mainly on the outskirts of Copenhagen with no scene connections, it seemed almost impenetrable. And story be told, his initiation into the local graff scene was not sweet like roses. A couple of costly mishaps led to the infamous battle with resident style master Jest, an incident that would have knocked most out in round one. To his testament, Sabe stayed true to his game and remained strong in the face of peer opposition and unpopular decisions. The

incident proved a motivating force in his rise and it seems that a good sense of humor and a ‘whatever’ attitude has worked well in his favor. In time, his willingness to experiment and twist convention teamed with cold, hard skills gained him respect. He challenged the notions of what graffiti should look like, forging his own unique spin outside of fleeting trends, and has since gone on to become one of Europe’s most sought after and commended writers.

Sabe is definitely one of the last standing non-conformists operating left of mainstream. He’s one of those sharp writers who will be remembered as much more than a spray paint technician with a good handle on graffiti. An original thinker like too few, he embodies the true spirit of getting up. He’s a self-confessed madman with a big heart. You won’t find him sitting around idly discussing the virtues of style, nor is he one to dissect a piece; he is only interested in whether you are up for painting tonight.

*‘Free Your Spirit’ by SKETZH, character by SABE  
Christiania, Copenhagen / 2004*



# COMING UP

**GRAFFITI** really started to take shape in Copenhagen around '84. The Danish interpretation of the New York styles was positively joyous and the city became known for its bright, colorful, happy spin. Always one to draw comic book characters, Sabe was understandably awestruck. In '85 he started drawing styles and later that same year started to piece. He didn't know many writers in the beginning, just a few neighborhood kids. By the summer of '86 he had met his first partner, Faze, who lived outside of Copenhagen, and together they tried to break through. The following stories chronicle the pivotal moments in Sabe's development, including stories of inspiration, adventure and of course misadventure.

## ZOCK

**THE** 'Zock' piece (1985) was done by Kyle from Whap Gang and I think one or two other guys were with him that night. The piece was painted two blocks from where I grew up. I remember it like it was yesterday; I used to walk my dog in the morning after breakfast before I went to school, which I hated. I was always in fights 'cause I had some strange clothes on and didn't give a fuck about who was cool in school ... huh anyway I came around

SABE, FACE / Denmark / 1988

*“ When I first got to know Sabe in middle of the 1980s he was mostly known for doing really weird, lunatic stuff and sometimes such ugly stuff that you wouldn't believe it, a lot of people laughed at it. But he laughed too and even laughed the most! Sabe often did his letters so complexly that even he could not read it himself! But if you knew him you would know he just was having fun with graffiti life. And if you took a second look you could see that this guy was doing stuff in the opposite direction to the mainstream. But with technically perfect can control so the guy must be mad sick in the head. Or maybe he just lives in his own world doing his own stuff. ”* RENS

the corner to pick up some milk from the store when I saw this huge crazy master burner! With yellow, orange and red letters and a bubble cloud in dark green and lemon ... ooooooooooh shiiiiit it blew my mind! I felt I had to skip school that day and just stand there and look at this masterpiece all day long. The piece was dedicated to a writer that lived in my neighborhood who wrote Zock, I remember he was one of the writers that were all over at that time. Scale wrote on top of the piece 'This is a burner' and sure it was.

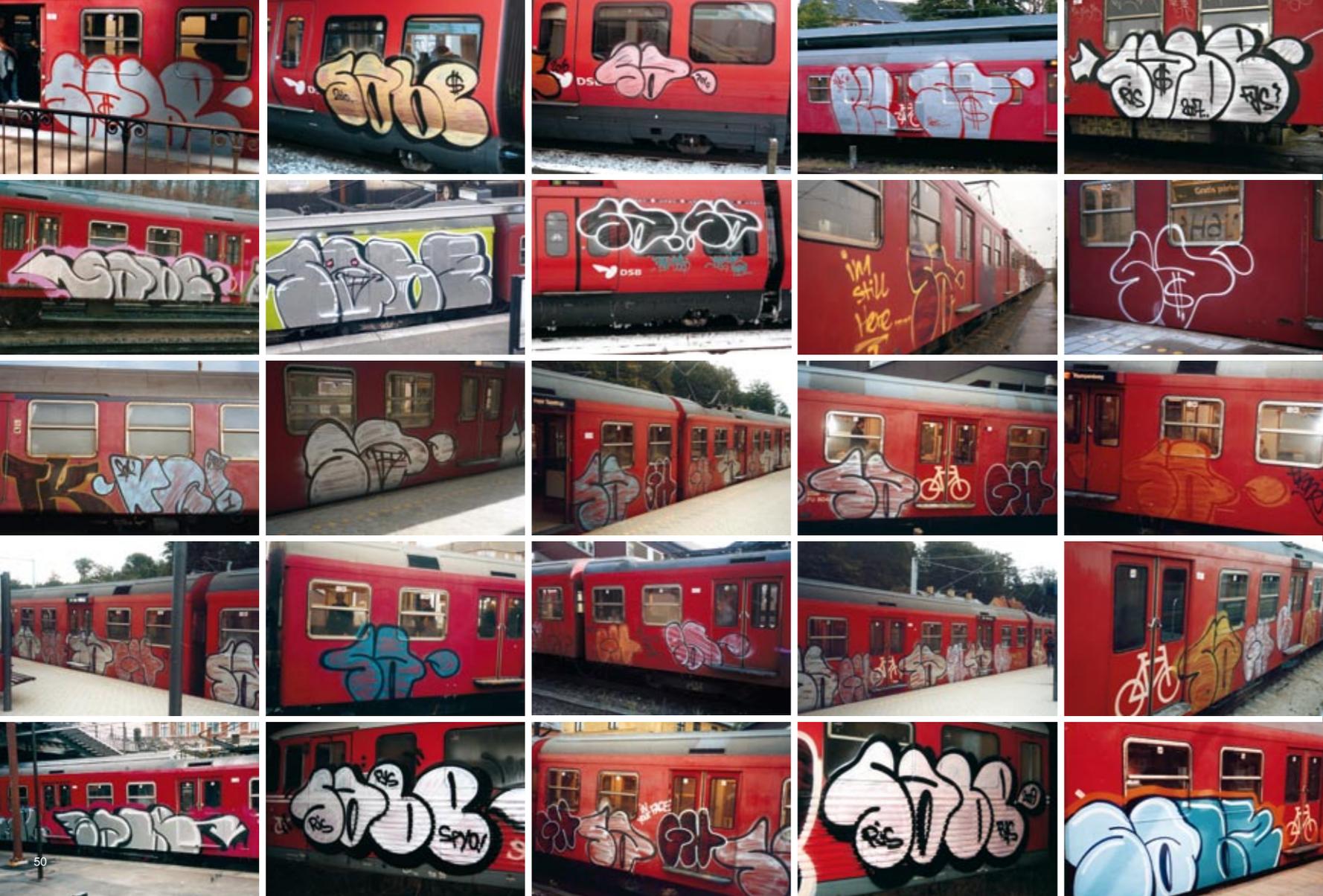


Zock (KYLE, WHAP GANG) / Copenhagen / 1985



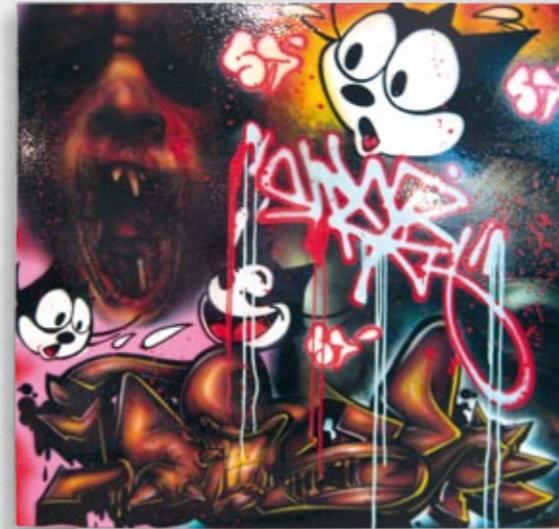
## REBEL TRAIN BURNER

**THE** 'Rebel' train burner is a classic done by Date, Fuse, Smurf and Scale in 1985, a crazy burner. Date gave me the original sketch from that night.



# CANVASES

“ Canvases are something you do at home, if you get bored. ” SABE



both pages: various canvases / SABE / 2000-09





BYE / Copenhagen / 2004



SABE / Copenhagen / 2004

left: SABE / Copenhagen / 2005



“ The first time I went to the trains with him I was still putting the cap on the can and he was outlining his piece. I was like, ‘damn’. ” <sup>GHOST</sup>

GHOST, BYE / Copenhagen / 2003



KOEE / Denmark / 2002



BYE / Copenhagen / 2005



BYE / Copenhagen / 2003



BYE / Copenhagen / 2003

right page: BYE / Copenhagen / 2002





CREG, SABLE / Copenhagen / 2007

“ To me Sabe is a very good and generous friend and an outstanding writer. He’s like a symphonic orchestra, a virtuoso at every instrument he picks up and there is always a lot of good rhythm in his work. He’s truly a master and has been a great inspiration to me over the years, he’s probably the most dedicated and productive graffiti writer Denmark ever produced. He’s simply a world class heavyweight graffiti-fighter. ” CREG, WHAP GANG

“ I see Sabe as a musician when it comes to writing, because he challenges the strict language of writing, while many other writers I see as technicians since they are more focused on the technical aspects of the art of spraying. ” CAVE

“ You know everybody can do letters that look wild but with a wild style the letters really need to have harmony like a big band, they have to work together. It’s not like doing a straight letter and then just putting a lot of arrows on it, that doesn’t work. ” SABLE

“ The ultimate writer: trains, trucks, walls, canvases, Sabe even puts his fresh colors into your skin. Most of his burners are done straight out of his crazy, abstract brain. I mean who else does complicated wild styles without the need for using a sketch for outlines? After 25 years of bombing, Sabe is a living legend who controls all the elements of graffiti with his significant original flavor. The ultimate writer—what else can I say? Chill homeboy, and let’s go grab a beer! ” SKETZ