

WLP



41
WINTER 2009

IN FOCUS:
BLACK
RECKS

THE SECRETS OF
CANADIAN
CLEAN TRAINS

THE GRAY GHOST
OF NEW ORLEANS

FHER

"THE MAN MACHINE"

COPENHAGEN OLD SCHOOL:
THE DARK ROSES

TOP OF THE LINE: DUANE REVISITED



\$ 8.75 US / 9.99 CN





were Nej, She, Enkk, Mat and Pizza Dude. If you bring together writers like that, you will automatically get a new style."

Despite his inebriation, Black speaks with engagement about his great love.

"Graffiti is what I love the most. But I have to be able to do it simply. That's why I don't do trains. First you have to scope, then

But despite being an unpaid job, at least it seems to be rewarding in other ways.

"A good tag contains everything. Even feelings. The should communicate through style, not colours which are easy to hide behind. Ordinary people might think it looks phat, but other writers can see if it's no good. A piece is really just a big tag, and it

|| My style is my greatest motivation. My tags have to look good. And they should get better every time ||

go out and hunt the piece to get a photo. It's like stamp collecting. Now I can just go out spontaneously and tag a bit. It's a nice way to empty your head. Bombing costs a few hundred danish crowns for materials. If I get caught, it's twenty thousand. Financially speaking, it's completely unreasonable. Everything else I do, I get paid for, but graffiti is more than a hobby, it's almost a job. One without a paycheck."

takes training to read tag styles and develop taste."

Isn't that a form of elitism?

"Sure, and it's ridiculous that I take the liberty to write my name on other people's property. I can't defend that. A colour piece is probably easier to defend, since people in general like it. I've got a dilemma there. Because it's hard to explain the itch to have your tag up there. Graffiti is a game. It's like





A FLASH OF CANADIAN STEEL

Calgary



Montreal Subway



Toronto Subway



Montreal Subway



Toronto Go-Train

The Canadians have a giant country, red-coated mounties, and a hell of a lot of maple leaves. They also have a small, underground train scene. Writers who make their way across five time zones in their hunt for different train models, with the police at their heels. UP packed the hockey sticks and went to Canada to speak more with North America's most secretive writers.

TEXT: Torkel Sjöstrand

IN TERMS OF SURFACE, Canada is the second largest country in the world, stretching across five time zones. Despite its surface, a third of its 33 million inhabitants live in the southern regions, less than 150 kilometres away from the US border.

The ten provinces of the country are interconnected by a well-structured road network and a rail network mainly running Canadian National Railways trains and various freight trains. Of the six major cities with some form of rapid transit, Montreal and Toronto have the largest systems.

Graffiti painted on passenger trains, or "clean trains" in North American terms, is a rare sight. Just like in the neighbouring US, freight trains have long been the most popular rolling target for the nation's writers.

But in the last ten years, a small, active but secret scene has emerged. Its target are all the subway and light rail systems in Canada.

Montreal, early September. Canada's largest French-speaking city is still basking in summer heat. The subway makes a low humming noise, but apart from that all is quiet as Cute and Tease sneak into the hangar. The blue cars are neatly aligned. After a short scout between the trains, Cute returns. "It feels good, we might just as well start painting."

They leave fifteen minutes later. They encountered no problems other than the wooden railing along the train side that forced them to paint "flying" pieces on the upper part of the car. Compared to many European cities, Montreal's subway would

seem relatively easy to paint. It is only lately that STM, which runs the city's subway, has started to install alarms and cameras to stem graffiti writing. You seldom or never see a piece in traffic, STM won't allow it.

The Montreal subway scene isn't very big, but is still considered the largest in

But it was in Toronto that train writing really got going around 2002, when the Dead Police (DP) crew made a name for itself.

"In Toronto, it took a couple of us to show that it could be done. I think there was just a fear that was embedded in the scene," says DP member Trik. "Beef with

task undertaken by only a handful of crews since then.

"Only DP, CT and Youth Gone Bad (YGB) has ever been dedicated to rocking cities all over the country. There is no real competition out here," says Tease. "But the scene is really secretive. People that paint

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Canada. "Montreal is the only city in Canada where it seems to get competitive because they have that European mentality," explains Tease from Clean Team (CT), one of the most active train writers in Canada. "Writers in Montreal are generally more active than in the rest of the country. In other cities it's only one or two writers doing their own thing with their crew and that keeps them motivated."

other writers was never an issue. We had our spots and never had anyone else painting there unless we brought them. But it's not like we had to enforce it. It was just that no one else was on it. Beef will start to happen as more kids get into doing it and the number of writers becomes too great for the amount of spots available."

After having explored Toronto, DP travelled across all of Canada to paint trains, a

clean trains don't talk about what they do with others in the scene unless they do similar things. Right now the YGB and the CT are the most active crews. In previous years it was the DP with writers like Cease, Trik and Causr."

"The unknown territory makes it more of a challenge and an adventure," says Trik. "Plus you get new types of cars to paint on, which is nice. The last good trip me and



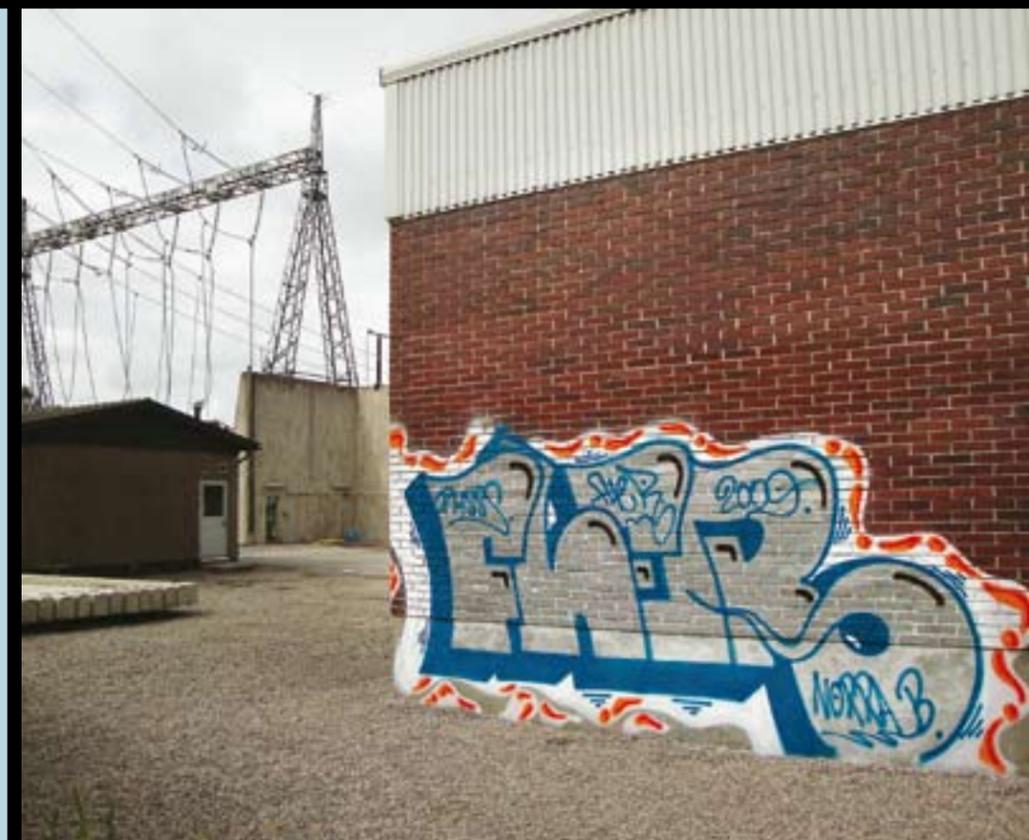
HNR
Active since the early 90s:

"**FHER BELONGS** to the generation after me, before backjump writing really got started in Stockholm. I'd say he's one of those who developed it.

Many have taken after his style. For understandable reasons. It's clear, effective and unmistakable. Whatever you think of it, it's good when you do something for so long and so persistently. There's a lot of Dortmund 1992 in his stuff."

What do you think Fher means to Stockholm?

"A whole lot. In many different ways. If you look at graffiti as a contest, it's hard to beat him in terms of quantity. For many people, he's set the standard for what graffiti should look like and how it should be done. It's not enough to do one, but you have to do seven or ten pieces a week."



ABC 123

Active since the late 90s:

"**I'VE NEVER** even met him, but he's one of my greatest idols. He's the one who paints the most and best in Stockholm.

At first I thought he was lousy. I didn't understand why people liked it. But since then, I've understood he's a genius. He's really good at finding spots. His style is so simple, yet personal. He does stiff things in a good way, and nobody else ever managed to do that."

It is said that you do Fher sketches?

"Yes, I do. It's one of the names I sketch the most [embarrassed laughter]. They're really nice to do."

Could you trick him into thinking it was the real deal?

"I probably could. I know pretty much how he thinks."





TEXT: Jacob Kimvall
PHOTO: Jacob Kimvall & Duane

DUANE

Gothenburg's Duane is one of Sweden's foremost and internationally most recognised writers. An artist who works with both style and characters, in suggestive pieces that can all look very different and yet always unmistakably Duane. Jacob Kimvall looks closer at a 1997 Duane piece and sees a precursor to the film *The Matrix*.

I HAVE THOUGHT of Duane as one of this country's most idiosyncratic writers for almost as long as I have known him. He originally hails from Gothenburg, and as a Stockholm resident I first learned about him through the characters he made for Dudes texts. But Duane is an artist with a broad spectrum who worked with both style and figures, often interweaving them into an indissoluble whole.

His pieces often have a suggestive rhythm, with long, billowing lines broken by odd, carefully formed details taken from fantasy and sci-fi. But these are seldom beautiful or agreeable pieces. Sometimes they are quite directly ugly, bearing something unpleasant and scary with their elements of gore and Goth. The characters in his early pieces especially often have grotesque traits, with exaggerated mimicry and dramatic expressions. The characteristic details often seem to have been intuitively chiselled during the course of the work, and when I interviewed Duane for UP in 1992, he spoke about inspiration from the subconscious and dreams to religion and the occult.