

7810M
7810M

Blackbook 02

SERIES INTRO

From the early nineties graffiti writers began to set priorities and to divide themselves into different disciplines: Street Bombing, Trainwriting, Stylewriting or Sketching find their respective masters and since then, graffiti has changed and shaped the cityscape of major cities, brought forth successful artists and finally established a culture with its own philosophies, attitudes and lifestyle. Due to these facets and genres, cultural-historical documentation of the graffiti scene has always been complex and often controversial.

While a closed circle of the scene declares trainwriting to be the supreme discipline, others see Stylewriting as the aesthetically more important approach. Somewhere in between, decisive boundaries emerge: illegality and style. Some of the scene is breaking with old New York traditions that have shaped European graffiti for decades, others holding on to them. At this point, a big rift emerges in the scene, in which we as re-editors and documentarists have been engaged for many years, often on the internet with the onset of digitalisation. With film productions and video series like RISE OF GRAFFITI WRITING - From New York To Europe, 5MINUTES, a regularly published podcast, or in articles on our website ilovegraffiti.de.

For us, as an active part of the graffiti scene, an important phase in the documentation is the reflection of the protagonists and the associated conclusions, which presupposes a subsequent academic examination of graffiti. In this way, we can answer questions, provide insights, and create access to the culture.

Why graffiti? Interpretations and backgrounds range from youthful sins, hobby and rebellion, addiction to adrenaline, competition, artistic approaches to political motives. The more interesting question is what the protagonists make of it. What does this culture create and what does it produce: new genres and definitions, a particular touch and artistic individuality, one of the most creative engagements with book stacks and the alphabet, or expressive forms of resistance. We attempt to answer some of these questions, provide a basis for scholarly consideration and aim to document them extensively.

For this, we have chosen a popular and traditional format of the graffiti scene: the Blackbook. A book mostly used in landscape format by players from the scene, which often also serves as a portfolio, with photos and collages of sprayed works pasted in. The Blackbook of a writer fulfils several functions: that of a sketchbook - which only contains sketches and scribbles - and a travel or guestbook - in which friends, acquaintances or mentors can draw or write. In this format, there is by definition no clear demarcation between these forms, so that a Blackbook can contain of pieces only or anything related to the act and execution of graffiti. Such books hide collections that have grown over years or decades. To leaf through such a book was and is a privilege. For this series, some interesting heads of the graffiti scene open their entire archives and give a very authentic insight into their creative work, from the first sprayed picture or sketch to current pieces.

With this second BLACKBOOK, we provide an insight into 30 years of trainwriting and the work of ABIS. He belongs to the second graffiti generation in Potsdam, a suburb of Berlin, as he describes it. In reality, the tunnels and layouts of the German capital quickly captured his interest. Here, he will spray countless trains over the next 30 years, investing a significant part of his life in the perfect preparation, the often very fast execution, and the documentation of the spraypainted pieces such as panels and wholecars. ABIS is one of a very few trainwriters in Germany who has been almost constantly awake, on the move, and seemingly never away. Therefore, we didn't take it lightly to compile this book, aiming to summarize such a long period of influence in a worthy and representative manner - this long-awaited title includes over 700 carefully selected photos from his private blackbooks, dating back to the nineties till 2022. Alongside the photos, ABIS shares thoughts on important periods and events combined with guest contributions from graffiti artists KEAS, AREA, LION, ROY, DENIS and KONE.

This BLACKBOOK 02 features one of Germany's most dedicated trainwriters, active since 1992 under several names, mostly known for high output and quality graffiti on trains: ABIS - of the BAD CREW.



The Beginnings

1992-1993

The early years, the beginnings - these are generally the years when individual weeks or months feel like long epochs due to the many new impressions and experiences. At least that's how it is for me when I look back on my first years as a graffiti writer.

How did it start? I began in the 7th/8th grade, hanging out with other rebellious kids from my then neighborhood, a prefabricated housing estate on the outskirts of the city. Everyone was into Run DMC, 2 Live Crew, Ice-T, and Public Enemy, and having a tag was just part of it. We walked around with BW backpacks, on whose covers we painted our first "pieces" with the names of our favorite rap groups.

In 1992, Beat Street aired on TV, and right after, I naively tried to replicate pieces shown in the opening credits. Around the same time, I watched the movie Colors - Colors of Violence. This inspired some friends and me to form a gang. We called ourselves SRS (SPRAY ROCK SYNDICATE), admittedly heavily borrowed from Ice-T's Rhyme Syndicate. It was all born out of the typical naivety of rebellious youth and wasn't to be taken too seriously. Apart from a few scuffles with some Nazi kids from the neighboring block, not much happened. However, it was significant for my early days in graffiti because everyone chose a name as a tag and passionately put it out on the streets. And I was fully into it.

In the beginning, in a time without the internet, you naturally only knew what was happening in your immediate surroundings. In my area in the early 1990s, MESTOR (who would later be with VAB ONE at ADS) was the standout figure,

shining everywhere with tags, throw-ups, and pieces from him and his then crew DRS (not to be confused with the later active DRS/DAMAGERS people). I also remember the name ASKY. He had some tags and cool pictures that impressed me at the time. With these impressions and some pictures from Johannes Stahl's book "An der Wand" in mind, the desire grew in me to try and create such colorful burners. I was enthusiastic and wrote the names CORTEZ and GORIE back then. Initially, I sneaked out in the evenings to make the first tags in the area.

At that time, I went to a school in the city center, which was quite run-down. The facades were completely bombed ghetto-style, and lots of problem kids attended. The conditions at this school acted as a catalyst for me. In my class was LARGE, who later became more active as a breaker, and in the classes above us were some people who had been around for a while. In the grade below mine were KAIRO and some from the later SBA crew. LARGE knew some of the older guys, and during breaks, we pilgrimaged to the Hall Of Fames in the vicinity. The CUE pictures by WORK at the washhouse and his Hardknox Rooftop in Berliner Straße or a bit later his MAD pieces under the Humboldt Bridge were worth every break-time walk. I couldn't understand how one could achieve such cool images with such fine outlines. Add to that all the pieces and tags by 2MOR all over the city and the old pictures of DONZIAK, etc., near Staudenhof that I could admire every morning on my way to school. The first train hit us like a bomb that LARGE and I saw passing by. It was a Potsdam tram by NOSE and KONE. It ran for days, which was very special because painted

trams were usually immediately taken out of service. All of this spurred me on immensely. I wanted to go off like that too. Of course, the cans were initially just shoplifted from the hardware store; they were initially Dupli-Color cans. I painted my first picture, an SRS, in 1992 on an old disused bunker behind the school, where the school kids secretly hung out during breaks. Only a little later did I paint my first panel, without realizing that I was painting my first train. In the middle of the day, with a friend from our SRS "gang," I crawled through the bushes on the pedestrian path in front of Potsdam Stadt S-Bahn station and stood in front of the rows of dark green DR-Regio carriages parked there. While my friend kept watch for us, I just started painting. I made a bright red "S" panel (for SRS) with white outlines. It looked a bit like a badly botched Superman logo. My first somewhat higher-quality piece was done with LARGE. We had homemade needle caps and painted a COR piece (for CORTEZ) on a transformer house by the district heating pipes parallel to the expressway, where the Stern Center Mall stands today. Shortly after, we heard about the paint shop in Schlachtensee. There, I bought my first Sparvar and Belton cans. With the accompanying fat caps, we finally figured out how others had managed to make such fat, downward-spraying tags. With the cans, LARGE and I made another COR piece at the S-Bahn tracks in Griebnitzsee. It was located at the base of a power pole across from the garage, where the legendary picture of 2MOR and DEJOE was at the time. Unfortunately, back then, we didn't think to take pictures of all these early pieces. However, we wouldn't have had a camera just like that. Today, that's very unfortunate for me because I only have memories of those early pieces.







In 1997, for various reasons, I decided to change my name again and opted to do more painting outside Berlin. At that time, I was so impressed by the KENT panels from True 2The Game that were circulating everywhere, and I felt the urge to paint a word ending with a T. So, for a while, I painted under the name SKIT. In general, it can be said that pieces by other writers that particularly impressed me at a given time often led to a heightened engagement with my own style. At various points in my writer career, I wanted to deliver something just as intense using the same methods or style elements but in my own way and with my signature. Looking back, such shifts in phases can indeed be recognized in a sudden change in my painting style.

After a few months, I became tired of the new letter combination of the word SKIT and chose another name. I started painting as KAY. I rarely painted this name at home, mostly in other cities.

During this time, we frequently traveled to West Germany because we were eager to paint Steeler trains, which didn't run in the Berlin area but featured in many legendary pictures I had seen. Additionally, it was appealing that trains elsewhere often ran much longer than in Berlin. The fact that it was generally much easier to paint trains in other cities compared to Berlin also played a significant role. Cities like Hamburg, Hannover, Frankfurt/Main, Heidelberg/Mannheim, and Stuttgart were, therefore, our destinations.

When asked about a special situation or the most beautiful experiences in terms of train writing, one thing from this period, when we were in the West almost weekly, comes to mind. Back then, we primarily wanted to paint Steeler panels and used an ADAC atlas to select locations near major cities where railway lines crossed, driving there to check if anything was parked. This is how we came across Nidda and Schwalmstadt in the Frankfurt/Main region. We could paint Stealers there until our backpacks were empty. Frankfurt was considered a city with an old graffiti history. It had the reputation of being one of the major German train bombing cities. However, when we stood on the huge main station, all the silver trains were clean. I was initially disappointed.

The only painted trains we saw were our own panels from the previous night in Schwalmstadt. And when a series of pictures we made 1-2 months ago also rolled in, it was a pretty uplifting feeling. It felt like we had taken over this legendary city at that time. I think, besides our pieces, I actually only saw an S-Bahn panel from Frankfurt, if I'm not mistaken, by JAIL.

In 1997, in addition to numerous graffiti trips within Germany, there was another graffiti summer vacation at Lake Balaton in Hungary. This time STAR (then NITRO), who was now also part of RKS, joined. During this Hungarian trip, we even saw some pieces from the previous year and, of course, added more.

Hamburg and its surroundings were a beautiful destination at that time. There were Minzers and Stealers that ran for a long time and were easy to paint. Besides, the city had a cool subway (at least the old silver-ridged models) with lots of large yards full of walkways. We usually first went to nearby places like Lüneburg or Bad Oldesloe, where we could paint Stealers that would then run in the Hanseatic city.

Then we entered the city to spots like Billstedt, Ochsenzoll, and others. There was always something doable on the U-Bahn. But the best thing about Hamburg was the many moving steel trains and Minzers. I saw panels that I had admired in some magazines and that had apparently been running for years – MOMO, KANDY, RAZOR, and JEPSY. Also, it was incredible to see the fantastic panels of our Potsdam style master WORK rolling live into Hamburg Hauptbahnhof. They had been running for about a year and, in my opinion, simply burned everything comparable.

In 1996, CREAM and SHAB released the first Hardknocks video. This piece hit me similarly to the True 2The Game or Backjumps films. My B-Boy buddy KEAS was also on fire. As a result, we both started cutting together videos of actions shot in a youth media workshop and collected footage. Eventually, KONE and ZOCKER joined in to contribute their part. With 10-12 stolen or borrowed VCRs, we duplicated the finished film in my room and released it as Hardknocks II in 1997.

ABIS 2023



Bizz Action Drive

1998-2005

In early 1998, external circumstances prompted us to change our beloved crew name. STAR, inspired by the Nicolas Cage film "Kiss Of Death," came up with the name B.A.D. for BIZZ ACTION DRIVE. The new crew officially brought together the existing team, with KAZE from SBC and RADAR from VTA joining me and TREK, making us a group of five. We actively worked to establish our new crew's presence. During this time, I adopted a new word and painted under CREK for a while. This marked the beginning of a phase where my primary focus was on local S- and U-Bahns. The era of regular graffiti trips to other cities was over.

With a growing collection of video material, I planned to create Hardknocks III with KEAS. This endeavor led to our first contact with the KO crew. What many people may not know is that KO was also an active breaking crew. KEAS, through his connections in the B-Boy scene, arranged a meeting, and individuals like SEKT, along with others from the HSK crew, contributed material for the video.

In 1998/99, STAR introduced TRUS (then MER) to our collective, and he was quickly integrated into our crew due to both our painting and non-painting harmony. As our crew valued style, "der Dicke," as we affectionately called him, underwent training to fit in beyond simple bombing letters. Especially TREK initially created FOUR sketches for him, which he then translated into actions. Soon, our newcomer developed his own styles, still heavily influenced by TREK. If you look closely, this initial creative push remained evident in his pieces over the years.

When TREK, KAZE, and STAR gradually withdrew from the scene in the 2000s, the commitment to delivering quality over mere quantity persisted within the crew. When "der Dicke," now painting as TRUS and BLOK, faced creative challenges, I occasionally provided him with sketches that he could use for his work.

Friendly style competitions within the crew sometimes took peculiar turns. I remember moments when I felt that painting a train next to TREK or KAZE was an ungrateful task because you just couldn't outshine them. Watching TREK sketch was especially sobering. Funkstyle effortlessly flowed from his hand, while I struggled with pencil and eraser to forge letters that captured the right flavor.

The late 1990s marked a time of competition with DRM. KAZE later told me that a few years earlier, during a trip to Nuremberg, he had encountered individuals on the train who introduced themselves as DRM and declared their intention to make a significant impact. By the late '90s, they had lived up to their promise, and although there was initially not much friendliness between us, we had respect for this incredibly active and creative group. In particular, MICRO, RAGE, and RUZD were all sources of inspiration during that time. When I later met them, RAGE mentioned that his crew considered us as competitors creatively, just as we considered them.

I recall an illustrative incident from around 1999 during an S-Bahn action at Zoo Station, in the lay-up directly above the Federal Police office. We were frequently there at that time. One night, KAZE, STAR, and I met some other figures on the tracks who also seemed to be writers. After a brief exchange, it turned out to be DHOR and DIKE and some other guy from MGS. It's worth noting that, as far as I knew, MGS, like DRM, may not have been our fans at the time. When we introduced ourselves as B.A.D., a provocative question arose during the discussion about who had more claim to that spot – why did we have to paint here in the West when we had enough S-Bahn spots in the East? That made me laugh. Apparently, the guys knew us to some extent, but couldn't place us at all. This was likely a result of us often doing our own thing, and thus, very few knew us personally. In the end, we painted together, even though no one really wanted to exchange words during the action with people from the other crew. In hindsight, it was silly, as, from a creative perspective, I already considered MGS a decent train painting group back then, delivering good styles.

Ultimately, the entire train with all the pictures was featured in the magazine True 2The Game, and flipping through the magazine today, I still chuckle.

ABIS 2023







Mister Tee

2015-2022

In 2015, there were several reasons that led me to start with a different name. The name MISTERTEE presented itself to me for creative reasons. Also, I found the name fresh, even though I wasn't a big A-Team fan! Using completely different letter combinations brought a breath of fresh air to my sketches. Besides the letter S, E is probably the most elegant letter in the alphabet. Additionally, the combination of two double letters added an extra appeal for me. In this word, I could merge everything I stylistically loved - the classic New York style of the 80s à la REAS, DERO, or SKEME, old Amsterdam stuff from SHOE and Co., and, of course, the endless number of impressions from 90s styles from Heidelberg and especially Berlin.

Around 2015, TRUS was heavily involved in the Interrail trip and wasn't just hanging around in Berlin but all over the world. However, I could never quite relate to the need to check off this or that train model somewhere on the other side of the world. "Der Dicke" had contacts with a variety of tourists and often arranged things for them here in Berlin in exchange for support elsewhere. That wasn't my thing at all. Except for a few times, even if "der Dicke" was with us, I only went out with my own people. Rarely did I allow myself to be convinced to go painting with people I didn't know. In one of these exceptions, through TRUS, I got to know some of the younger generation from DNS. We went on a trip to Napoli, and after that, an intensive collaboration quickly developed with the guys. Especially KAGO has been frequently joining us when we go painting.

Even though the act of "checking off" train models from other cities or countries didn't appeal to me, I do love old trains that haven't been disfigured with plastic or mirror glass elements, etc. Therefore, I was immediately hooked when I had the opportunity during a vacation in the summer of 2015 at the Polish Baltic Sea to paint a few of these old wine-red-anthracite EN57 trains that still conform to this nostalgic ideal. There, I created my first MISTER TEE pieces. Painting in Poland was like a flashback to the 90s when we traveled around Germany to bomb steel trains leisurely. The EN57 things were so casually parked, surrounded by scrap, and everything was dilapidated, making you wonder if the Polish railway even cared if you painted these things. It had an incredibly cool flavor for me. Shortly afterward, I was immediately on board when TRUS said he also wanted to do these things more often. It turned out that he had been to our eastern neighbor several times before. I started researching and identified several other spots that we could visit there. So, mostly together with KOLD 125, we spent several months regularly crossing over. At times, we covered 2-3 spots in one night, delivering good pieces at each, and then crawled back home tired in the morning.





