







Unconventional, wild, consistent and prolific are but a few of the words that describe the style and career of SAGE, one of the world's most active and dedicated graffiti writers.

The Danish artist started painting in the 1980s when hip hop and graffiti art both arrived in Europe via films like *Style Wars* and *Wild Style* and young boys and girls decided to emulate the painting, music and dance styles of now-legendary figures like Dondi, Lee, Case2, and Crazy Legs.

SAGE caught the fever and joined the movement from Copenhagen eventually making a journey to New York City to visit the graffiti Mecca. By the 1990s he was fully hooked and the metro trains in Copenhagen along with the trackside walls became a favorite target for him and his friends. His style was developing and he was painting in the wild style tradition of pioneers from the Bronx like *Hot 167* and *Jeff 170* with arrows and extensions as part of his style arsenal.

I first encountered his work on the train tracks in Copenhagen when I first visited in 1994. At the time he was active painting walls and trains and had started to develop a distinctive style. Over the years on my trips to Copenhagen and on his trips to New York City we developed a friendship and painted together many times. A few walls here and there but mostly trains as that is what we both loved. He knew how to bomb, he was fast and he was good too. His bombing style over time included a good, clean throwup as well as a number of doof aliases that showed that he had beyond his own four letter name. It demonstrated that he had what I call "funk" or a certain command over letters and their stylings. Into the 2000s he only got better and better.

On trips to New York we found ourselves creeping around walls and tunnels always looking for the subway train when no cops were present. Many missions were failures but a few were a blast. He is a professional but one with a sense of humor and wicked laugh. A fan of classic hip hop and funk music and never a dull moment or one with weak music. Funky music was my best friend and what we thought would be just a normal evening of spraying turned out to be one of the most fun and dangerous of my painting career. Loaded up with beer and hung out and watch but it seems like the neighborhood dealers were annoyed at our music and painting and drove a car dangerously close to us to scare us off. Of course we didn't care so the next action was that they torched a car right by where we were painting.

Throwups turn to pieces with arrows, mechanical styles blend with block letters ...

This of course alerted authorities and out our favorites *Shorty* by a few minutes. But the most that I remember about this night was listening to - a combination of funk and soul with a touch of steel. His style is like that - funky, soulful, vibrant and at times sharp and tough. He makes it all seem easy and it makes sense when he blend with block letters, letters have tails, and more, he makes up like a deejay mixes records that you would never expect. SAGE is an innovator and while other writers have careers that last five years his has lasted 50 years or more. I imagine he doesn't even keep track, instead like a real writer he just goes out and paints some more with the same love as if he was painting for the very first time.

A writer's writer - that's my brother SAGE.

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Ket One / RIS, XTC







