

Wall Art

It is on the walls of New York, in the underground corridors of the cities, in abandoned industrial sites (left to down-and-outs and the homeless) where what we then called 'street art' appeared. We are in the late Sixties, the pop-culture world of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein is now considered as a distinct culture, and is recognised as such. Then new forms of expression begin to emerge which gradually invade urban space. By displaying their works in such places, Martinez (*taki performance 183*), more famous artists such as Keith Haring, Little Angel, Jean-Michel Basquiat and others, allowed their creators to be discovered. In reality, expression via wall art was born within man as a vital need. We all know the stories of this ancient wall art; today it is method and intent which have changed.

After that extraordinary period, these new forms of expression diffused around the world; new generations took hold of them and made them their own, appropriating graffiti and free expression; this ultimately isolated earlier generations, creating a deep divide. The phenomenon became so commonplace, that it lost its original meaning. Bans and protests which were at the origin of this wall art were distorted by too much freedom to act, creators acting without conviction. The movement self-replicated, generating many imposters. There are however those who focus on the graphic composition and who are only interested in pictorial form, those who interact with interior design considering this art as decoration, and those who cope with this language in its primitive and original meaning, such as the Franco-German artist duo Geza and Chérif (KRM). Their work is both rigorous and of high technical quality and complete intellectual honesty. KRM is an example of a new generation of artists which finds its expression in exceeding borders and cultural barriers.

Four-handed, Geza and Chérif create their walls, their painting universe and their writing. They use publicity posters which they stick on and then tear off wood, metal, plaster and painted backgrounds, scratched and scraped. They identify and thereby affirm their work. In an interview, Geza said an artist couple is not simply the result of adding one-and-one to get two, indicating that dialogue was a third and essential element, indeed the very foundation of the *work in process*. This dialogue allows the creation of a work which is both rich and complex, never banal, though it can be extremely simple and obvious. The KRM tableaux encourage query and force reflection via their images, writings, symbols, materials and colour. They address issues inherent in contemporary society and the human condition. Anorexia, segregation, genocide, media, corruption and exploitation, and human rights, these are all themes put into the spotlight on their unique walls!

Pancaldi Paolo, curator