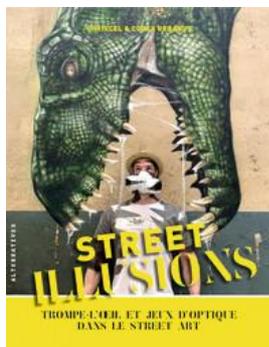


## *Street illusions: Trompe-l'œil et jeux d'optique dans le street art* (*Street Illusions Trompe-l'œil and optical games in street art*)

by Chrixcel and Codex Urbanus

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Today's trompe l'oeil has little to do with the technique that for centuries has marked the history of art. After shaking off its purely decorative use while perfectly mastering its formal constraints, the urban illusionists offer the public interactive and visual games that are as diverse as they are surprising: anamorphoses brought up to date in stunning staging, letters in 3D coming to life thanks to digital processes, or even black holes and other polychrome vortices that lead us into a form of meditative geometry...

After a historical introduction in which Codex Urbanus returns to the sources of this type of pictorial production, Chrixcel presents some twenty of these international artists who are masters in the art of illusion and shows us how over a rich portfolio of styles and of techniques, they transcend the reality of our cities and open up new and incredible perspectives.

With the participation of 23 international artists.

### **Drasko Boljevic**

Croatia / Australia

#### **MINIATURE ANAMORPHIC STENCILS**

Drasko Boljevic began his career as a multidisciplinary artist at the Academy of Fine Arts of Zagreb, in Croatia (1993). After settling in Australia in the early 1990s, he completed studies in sculpture, painting, and contemporary art between 1997 and 2012. All while remaining active within the artistic scene in Melbourne, for about 20 years now, both in galleries and in the street. It is precisely his work as 3D-stencil artist that we will focus on. It is rare for street illusionists to work with stencils, especially as the artist works with liquid chalk and exclusively on ground.

It is through these mini visual and ephemeral mirages that the visual artist changes not only optical but also mental perspectives. It is all a matter of scale between the miniature human found in the middle of a vast universe and the objects around them.

At times, the antithetical subjects found in the array of sketches, playing between life and death, have an anxiety-provoking side to them. When placed at the same level, these jarring juxtapositions remind the spectator that anything can happen from all corners of the world at any given time. The worst as well as the best. Carelessness and seriousness, quirky humour and inversion of perceptions are the very heart of this stencil art, to say the least. Particularly, when considering of the enormousness of most urban *trompe-l'œil* works.

#### **ANAMORPHOSIS OR THE ART OF SECRET PERSPECTIVE**

The incongruity of the work of Drasko Boljevic lays on his choice of subjects: levitating divers, astronauts, or half-heads, haloed by a white light as if elucidated by a theatre scene-projector. Gutter manholes seem to offer an escape towards an uncertain destination while tanks and war airplanes line up the concrete. The overall effect is perturbing and gives the impression of being in the presence of cut-outs of old American comics, particularly due to the basic colour palette (yellow, red, blue, green) and the pronounced black contours. In sum, a type of *in situ* stickers echoing social and environmental issues of our era. In a febrile urbanity that is always going faster and faster, where everything needs to be extremely visible and enlarged, the stencil artist incites the passer-by to stop for a moment, to lean in to observe the works closely, to take some time to breathe. The submerged, stretched, and suspenseful postures of these characters generate an appeal to the conscience and the refocusing on one's self. The artist puts an emphasis on the ordinary people, the homeless (man lying on the ground), the underground workers. The half-faces stamped on the concrete evoke the hidden side of a crippling world under the form of a metaphor. A world whose means of transport are machines of war (tanks and planes).

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