



PARIS ARTIST BLEK LE RAT, WHO DID THIS STENCILED IMAGE IN DUBAI, IS CREDITED WITH HAVING INFLUENCED BANKSY.

gallery world with a combination of fine traditional oil painting technique and the willingness to risk arrest while installing his work in public places.

Witz is a hybrid. While he continues to place work on urban walls without, let's say, seeking a permit, he also shows in galleries around the world: New York, of course, but also San Francisco, Los Angeles, Berlin, London, Amsterdam, Toronto and Vienna.

Many artists in history have had parallel art practices, Witz notes in a telephone conversation from his Brooklyn studio. Rembrandt did etching as well as painting. Andy Warhol made films as well as prints. In his own case, Witz says, he's learned technical skills for his gallery work from making street art.

He burst quietly on the street scene in the 1970s with carefully painted life-size hummingbirds that appeared like little green jewels on walls in Manhattan. At first, Witz carefully painted each one on the spot, using all the traditional technique he learned studying oil painting at Cooper Union.

Witz soon realized that such a degree of craft left him exposed to police attention for too long; these days he makes his images in the studio on plastic or other materials and then installs them on-site in a hit-run process that can take less than a minute.

More recently his work has involved references to imprisonment or confinement. In about 2008 he started an informal series he calls "What the Fuck?" showing people locked behind, say, a ventilation grate next to a freeway ramp or on an apartment wall.

That led to a 2012 project called *Wailing Walls* with Amnesty International in Frankfurt, Germany, that told the stories of eight different injustices in eight different countries.

Witz, a vegan, took a similar approach in *Empty the Cages*, a 2014 project for People For The Ethical Treatment

Of Animals in London, in which the caged victims were animals.

In his four decades of work as a street artist — he turns 60 this fall — Witz has encountered police numerous times but has never been arrested. That's in part because he realized early on it was safer to get right in and right out. It's also because he's an older white guy and benefits, as he notes, from profiling.

He also understands urban camouflage: These days he wears high-visibility neon-bright clothing and hard hats, passing at a casual glance for an official city worker.

But it's also because his art, while challenging, is subtler in its approach than it is in-your-face.

"I'm not spray painting on walls," he says. "I'm doing something that is fairly benign — and people are happy to see it."

Unlike some of the other artists coming to Eugene, Witz hasn't been assigned a particular wall for his work. Instead, he says, he'll be installing 15 to 20 pieces in "undisclosed locations" around town.

Here are the other artists coming to the party, and where (if it's known) they will be working:

BLEK LE RAT. The French street artist is known as the grandfather of stencil graffiti, a technique he adopted because its on-site speed helped him evade the Paris police. He's often cited as a major influence on Banksy, who has even been accused of copying his work. Le Rat — "the Rat" — is expected to create a mural at 100 East Broadway as well as smaller works at five or more other locations.

TELMO MIEL. This duo from the Netherlands — Telmo Pieper and Miel Krutzmann — is behind large-scale hyper-realistic/surrealistic murals in big cities around Europe. Both artists are strong in traditional figurative technique, but their images are layered in complex and intriguing ways. They will be working on a wall at 198 West Broadway.

HYURO. The Argentine-born painter now lives in Valencia, Spain, and is known among other things for her large monochromatic depictions of women, sometimes using sequential images and patterns.

JAZ. Born Franco Fasoli, Jaz learned his trade painting backdrops at the Teatro Colón opera house in Buenos Aires before evolving his own style of street graffiti there in the 1990s. Jaz is to work on a mural on the south wall of the McDonald Theater at 1010 Willamette Street.

HUSH. The London artist incorporates Japanese influences, from anime to geishas, in his work, which has a high-fashion sheen. He's to work on a mural at Falling Sky Brewing House at 1334 Oak Alley.

These four artists have completed their murals already:

BEAU STANTON. A California native who studied illustration at the Laguna College of Art and Design, Stanton moved to the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn in 2008; his work draws on religious and nautical imagery. He completed his work last year, a 3,500-square-foot mural on the McDonald Theater.

ACIDUM PROJECT. A collective from Fortaleza, Brazil, founded by artists Robézio Marquez and Tereza De Quinta, who also do tattoo art. They have completed a mural named *Sidewalk Games (and Kindness)/Jogo de Calçada (e Gentilezas)* in the alley next to Cowfish at 62 West Broadway.

STEVE LOPEZ. The Los Angeles muralist is a UO art graduate; he studied here with sculptor Dora Natella and design theorist Leon Johnson and showed at the now-defunct Fenario Gallery downtown. He's also illustrated covers for *Eugene Weekly*. Lopez incorporates images of wildlife and women in his highly stylized work. He's completed a mural on the Wildcraft Cider Press house at 254 Lincoln Street.

HUA TUNAN. The Chinese spray-paint artist's enormous, vivid mural on the outside of Vistra Framing