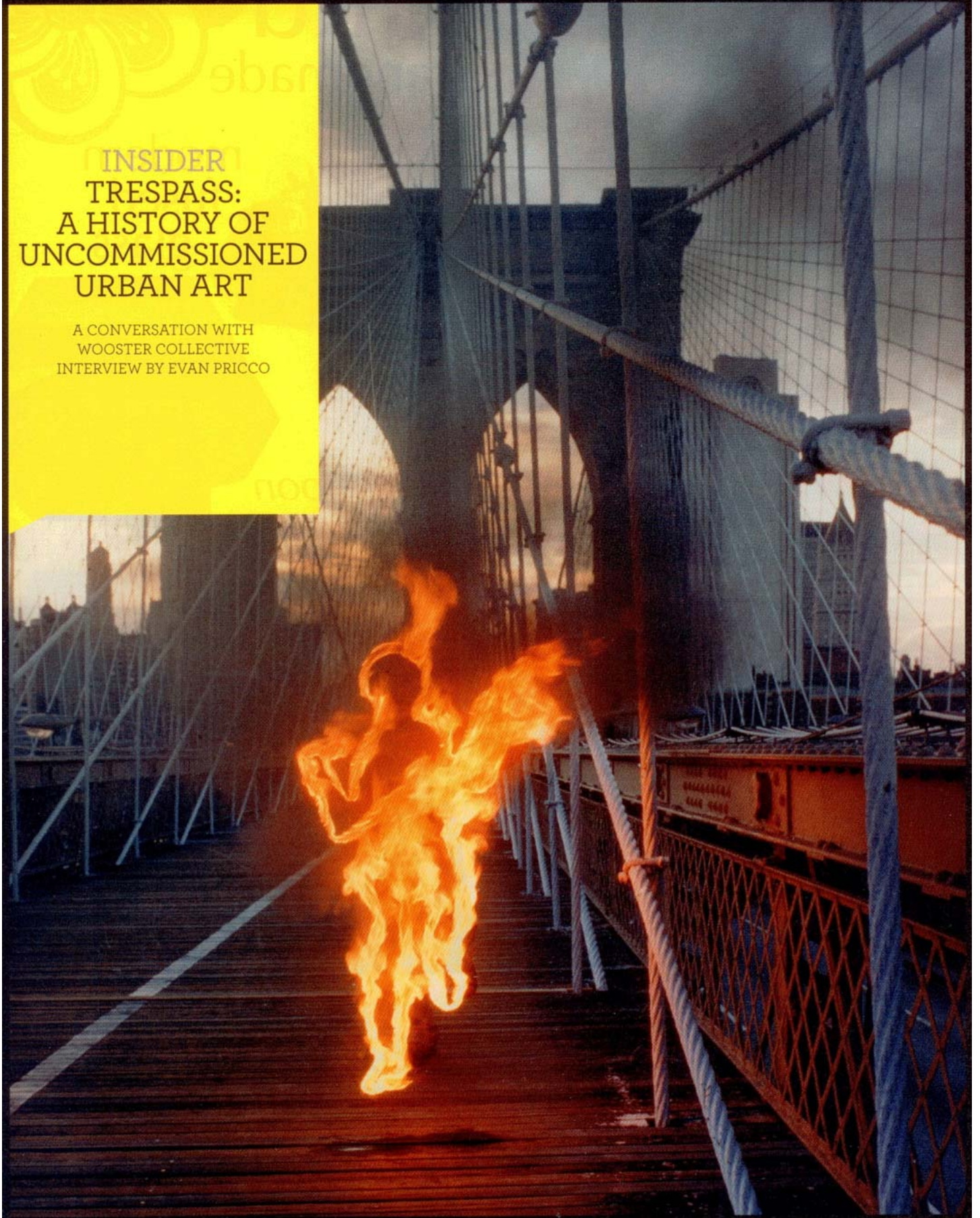


INSIDER
TRESPASS:
A HISTORY OF
UNCOMMISSIONED
URBAN ART

A CONVERSATION WITH
WOOSTER COLLECTIVE
INTERVIEW BY EVAN PRICCO



JUXTAPOZ

AN ASPECT OF ART WE HAVE COME TO RELISH OVER THE PAST 16 YEARS IS THE DEBATE. EVERYONE HAS AN OPINION OF WHAT SHOULD AND WHO SHOULD NOT BE DOCUMENTED AND HELD IN HALLOWED GROUNDS. BECAUSE WE PRINT ON PAPER, CONSIDERED SIMILAR TO THE ACT OF A CREATING PERMANENT GOSPEL, WE ARE IN THE STORM OF DEBATE MONTH IN AND MONTH OUT.

Of all the genres we cover, graffiti and street (or uncommissioned art) has some of the most ardent judges of merit. Who deserves to be known as the "first," "most influential," or who "got up" more has elevated into a full jury trial.

When influential street art website, Wooster Collective announced publication of *Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art* (Taschen, 2010), we knew the debate would be in respectable and knowledgeable hands. *Trespass* turned out to be a success, a well-documented history of seminal pieces, artists, and sub-genre movements. We spoke with Wooster Collective about the difficult task of covering the most fickle of art, permanence of paper, and trying not to lose the visceral. —Evan Pricco

Evan Pricco: Everyone has an opinion, especially in street art and graffiti, about who is good and who has done the time to be considered legendary. And with that, everyone has an opinion of who needs to be included in a seminal street-based art book. Did you have a fear of missing, or forgetting someone, and how did you avoid that?

Wooster Collective: When we decided to put together a book as ambitious as *Trespass*, we knew it would be a challenging, multi-year project. We established some "rules" that we tried to follow: the work should be unauthorized, the image should show the context of the work in a public space, and each piece should have a high enough resolution to be a full page. So, some artists that we wanted to include had not documented their work in a way to meet the needs of *Trespass*. Not categorizing the chapters by time period (70's, 80's, 90's, etc) or by medium (Graffiti, Stencil, etc) meant that the pressure or need to include everyone

became less of an issue. In addition, since the book took three years, some amazing artists emerged during this time that we would have loved to include but who could not fit into the design schedule.

Photography has been a huge part of graffiti and street art culture, but there is always a chance that in a book the art loses something. One of the major parts of why uncommissioned art is so affecting is that you are pounding the pavement seeking the work out in person. A book takes away a bit of that. You may get the visual impact, but not the visceral. So how do you create that intrinsic experience in a book that is so tied to these forms of art?

We are always preaching to "get out and walk the streets!" as it is the only real way to see street art and graffiti. However, because of the ephemeral nature and the globality of the movements, it is just not practical to see every amazing piece in person. And, for something like performance or protest, you are either there - or not - it is a fleeting artistic experience. By working with Taschen, publishing with the highest quality of printing and paper in the art book world, the images are thus brought to life. In addition, we tried to have every image be full-bleed and if possible, double page. The image would envelop your entire eye, not compete with captions or other photos.

The organization of this book is one of its strongest attributes. Whose idea was it to categorize by theme as opposed to chronology?

We worked as a team with Ethel Seno our editor and Carlo McCormick our writer. *Trespass* is different from other books as it represents performance, protests, and interventions as well as street art and graffiti. We knew that we didn't want a conventional format of chronological or by genre because the art is connected together in deeper levels. After many wine fueled conversations, since Carlo was writing each chapter, he generated many of the themes and then we worked to match images.

What are some areas of the world that you think have interesting street art that has been under-covered? What have been some of the burgeoning scenes that are going to be documented soon?

To us, cities and even neighborhoods tend

Paolo Buggian
Minotaur
Brooklyn Bridge
1980

to go in cycles. Depending on the artists and the legal enforcement, neighborhoods can be hot one year and cold the next. One spot that we've really wanted to get to is San Paulo, Brazil. The caliber of artists, the freedom to express and the interesting urban environment make for the "perfect storm" for street art and graffiti. We've seen our own neighborhood of Lower Manhattan emerge from a really dry spell over the past couple years as the economy turned down, and street art and graffiti turned up. So we are always walking around looking for interesting pieces.

Where does the content in *Trespass* go now?

Trespass is in six languages, so we are really hoping that it will spread around the globe. Since it takes a different view on unauthorized urban art there is something in *Trespass* for everyone. We are always thinking of our next book. We have a list of artists we'd like to put into *Trespass II* and we have ideas for other books around art on the streets. However, since it took three years to take flight, right now we are simply watching it grow.

Trespass was published by Taschen Books, and available at Taschen.com. Wooster Collective is an online journal of street art and graffiti from around world. Go to Woostercollective.com for more information.