



Street Scene

Graffiti gets added to the canon at Amsterdam's Straat museum

By Yvonne Gordon

Is street art still “street” when it’s created and displayed inside an exhibition space? In Amsterdam, visitors can decide for themselves at Straat, a museum of street art and graffiti that presents over 150 pieces by more than 130 artists in an 86,000-square-foot warehouse.

There’s good reason to show works by artists such as Thailand’s Alex Face, New York City’s Daze, and Belgium’s Adele Renault indoors; after all, street art is at the mercy of the elements, urban change, and even other street artists. Straat’s main exhibition hall, however, hews to the roots of the art form by mimicking the layout of

a city, complete with intersections and squares.

Another way the museum—which originally opened in late 2020, shuttered shortly thereafter because of the pandemic, and reopened for good this past June—retains the liveliness of a cityscape is by constantly adding to the collection, with new artists sometimes generating works live in front of museum visitors. Straat also leaves some of its exterior open for artists,

meaning the outside changes almost daily. Dutch artist Fake (given name: Manuel Seikritt) says he appreciates the museum’s free-flowing, interactive spirit.

From top: Fake’s *Super Nurse*; pieces by Apitatán, Nasca Uno, and Vegan Flava, among others, at the Straat museum

“It’s great,” he says. “You start painting, and there’s a lot of people looking and talking to you. I always like when people give their own interpretation of my work.”

One of the notable pieces in the museum’s collection is Fake’s *Super Nurse*. He painted the original version on a wall nearby—Straat is located on the NDSM Wharf in the up-and-coming industrial neighborhood of Amsterdam-Noord, long a haven for muralists—as a tribute to healthcare workers when the Netherlands announced its first COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020. The image became famous around the globe: It was

projected onto hospitals such as NYU Langone in Manhattan and Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles, and a version was sold by Sotheby’s in New York for \$18,900. Fake recreated it for Straat, where he had the space to make a version that was four times as large as the original.

“The canvas at Straat is so big that it’s actually how it should be on the streets,” he says. “It’s great to paint it bigger—it’s painting outside, but inside.” straatmuseum.com

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Tim Stet Foto (top); Roderik van Nispen (bottom)