

JONONE

Graffiti is as hip as ever, and JonOne is one of its stars. Born in Harlem, he has been living and working in Paris since the late 1980s. He designed our cover, but he is also exhibiting in two galleries at the moment. Inspired by Pollock and de Kooning, JonOne describes himself as an "abstract expressionist graffiti painter." But whether on the street or in the studio, working on a wall or a canvas, JonOne is above all a freestyle artist.



Is graffiti an art in motion?

What interests me the most is the movement of colors. In New York, I love to see the tagged subway cars speeding by. When the subway stops and I can read the graffiti, it's less interesting to me. This is certainly why my work is abstract. It is neither figurative nor representative; it is in motion.

You painted a Thalys train for the Amsterdam/Cologne line. Would you like to graffiti an airplane?

I'd love to! With speed, I'd feel like I was flying a rainbow.

Did the shift from the street to the gallery change your art?

I have always worked in a studio, even when I was doing street graffiti. They are two different, but complementary approaches. When you graffiti a wall, you're always on edge. In the studio, you can work longer, do research, paint and listen to music—and most of all, rework what you've done.

What are your priorities in life?

My family, my friends, to keep me balanced; freedom to express myself; and the good fortune to work at something I love. Art is a way of communicating that has allowed me to travel around the world, to meet extremely different kinds of people. I think art and art de vivre are linked.