

# LEGACY AT MARTINEZ GALLERY

NOVEMBER 11, 2022  
MARCH 2023

## PRESS RELEASE

Legacy  
November 11, 2022 – March 2023

3332 Broadway, NYC 10031  
515 West 207 Street, NYC 10034  
Hours: Mon-Fri 10 AM – 6PM

Opening: November 11, 2022, 6 - 10 PM  
at 3332 Broadway

## ARTISTS INCLUDED

910DO	MAE
ALONE	OMYE
BEAST	P13
CANCER CARL	PAPI
CAP	PETRO
CASE 2	PILFER
CHUSKI	REMIO
COMET	RENKS
DIP	RIZOTE
FLINT 707	SABE [DK]
FORM 76	TYPE 2
GEAR	VFR
GOREY	XPOME
KAPUT	YES 2
LAMBO	ZONEK
LEAD	

Legacy discussion between Danielle  
Becker, Marleen Kaptein, Hugo  
Martinez, Kevin Monaghan, PETRO  
and Octavio Zaya.

H: So...what are we talking about this morning? We have this show coming up called Legacy. I thought, let's talk about it a little bit. This will then serve as the press release.

O: I wrote down a few questions that will explain to the public a little bit about the show, with specific questions that will bring about the conversation. In general terms, legacy is handed down from past predecessors or ancestors. Why is it important and necessary for graffiti writers and artists to consider their legacy or legacies now?

K: You've been doing it for 50 years; you need to talk about that.

H: Well, the first thought that comes to mind is that many artists talk about making money. I was speaking to KAPUT and XPOME in Greece, and they said, "We're not making any money." It hit me that maybe you can't, as an artist today, you can't have both money and legacy. That started me thinking, when you sell out, you get money but is it always a question of selling out versus not selling out? And in the graff world, or maybe in the art world, in general, when you do a commercial product, or you get commercially successful by changing your work to fit into the corporate venue, the corporate perspective, once you do that, you've lowered your standards already. You may not be able to get them back. I don't think you can get them back because it involves a specific psychological change. It's like, you do graff, you get arrested, or you're doing illegal things, you go through a portal, then you're a different person, you've already become an anti-establishment being. Then to come back through that portal, it's like coming out of a black hole.

O: But is there a criterion to bring all these people together? I mean, the curators have an idea to do the show. And it will be under the title Legacy, implying many things. How do you come about selecting?

H: I'd like to first explore the concept of legacy a little bit more. So, I'm gonna bow to Marleen because she's an expert on legacy.

M: Am I? I am just trying to translate it.

H: What did you come up with?

M: It is difficult, but what is a legend?

O: A legend is different from legacy, isn't it? You can be a legend without legacy. Or you have a lot of legacy that you brought down into the next generations. But you are not a legend.

K: It has a double meaning, whereas, in graffiti, all the stuff you do is relatively temporary. A lot of the time, it's illegal, and it's only going to last maybe hours, sometimes less than hours. Even though you've done a lot of stuff, nothing ever lasts. The only way you'll ever be remembered is through having a good legacy; what you've done, you've either influenced people, or you've created a style or something. If you haven't done enough to create a legacy, you'll never be remembered.

D: You know, it's interesting. I remember KEZ once told me, "If I paint here, here, here, and there, and then they paint over it, I'm still in the foundation of this building. Regardless, if I die, I'm still in this world." His thought was to keep painting. He was building a legacy; he is a legend because of that.

H: That was his technique.

K: Yeah, that's cool.

H: Is it really, Kevin?

K: It's cool to have that thought; if someone paints over it, you don't think about it anymore. It's gone.

H: Yeah, but he was always painting over other people's names. It is a little different than just painting and getting painted over. He meant getting your name painted over by somebody else.

K: He made a legacy for that, anyway.

H: A hostile legacy.

K: Full-contact sport.

H: That concept was introduced by white kids. IN IZ, CAP would write over people. That kind of hostility became a way to gain legacy, or at least legend. Legacy doesn't have to be positive.

O: No, you can leave a legacy of terror, like Stalin or Hitler; you can leave a legacy of pain. Legacy is not necessarily something either positive or negative; it is what you take from the past. And what you continue in a way, if it is good or according to your predecessors, ancestors, family, or whatever.

H: The question is, who determines it?

O: Exactly. And for whom it's important or not. In this case, I was wondering--

H: The audience then determines what legacy is. It could be a legacy in this world, but not in another other world or with this audience and not with another audience. So, let's say within graffiti itself, is there one legacy? Is there one determining factor, one determining consciousness of what legacy is? I'll give you an example. I used to hear a lot of writers say, "He's a legendary writer." In the 70s, by 1976, what "legendary" meant was the first group of writers that painted from 1966-1975. It also meant that they had to come

up with something, introduce something into the culture that was entirely unique. It could have been as simple as PHASE TWO using the number two instead of PHASE ONE. It could have been JOE 136's J. It could have been whatever, but it was also attached to quantity and placement, placement being critical - where you put it. SKUF said to me yesterday, "...how it makes the audience feel, how it makes the viewer feel, is also important". That answered the definition of legacy. I started thinking, a writer from 76 and 77 ain't no legendary. You're not a legendary writer. So, what's the difference between legend and legacy?

O: There's a big difference. Let's say some filmmakers left a legacy of how they work, how they work, how they influence other people, etc., but they are not very well known - Cassavetes, for example. They are not very well known to the public. They are not really a legend, only for the group of artists for artists or filmmakers for filmmakers. But beyond that point, they may be people that nobody knows about. They are not legends, but they left an incredible legacy. That goes for all the arts. Many people were recognized, and they are considered legends. They are people that left an incredible legacy for other writers, painters, whatever. But they are not very well known among the public. They are not legends.

H: Kevin. What could destroy a guy's legacy? A writer's legacy?

K: Snitch? That's all the stuff down the drain in two seconds. That's the number one.

H: Yeah. Anything else?

M: In art and poetry, you can't snitch.

O: No, but you can change directions, or you can decide to go for a dictatorial regime, or you can write something in favor of somebody that is a monster, whatever, it will destroy your legacy. You may still be an outstanding artist or writer, but...

M: You can sell your soul to the devil. And graffiti writers can do that to each other.

H: What can they do to each other?

M: If you've been snitched on, there is a war, probably. With normal art and music, it's not possible. Maybe a little war, but in graffiti, it's more direct.

K: But the difference is, with all the other arts, they're not breaking the law. So that way, there's "honor among thieves." That's how your credibility is judged. Or at least how you lose it very quickly in this walk of life.

O: And they don't have many rules.

H: Amongst graff writers?  
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O: Yeah, but their own rules. What we consider, let's say, something that you couldn't go about or agree with, in the graffiti world, they have more freedom under their own rules.

H: There's both freedom and constrictions. If you do XYZ... Given that it's from New York, the criteria will always be somewhat fascist. If it's a sport, it must have a score; it has to have errors, it has to have most home runs. That's one of the appealing things about it. Quantity, it's got numbers to it. It's got mathematics in it.

K: It's subjective; some people just care how prolific someone is. Whereas I rank style higher. So maybe if someone only does three or four pieces in a year, or if they have a unique style, that's good. That means more to me than somebody who went out every night and bombed somewhere with the same thing every time.

H: That became true by 1973, when the black writers came in from the Bronx and were concerned with style. "King of style," how they look. That style was more important than quantity because they were doing pieces. Pieces took a lot of time. Before that, in Manhattan, where graff in NYC originated, it was quantity and signatures. By January or February 1973, STITCH 1, JEC, SJK 171 started doing signatures on the A trains signatures from the window down, but then they would embellish them. They would do like a cloud - a white cloud and then maybe add a pink cloud. They called these softies because they had an element of femininity to them, so it wasn't just the hard New York street gang type graff or persona. It was now, "I'm bad, but I'm bad because I'm soft also." It brought me back to the gangs in the 50s that used to wear a black T-shirt, fedora hat (had to be black and had to have a red feather), had to have tight wasted pants with those baggy pleats with cuffs, and black Chinese slippers or PF Flyers. Those were the baddest guys, because they were feminine, but they were also hyper-masculine. You didn't mess with them at all. Because it was absurd how they were dressed, to that culture, they were dressed both masculine and feminine. We have PETRO with us today. PETRO deals works with a Ralph Lauren theme.

PETRO: It's not really to do with graffiti, is it?

H: It has to do with legacy, or it has to do with legend. I gave him a shirt this morning that was not Ralph Lauren. It was a nice silk shirt. He said, "I can't wear it." It gives him hives; anything, not Ralph Lauren will make his skin react.

P: It's not funny though, really; it's a strange condition. I think it's in my head, really. But yeah, it hasn't got anything to do with graffiti. It has to do with obsession. And graffiti is a total obsession, isn't it? So, I have an unhealthy obsession with professional designer Ralph Lauren; I make art about either being him, being a model for him, stalking him, making fake shops, and marriage proposals. I have an unhealthy obsession with brands, but it's not really to do with graff. But it

has a graffiti sensibility. But yeah, it's nothing to do with graffiti.

H: But it has to do with obsession.

P: But graffiti is an obsession, isn't it? People have had their lives ruined by a childhood phase that took us through our midlife. It's quite a legacy, that you dedicate your whole life to something for no good reason. Well, it's a good reason, but I guess my addiction to Ralph Lauren is the same thing. Graffiti's a bit more fun. But Ralph took over.

H: What legacy would Ralph Lauren be?

P: Well, a strange taste in most people's mouths.

K: Like there's legendary pieces of clothing.

P: Yeah, yeah, that's true. There is that. There is a similarity between all subcultures; they all take a few concepts, from skateboarding to graffiti. They're all lifestyles, aren't they?

H: What do you think, Marleen, what will you leave behind?

M: I'm just thinking.

H: What are you thinking about?

M: I'm enjoying the story because it's so brilliant.

H: You've done a lot of designing with us. That's a lot of history.

M: Yeah, but I like to use the stories of what you tell me and what I hear, I try to play with it, and sometimes it works out, sometimes not...

H: Which stories?

M: I don't know any specific stories. I like to listen, and then it comes from somewhere in my brain and out as an idea or something practical.

H: On this next exhibition, you've come up with a few ideas to deal with legacy.

M: Yes. It's still difficult to show it in a space and give everybody the older legacy. That's quite difficult not to be overly exaggerated. Giving everybody a natural state is quite tricky. It should not be too designed because that's a bit horrible.

P: What's interesting is that everyone in the show, and everyone that does graffiti, does it for a different reason. It's not just one narrative. It's interesting about any approach to doing anything - that there's a set of rules to be broken or not. Each artist in that group of artists in the show does the same thing, but for different reasons. That's an interesting aspect of making art, especially within graffiti, where there's a boundary.

M: And what can that be? What kind of difference? It can be like an addiction, or you have to do something, or it's irritating.

P: Yes, and what you deem to be doable or achievable. Like my name, I write PETRO, because it means to be scared because I shit myself every time I go and do graff. I still overcame that fear to do it as far as I could take it. My insecurities lie within that. My career as a writer shows that fear because I'm not as prolific as a lot of my peers.

H: It also shows the negotiation between what's the best spot you can pick with the least amount of hassle. As you're leaving Amsterdam Centraal Station, you picked an electrical box and fit your two letters, but it stood out more than anybody else. Just an electrical box. Everybody's doing big pieces, this, that, and the other. But you picked one that was relatively safe but also dealing with your fear.

MICO told me that he knew when Pistol was in the train yard by the smell of shit.

P: Did he go straight away, did he? Was he ready to go?

H: Yeah, so much so that he would go in some exit.

P: I wonder how prepared he was for that. [laughter]

K: Two sock guy.

O: I have more questions. How many artists are involved in this exhibition? Was it difficult to bring together all these different types of graffiti artists? Most importantly, do they represent the past as a legacy? Or are they artists representing current graffiti or predicting what is to come? K: There are 31 artists involved. They range from guys who painted in the early 1970s right up to recent. So, it's a mix of everything. The common denominator is that these are the best, like instead of having a theme, like 1990s New York bombers or current writers, it's a mix of basically style masters over the last 50 years. So obviously, it's a lot harder to represent. Some of the style masters are dead now or because it's been so many years. But that's the mix of people in this one, trying to pull out the best lineup we can get together with the people who are available.

H: Not only available, but the legendary writers, those that wrote prior to 1975. Those were three to four hundred writers. Of those, in my opinion, 35 to 50 writers were "Kings." Say 50. Of those 50, only two have maintained their talent. Maybe three. That's it. The rest of them have lost their talent. I've been asking myself, "Why?" A lot of that has to do with the fact that they didn't get the success they expected. They thought they were going to be accepted by the art world and by the world at large. And they became bitter. Or they came from a stratum in the working class, right at the border of poverty, and other priorities cannibalized their gift. The purpose of the art became, "Why isn't this helping me through this?" It became art at ...



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the service of the rent, art at the service of food, or other necessities. Art and necessities became diametrically opposed to each other. I recall one of the fathers saying to one of the artists, “Why are you doing that? I could get you into the doorman’s union.” He could be opening doors and carrying suitcases for people and saying hello to people for the rest of his life. “Instead of doing graffiti, graffiti, graffiti.” That reality destroyed many of the guys.

Kevin, how did we make choices? We tried to make some contemporary, but they’re not legacy. Or were we predicting legacy?

K: The people who come over to be part of the Martinez shows, and the reason it’s different here from other shows is that you’re asking people just to paint what they paint on the street onto a wall in the gallery. You’re not asking them to create a canvas, drawing, or whatever. So, many graffiti writers have no interest in making art or being part of the art scene, but they happen to be part of these shows because you’re showcasing graffiti for what it is. People are still looking at the photographs of the shows that the gallery put on in the 70s. When you’re part of something, it becomes part of your legacy, because it’s been documented, you’ve been there, and that will be there forever. It’s a marker to have “such and such was part of that show” where it’ll always be remembered by someone, especially in the days now of Internet where people go in and take photos, save them, and you don’t even have to be there to see it anymore.

O: Do you try to cover different trends, schools, styles, nations? How far does legacy go? Is there only American graffiti?

K: No, there’s people from Australia, Europe, everywhere.

H: There’s even people from England [laughter].

K: England, yeah, well, you have to give a sympathy one every now and again. [laughter]. There’s people from South America. It’s all over the world. When me and Hugo were talking about this, he doesn’t set any rules on where someone’s from; if they’re up and they’re talented, it’s not about where they’re from or anything like that. There’s a mix of all types of styles, classic styles. Then you’ve got someone like LAMBO who paints Lamborghinis; it’s not even lettering. It’s a mix of everything. Everybody’s not fit into a certain criterion, no matter what they do.

D: The guys make the trends and solidify what the masses will do.

H: They create and define what is new and best. They are the fountainhead. That involves a lot of different personalities, many of whom shouldn’t have ever met each other. They respect each other even if they don’t necessarily like each other.

K: Never meet your heroes.

H: I don’t know that to happen at the gallery. People like to meet their people. When you put people together in the same room and give them this objective, does the energy continue to exist as it exists on the street? And does it create a bond, some kind of relationship between them, where they’re not gonna fight? Where they’re not going to go over each other, where they’re going to engender respect? Ergo legacy?

K: I think what it means is just that sometimes when you like somebody’s stuff, you half idolize them, or they’re your hero, and then a lot of times, they can turn out to be a dickhead. What you’ve thought about them is automatically ruined. Like, “I was better off not meeting that guy, because I loved his stuff, and then when I met him in person, he was just a shit human. So, I don’t like this stuff anymore.” But that could be the same for a footballer or anything. This guy is really good at football, but actually, he’s a domestic abuser or something. That’s his legacy gone. The good thing about these shows is that just mixing all these people is a perfect thing because it seems like they all come away from it with something new, or many times people say they got inspiration, or they’ve shared ideas where people are showin’ different ways of doing this and that. It’s something that you don’t see when you’re looking at the pictures, but it happens. I remember the first one that we did in 2019. When Hugo showed all the guys, he has a black book from CASE 2, and I can still see guys taking inspiration from seeing their drawings and putting it into the stuff that they’re doing now. In a good way.

H: PETRO saw it. What did you get out of that? Looking at CASE’ book?

P: Yeah, it was a sort of a portal into his life, preserved, with schoolwork and all the paper sort of. It was an amazing experience to look at that book. It was a piece of history, a historical document, more so than just a black book, because he also had his schoolwork in it. You had a totally different dimension added to the book. It wasn’t just like you were looking at graffiti drawings. You were looking at the way that he wrote sentences, the things that were concerning him in the things he was writing.

K: It was a reminder of how young he was as well. That he was doing all them styles when he was in high school.

P: Yeah, at 14. You could see where it was Fantastic Crew, and then by the end of the book, it was The Fantastic Partners. That book is a historical document.

M: It should be published.

H: Kevin has been pushing for that for a while. But I don’t think we’re there yet. I don’t want to print something that’s just gonna sit out there to 50 people. I want it to have a little more... After this show, we’re more entitled to say, “Hey, look, after 50 years, we

can kind of say who has legacy, from 70 to 74.” That gives us a little bit more authority. I would hope, just to establish that.

M: It would be nice to have an exact copy of the book.

H: You’re right. And in the order, right? As you said, it started out as The Fantastic Crew, which then became The Fantastic Partners. That requires a change of mentality. Partnership is not a word that you usually hear. I think he was the first one to introduce that concept.

P: Regarding style and never meeting your heroes, I know, nine times out of ten, if I’d get on with a person just by seeing their painting. You’d be, like, “We are not going to get on. You have been there for four days. With your stereo, with your mates, having a right boring, great time. And it shows. We’re not going to get on. I’ll be there in a couple of hours. Looks like he probably was at the pub or went to the pub after. On with him.” You can see that when you look at a painting. “They’re gonna be a laugh,” or “They’re gonna bore my tits off, and we’re definitely not going to the pub.” I think you can see that within paintings. But sometimes, someone does an extremely ugly piece of graffiti that’s really good. They’re actually all right, but one in ten. There are nine other people when in the show; it’s there in front of you that all the people that are in it have all kinds of bugged-out, style innovators. And I bet everyone’s lovely. Might be one or two not. I can normally say if I’d get on with them just by looking at their painting. I don’t know how that reflects in Contemporary Art--it’s probably the same thing. Style reflects personality.

H: There’s more marketplace in today’s art, less so in this culture. Marketplace has its influences, but the artists that get into the marketplace permanently must be graduates of Yale or another recognized ivy league KKK. That criterion determines currency – which also emphasizes which gallery they’re with.

P: But that’s still graffiti; which gallery you’re with is which crew you’re with.

H: But that’s people; that’s not market. Market is some Art World luminary telling a writer that he should stop doing letters and start doing more figurative work. That’s what market does. Because that sells, they told writers, “You must start painting with monochromatic colors. That’s what’s in.” It ruined fleetingly successful writers’ work. That’s what market does.

Marleen, what elements are you introducing to this next exhibition related to legacy?

M: I’m just still thinking about how to create more space, more walls.

H: Because of the number of people? Because you want them to have their separate type of relationships in their history? Why?

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M: To show everybody well. Give everybody enough space. We can use all the elements in the space. It would be great to build windows. You may want to wrap some of the works in your collection in plastic and spray over them.

H: The concept is to take paintings or drawings that have been made already, cover them tightly with plastic sheets, hang them where we want to hang them, then, the artists come along and paint on the walls, do murals in, around, or on them. Thus, consider the painting, as opposed to what has been proposed in the past, paint up the whole place, and then hang paintings on the installations. I found the latter disrespectful to the work, to the mural, because you're taking a painting and invading a mural.

M: With our idea, you take a piece of a puzzle out of the mural. It's the opposite.

H: The paintings become a piece of a puzzle?

M: Yes.

O: Are you maintaining the integrity of the original piece covered in plastic?

H: Yes, then we uncover the plastic to uncover the work.

O: Exciting concept, maybe the best, because in some way you trace of legacy in that kind of intervention, while the other way is going to be very difficult for the viewer to learn or even look at this many pieces of art to try to solve a puzzle that is not in front of them - it's everywhere. The idea of making all of these works an integral part of the exhibition is the best way to trace that legacy. You have plenty of people, but if you are not a person that is completely knowledgeable, or a specialist in graffiti, you will miss the points of the legacy. This idea can work.

H: Now, where do you hang what?

O: That is the curator's job. You must bring together these significant pieces that you already have and place them somehow. Then you bring the artists to finish up the installation...

K: In including that stuff, you'll have to show people what you have. You don't like that. [laughs]

H: But there are also new things aside from older works. Ninety percent of it is going to be new.

P: A lot of A4 drawings, isn't it?

H: A lot of A4 drawings and ten paintings, 3 feet by 4-foot paintings. We'll have murals, pottery, drawings, and film with historical references. Kevin should compile a selection. Marleen will include sandblasting boxes to access some black books.

D: We also want to incorporate some photographs FLINT 707 has. Probably for the windows.

O: Yeah, that sounds wonderful.

K: It'd be cool, like, each room, like the doctors' office windows.

K: You'll have a theme in each one of the doctors' rooms. I feel like we should show some of the photos from the first exhibition; if it's 50 years to the present, it must be in some way. It might be cool to have a room you walk into with photos from 1972.

O: You must have historical references everywhere.

H: We have a lot of photographers and videographers coming over. It's going to be a little complicated, so they don't get in the way of each other. Although they're all writers, somehow, they stay out of each other's way in the past. That happens in this kind of collective atmosphere, which then becomes their space because of the artist we've chosen; there's also a collective respect for the work.

M: On all sides. They don't get into each other's way; they merge somehow, and everybody feels they have their way of respecting it.

H: But no one wants to shine too much until the beers start to take effect. Then you get showtime.

M: Inside and as seen from the street.

H: This is better than another ordinary press release. Anything major, that we haven't spoken about?

K: I just think it's important to look at the legacy from the perspective of this is also your legacy. Someone who's doing shows for 50 years.

H: I want to leave myself out of it as much as possible.

M: Why is that?

K: I know, but...

H: I'm not the legacy.

O: But you can help read it that way too.

H: I want to put it out there so it's something you can show your grandkids without having to have my name on it. My name's on the door. That's enough. The rest must be the work.

K: But this year marks 50 years of shows.

P: It would be good to have signed documentation of your legacy as a gallery—photographs of the last 50 years.

K: I didn't mean to have your name. But if you're doing a press release, mention that it's 50 years.

H: It started on November 11, 1972, the night my kid was born. That's the night that we invented United Graffiti Artists. That's the day that we considered the beginning. So, the opening is on November 11 and will be made up of various exhibitions for a year until we celebrated our first SoHo exhibition in September 1973. At that point, we can introduce those SoHo shots. I don't want to do too much of a National Geographic display. You got gems; stick to 72 if you're going to show the old shit, stick to 72. You can have a couple of smatterings after that. But to release those gems, and then in another three months, we do another one, when we do another, a maybe broader number of photographs, and then end up with another message, so you got a progression. I would rather do that than say, "This is the 50th; everything is in the 50th." No, this is going to be a one-year show. Here are some gems from this. Does that make sense?

O: Yes, it makes sense.

H: I don't want it to be like a comic book: those thick comic books you get every year, a Hulk magazine compilation.

D: Buyer's Guide.

O: Out of all the selections you have been making of writers and artists, could you say that they are the most influential, or are they the ones you like the most?

K: This will be the best show of all of them because of the broad range. There are a lot of leaders in the group. When you had a concept the last time, or a certain theme, it doesn't always require people to be super original or to be the creators of the styles. It could be just like, oh, we're having a guy from Philly, he didn't come up with it, but he does the style well. Whereas a lot of these guys are the leading stylists. Look at PETRO there; people all over the world copy his shit. You know, the chap's a world-renowned stylist, and plenty more style trailblazers are in it. That's all I can say. Not to take away... say with the 90s show. All those guys are legends in their own right. But it was just for throw-ups in the streets. It wasn't really about piecers or trains or anything like that. Whereas this covers everything. It's a more diverse lineup with a lot of heavy hitters.

D: And I like that when there's a room full of leaders. It's a totally different energy. Everybody looks like they're from Ancient Rome or Greece. Everybody's statuesque and even have this way of bringing out so much confidence from within that it floods everywhere. It's almost like you can drop a pin and hear it.

H: Danielle doesn't have any problem with manhood. [laughter]

M: I'm gonna be afraid to come out. [laughter]

D: We'll have a blast.