

# The Crystal Ship

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# The Crystal Ship Has Come of Age



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This third edition of *The Crystal Ship* is the one that really marks its concept's coming of age. The festival has by now become a permanent feature in the cultural fabric of our city. The people of Ostend are proud of their Bosoletti, their Matthew Dawn and their Guido van Helten. They are proud of their gigantic murals as well as their minuscule intervention pieces.

And we speak of *their* art festival because *The Crystal Ship* is a collaboration project. It is not art for the sake of art, but a dialogue with the neighbourhoods, their surrounding areas, and especially, the people of Ostend. *The Crystal Ship* is comprised of artists making technically outstanding portraits of local heroes while tipping their hats to the sea and the fishing industry. Our citizens volunteered their walls for the festival and participated throughout the process. The artworks themselves are also stimulating dialogue. Residents and visitors meet each other and discuss what they see. Young and old, families and tourists all engage with it. *The Crystal Ship* reaches a wide audience.

*The Crystal Ship* is also opening up Ostend. Residents and visitors are discovering other parts



of the city. "Unknown, unloved" may be a truism, but *The Crystal Ship* is changing all of this. Herein, too, lies one of the major challenges facing us for the festival's next editions: reducing blind spots and ensuring that all neighbourhoods receive due attention. We consider this very important, because it gives *The Crystal Ship* a base that we can use to build upon and innovate further. We no longer have to explain the concept to people, because they immediately know what we're talking about. The press carries it exceptionally well, and artists spontaneously offer to participate in the festival. Johannes Verschaeve, for instance, approached the curator himself to propose an idea. We provide artists *carte blanche* to break any and all street-art conventions during *The Crystal Ship*.

With Sainer, Icy & Sot, and Zoer & Velvet, we have brought some of today's most influential



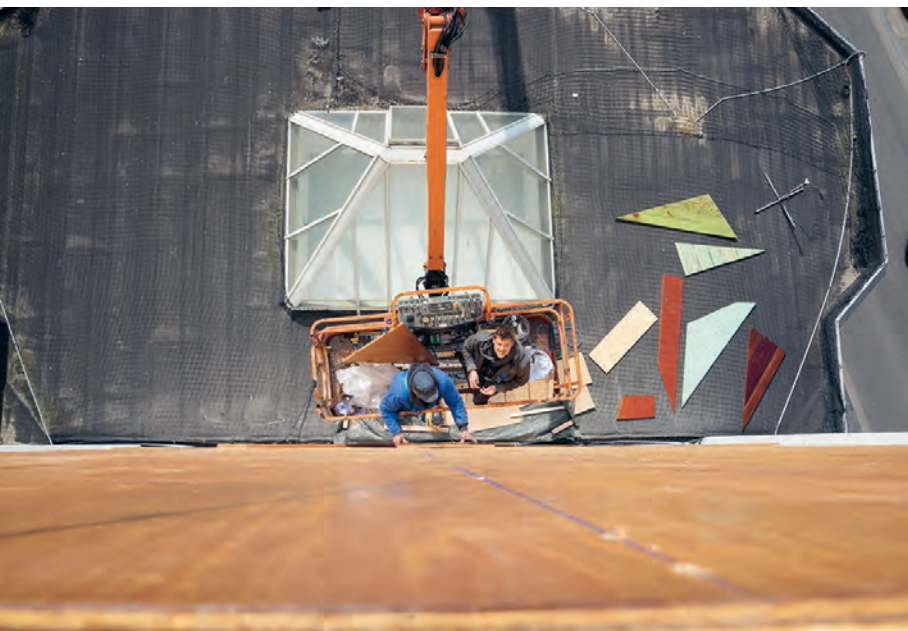
P artists to Ostend. They are true pioneers in their  
U field. However, we also feature homegrown talent:  
B Matthew Dawn and A Squid Called Sebastian, for  
L example. Jaune was visiting us again, and this year he  
I got a helping hand from that other interventionist,  
C Oak Oak. With just a few exceptions, the top 50  
A artists of street art are all represented in our streets,  
R and we are rightfully proud of it.

N Would you like to see all the works? Then get ready  
D for some serious walking! Or, take your time and  
stay for the weekend. This booklet offers you some  
information about each artist's way of thinking and  
working. Consider it an extra dimension to the art.

Enjoy, talk and let us surprise you!

Johan Vande Lanotte - Mayor  
Bjørn Van Poucke - Curator









# Strook

## Waking up with a wooden head

/

° BELGIUM

- Works with recycled materials

▪ Belgian talent

/

Wood sculpture  
on wall

**P** Using the name 'Strook', Stefaan De Croock pulls out all the stops with his art. Having studied art at Sint-Lucas in Ghent, he earned his stripes as a graphic designer, but where he really comes into his own is out on the streets. All of his works begin with just a few lines and a flourish of creativity, as if the drawings make themselves. To these lines Strook adds extra dimensions: story, structure and colour. His canvas can be made of anything: paper, wood or even imposing walls. And, why not even have a go at moss with a high-pressure cleaner?

A special aspect of his work is its frequent use of recycled wood. This is not a coincidence: De Croock senior is an excellent woodworker, and Stefaan wanted Strook's work to be a mix of his father's technical expertise and his own artistic ideas. He is constantly roaming the streets in search of fine boards, old floors or elegant doors. However, he leaves them as is: the materials' unique personalities guide the creative process, infusing the artwork with its soul.

Strook always begins with a drawing. He then mentally fills it in with pieces of wood, leaving plenty of room for the unexpected. He can spend long

stretches of time just staring at the wood, yet also thinking about the artwork's future surroundings: does the building have a story, and can his artwork enter into a dialogue with it? This whole process gives Strook a nice picture of the desired result. The next step is to carefully clean the wood and cut it.

For his work on the façade of Toerisme Oostende—his largest to date—Strook wanted to use only wood from Ostend. It was a daunting challenge. Luckily he enjoyed the goodwill of Ostend's citizens and the help of his father. He managed to get his hands on some boards of the *Mercator* sailing ship as well as the *Assanat*, a fishing boat that capsized, taking the lives of two of its crew. He also used pieces of beach hut and old doors, all with their own stories. In short, it became Ostend's history condensed into one, large artwork. In a deft extra touch, the portrait looks slightly musingly out to sea.

*Each piece of wood has a story of its own. And when I join those pieces, you get still another story. That wood has a history, and this makes it so beautiful. ■*







# Disorderline

## Young violence

/

° BELGIUM

■ **Abstract and multi-coloured**

■ **Worked in Mexico, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, amongst other countries**


/

Spray paint on wall

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In their teenage years, no streets were safe from the graffiti of the members of this collective. Over the years they progressed towards graphic design and the visual arts. Always maintaining a dialogue with its surroundings, their colourful painting combines abstract planes and realistic forms. The number of artists painting a piece depends upon its design, but there are usually two or three of them.

For *The Crystal Ship*, Disorderline drew inspiration from the setting and the swimming pool. The sea's blue and the beach's ochre appear in the geometric figures that combine to form a gigantic abstract ensemble. No wonder this work was so successful in the first edition. An interesting detail: because they had another large project in the works, the collective worked during the night. In spite of their lack of sleep, they created a flawless, impressive result. ■

A large black billboard is mounted on the side of a modern, multi-story building. The billboard features white text in a bold, sans-serif font. The building has a light-colored facade with several balconies and windows. The sky is overcast and grey. The text on the billboard is arranged in three paragraphs. The first paragraph is the longest and is followed by two shorter paragraphs. The overall scene is an urban setting during the day.

NEW COUNTRIES WILL  
GROW UP ON GRACEFUL  
PROMONTORIES WHERE A FEW  
PEOPLE GATHER TOGETHER/  
IN THEIR WORLD IT WILL BE  
ILLEGAL TO OWN THE LAND.

//AND THEY WILL MAKE  
NEW LITERATURES IN  
WHICH THE OIL AGE WILL  
BE FORGOTTEN//

AND OUR CITIES WILL BE  
FOLDED BACK INTO THE SAND/  
AND THEY WILL NOT EVEN  
REMEMBER HOW WE ONCE  
HELD THE WORLD IN OUR  
HANDS AND HOW WE  
CRUSHED IT LIKE A BIRD  
IN OUR HANDS



# Robert Montgomery

## Poetry with paint /

° GREAT BRITAIN

■ Installation artist and socio-critical poet

■ Exhibits worldwide /

Acrylic paint and stencils on wall

P In the very beginning, inspired by the diversity and  
U freedom of graffiti, the multi-talented artist sprayed  
B poems on buses and walls. Power, love and human  
L interaction ... they all return in his melancholy  
I poetry, as well as the search for beauty in sadness.  
C Robert Montgomery makes billboard art, fire poems  
A and woodcuts, but also neon-light installations  
R that seek to punch capitalism and the consumer  
T society in the face. His creations may sometimes  
I look like large ad campaigns, but that is only until  
N you take a closer look. You then discover the often  
O strong, underlying message. And yet, he always  
S manages to sneak a positive note into  
T the melancholy.  
E  
N

Since Montgomery considers publicity a reflection of people's desires, he often plays with the topics of love, hope, happiness and durability. These are to him the only things worthy of our desire as human beings. His product is inspiration, inspiration that he hopes will incite society to consume less. And inspire he does! So much so that some of his fans immortalise his poems in the form of tattoos. Oddly enough, his art, so critical of consumerism, has itself been turned into a consumer product against his will, with depictions on mugs, cell-phone

cases and shoes. Montgomery views this as a kind of acknowledgment of his work.

While words are the core of Montgomery's work, he nonetheless connects them perfectly with the visual world. What is written has to be good, too. Design lends words more depth, more power of persuasion, more impact. Indeed, this is what Montgomery aims for—impact. Influencing society through his art by proclaiming the word as an artistic prophet.

It is no different in Ostend. As an exclusive for *The Crystal Ship*, Montgomery wrote an optimistic poem on the ecological crisis using his patented font. First, he painted the wall completely white. Then, he worked with letter stickers, and finally, he painted everything black. This is a unique piece, because Montgomery has painted precious few murals. In fact, this one for *The Crystal Ship* was his first outdoor mural. ■



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# Henrik Uldalen

**Dreamlike  
vulnerability**  
/

° NORWAY

■  
**Photorealism**

■  
**Dark themes**  
/

Acrylic paint on wall

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D** *The Crystal Ship* may be the largest public art festival in Europe, with Nuart in Norway being the first one. The two festivals joined forces in an exchange project. We sent our very own Jaune to the High North and, in exchange, Henrik Uldalen came down to Ostend.

Uldalen was born in South Korea but draws his inspiration from the wintery darkness of Norway, the country where he grew up. His work explores the dark sides of life, taking on nihilism, loneliness, longing, and fragile beauty. His portraits create frightening, dream-like atmospheres—open to interpretation, if you just stop and look at his work long enough.

Looking at this work, you wouldn't believe Uldalen taught himself to paint. His colleagues praise him for his incredible technical ingenuity. Yet, his work is not pure street art: it doesn't create such a strong dialogue with its public surroundings and could also sit perfectly well on a canvas. After all, Henrik Uldalen grew up inside a workshop and only took his work outside at a later stage in his career.

# Colophon

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