

FA-Q BY LUCIANO CAPRILE

By Luciano Caprile for Fondazione Europea Alberto Cravanzola, February 15 1999

fa-qart.com/2005/01/01/fa-q-by-luciano-caprile/

FA-Q is an omnivorous artist; he consumes all the colors, he hurls himself at every space. He paints in a hurry: he's a convinced proponent of "fast painting," which is also a type of behavior, a way of life (or non-life).

This combination of tribalism and modernity corroborates a concept expressed by Jean Baudrillard in his book *Amerique*. The writer affirms that the inhabitants of the New World are the only true primitives. And, being a good neo-primitive, Kevin Wendall (FA-Q) uses his hands as brushes and palette knives; his fingers spread the paint over the surface after it has been spattered there directly from the tubes, jars, and spray cans.

A similar repeated ejaculation of paint is part of a rite of love and confrontation, and may be likened to the current of Bad Painting, which, rather than aiming at so-called beauty, provocatively seeks out ugliness — in other words, bad taste (that, however, has nothing to do with kitsch).

In fact, through this behavior, the artist is exclusively aiming at heightened aesthetic disturbance and rejects any possible attempt at contemplative analysis. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1955, in 1975 Kevin Wendall attended the Cooper School of Art, where he began to use the pseudonym of FA-Q as a signature guaranteeing his artistic recognition.

In 1977, still in Cleveland, at the Baldwin Wallace College, he worked with mentally disturbed patients using art as a form of therapy and, just two years later, he began to take part in group exhibitions. Also, in 1979, Wendall moved to New York, continuing to participate in such artistic events as Portraitshow and Dog Portrait paintings.

In 1981, FA-Q spent eight months in Berlin, perfecting his special technique characterized by the use of the hands as a means of spreading the color over the canvas and the unusual thickness of the paint spattered over the surface of his works. At the same time, however, he refused to exhibit his latest creations in the galleries and it was only in 1985 that some of his works were displayed in public. Meanwhile, he shared his studio with Norwegian artist Knute Swane and another individual called ET, who was not otherwise identified.

And it was this period that Street Art began to attract public attention, and FA-Q's output was even reproduced in a series of posters in the Paris banlieu. In 1986 at the invitation of famous galleries, the artist went to Helsinki with a study grant to make works on the spot and exhibit them at three venues.

Before returning to New York, Wendall was a guest at Enrico Baj's studio, where they executed works together. In 1987 FA-Q's artistic output began to take off with a series of solo exhibitions in galleries in New York (No Se No, Emerging Collector) and Europe. Particularly noteworthy was his participation in

the third international art show at Amalfi, entitled L. Arsenal, il Laboratorio e l'Artista. Moreover, in 1987 and 1988, after an exhibition in Tokyo, an ample solo exhibition was devoted to him at the Nice Art Fair (Emerging Collector Gallery). Wendall continues to survive, thanks to the creative drive that marks him unique and allows him to be always present in the limbo of misunderstood geniuses who have the courage to say FA-Q.

Excerpts taken from Fondazione Europea Alberto Cravanzola — Kevin Wendall FA-Q a cura di Luciano Caprile