

Alex



Kuznetsov

USING BRIGHT COLORS TO
BRIDGE THE GAP

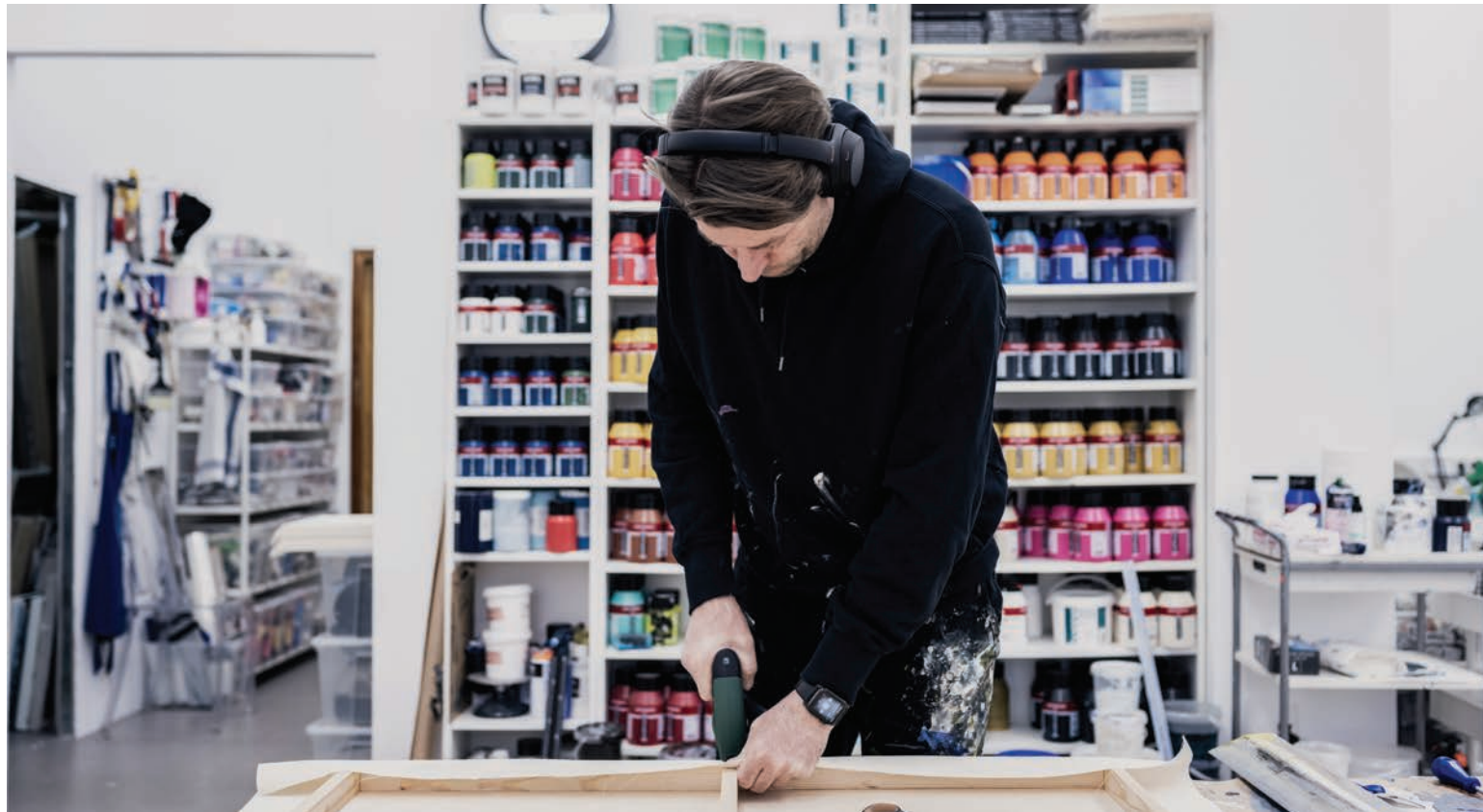
BY
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IF YOU HAVE SEEN THE VIBRANT COLORS OF ALEX Kuznetsov's graffiti and abstract works, you might be surprised to know that this now Lisbon-based artist who grew up in the Soviet Union was not always surrounded by a visually stimulating environment. Any colors he did see, however, sparked his imagination.

Kuznetsov, who was always thinking—and drawing—ahead of his time, is very keen on technology and remained determined that he would work on a computer with colorful graphics in the future, even after getting his first black-and-white PC in 1989. “I didn’t even know what to call it back then, but five years later, I figured it out and dived deep into the world of the graphic design. That passion has led me to doing graffiti and, 15 years later, to the abstract painting which is my current occupation.”





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This forward-thinking artist also remembers some of his first inspirations. “Being a soviet schoolboy, I was amazed by the Donald chewing gum wrap with some of the Disney characters on it. All that I had at home from so-called visual materials was one comic book and a few magazine cutouts. I wasn’t at all different from my peers in that way. We were living in a very dull, uniform world, and up until now, I feel that strong attraction to working with colors

in my everyday life. It’s very likely that, subconsciously, I’m still trying to compensate for that time.”

Not allowing his surroundings to stifle his dreams, Alex helped organize a graffiti team with a small group of like-minded artists in the middle of the ‘90s. “We would download some pictures of artists from Paris and New York using the dial-up internet connection at night. Afterwards, we would copy them into our sketchbooks. In that way we were learning the fonts, dynamics, and color schemes. That was our artistic education. We had neither specialized magazines nor graffiti spray paint. We would bring those from the neighboring country of Poland in the

car trunks, but I never let any difficulties or the absence of the necessary conditions around me stop me. I would always use my imagination, fantasizing that we are somehow interconnected with those who do the same all over the world. In that way my confidence was shaped, and I kept on moving forward.”

It wasn’t long before the group’s artistic efforts, both on the surface and behind the scenes, started getting noticed by others, most crucially, by festival organizers around Europe. It was during this time that Alex was also allowed to see other parts of the world. He eventually got involved working on exciting collaborations with brands, including Adidas, Nike, Absolut, Tumi, and Vogue. “Aside from bringing the idea of the graffiti culture itself, we became its foundation in our countries from Soviet bloc.”

He also describes how something similar was happening to him while he was working on his abstract painting in Moscow. “It’s important to understand that the aesthetics, and in general, the inclination of the artists and collectors in Russia is very different. Most often it’s gray, dramatic, figurative painting sodden with some sob story or tinged with a sorrowful sense of despair. I was never inspired by those things. Once again, I felt different, and in my imagination, I was together with the whole

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Alex Kuznetsov
Midnight Cats Serenade,
2021

acrylic on canvas
150 x 100 x 4 cm
59 1/4 x 39 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches





Alex Kuznetsov
Sound Composition
 0204-2021, 2021

colorful world, even though we were separated by the distances. I was sending out the signals and trying hard to set up the connection. And I've succeeded, first via the internet and then later via my Instagram account, which became my mouthpiece and the lighthouse. My way to reach out to the world: 'Look, I'm here! I also exist!'

He has certainly come a long, and very colorful, way from his restricted beginnings and is now living in Lisbon, where he remains connected to the art world.

How does he describe his current style? "I'm enjoying developing several styles simultaneously. That's the habit I brought in from my graffiti past. At that moment I was actively using four nicknames and four alter-egos in disguise. Each of them with different style and

approach. All of that was coexisting in my head with no effort, and I was never afraid to experiment, finding new forms of expression and perfecting them. I use the same approach in my painting now. I have several directions. Each of them resonates differently, but there are a few aspects which remain unchanged: balance, composition, work with color and energy."

Alex also explains how his evolving works come with inspiration from music, design, an encounter with a certain person or any other intense impression, which might open the door or become the starting point. "From then on, everything that is happening within the creative process is pure magic. I can't formulate it, though I often think about it and observe the attempts of other artists to describe the process. We all end up with approximately the same

Signed and dated verso
 acrylic on canvas
 150 x 100 x 3 cm
 59 x 39 1/4 x 1 1/4 inches

"THAT'S MY PIECE OF ADVICE TO EVERY BEGINNER OR PRACTICING ARTIST: PRACTICE, PRACTICE, AND ONCE AGAIN, PRACTICE."

conclusion: it's hard to describe, but it's even harder to live without it."

He has certainly overcome a lot of darkness, which perhaps is why he is now able to bring so much light to others through his pieces. Alex also admits that the life of an artist is complex, something he tries to advise other emerging artists on. "The complexity is not about being better than others. Rather, the complexity is about fitting into this logical world with its linear tasks while speaking the language that only few people can understand. The language that becomes your personal means of communication, expression, and the way of existence. Because when an artist stops speaking and practicing that language, he can feel like everything around stops making sense. He starts losing his powers, and his life turns into routine. That's my piece of advice to every beginner or practicing artist: practice, practice, and once again, practice. Similar to a musician who practices playing the violin, one should constantly sharpen the craftsmanship expressed in such an intricate but yet interesting form as art."

In addition to working on two painting series for upcoming exhibitions in Paris and Hamburg, Alex is also busy on one of his most exciting projects yet, the construction of a studio in the suburbs of Lisbon. When he's not painting, which is not often, as he spends close to 12 hours in his studio every day, Alex enjoys cooking. After all, he equates the process to making art. "I find cooking and the presentation on the plate similar to my work in the studio between the color, composition, and flavor harmony."

Alex keeps getting his art on and continues to catch the attention of galleries and art dealers around the world. **P**

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Alex Kuznetsov
Summer in Cannes, 2021

acrylic on canvas
 150 x 100 x 2.8 cm
 59 1/8 x 39 3/8 x 1 1/8 inches