

GRAFFITI BLOG

eklips interview / <http://graff.blog.hu>



For those who don't know you, please introduce yourself. What should we know about you in a nutshell?

Eklips: My name is Casey Zoltan aka Eklips One aka the founder of AWR and MSK aka the chief of The Seventh Letter aka the boss of Known Gallery aka the father of Savannah...

Were you born in the US? How did you/your parents end up in the States from Hungary?

Eklips: Yes, I was born in Santa Monica, California. My father came to the States after he fought in the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. He met my mother in Canada and then they moved to Los Angeles.

When being a kid, have you ever been bullied because of your name / nationality?

Eklips: Never. People tried to bully me when I lived in Germany for being Hungarian, but that didn't go never far.

What do usually people think about Hungarians in the US?

Eklips: Most people in the US don't know much about Hungary or Hungarians.

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Your Godfather is the famous hungarian painter, Endre Szász, who has lived in LA for a while. How was your relationship with him?

Eklips: Endre Szasz was my best friend growing up. I love and miss him dearly. Szasz, as I called him, and his wife, Lula were great to me. They treated like a son but with no rules, I could get away with anything when I was with them. Szasz loved when I would be wild and do crazy things, he got a kick out of it.

How did he inspire you?

Eklips: It was always amazing to watch him create such beautiful pieces, especially the huge murals on porcelain slabs. I think one of the coolest things was his swimming pool because he painted it and at night it was super scary looking, but in a good way. My mother and I would always go get art supplies for Szasz, I think that's where I discovered spray paint for the first time. Szasz used a lot of Krylon in his paintings and paint markers too.

Any particular memory you would like to share?

Eklips: I also have really great memories of staying with him in Hollóháza after he moved back to Hungary.

When did you first meet graffiti / illustration arts ?

Eklips: My first introduction to graffiti was in the breakdancing days while living in Germany around 1984-85, but I didn't use spray paint until 1986.

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You remember the first time you ever did graffiti?

Eklips: Not really to be honest.

How was the LA graffiti life back then when you got into it? Did the writers from different crew know each other in person or only by seeing each others pieces?

Eklips: LA graffiti was great in the mid 80's and early 90's. There was so many people doing quality works and the scene was on the rise. In the mid 80's when I was getting started you didn't really talk about graffiti but in the 90's you definitely did and made a lot of friends and enemies like that, but I would say mostly friends, male and female.

Was there any violence between the crews / gangs?

Eklips: There has always been violence in graffiti and mostly because of the gang mentality in LA, but I think that goes for everything in LA not just graffiti.

Did you have any mentor who taught you the basics or watched your first steps?

Eklips: I had a few, mostly older guys from a crew called KSN, KINGS STOP at NOTHING. They lived a block away from me so I was always rolling with them at a young age.

The crews founded by you (AWR, MSK) are famous about having the most highly skilled writers within. Was it you who usually recruited / approved new members? Have you ever said "no" or "not yet" for somebody?

Eklips: Yes to all of that...

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What was your concept when merging the two teams to the Seventh Letter?

Eklips: That's not what The Seventh Letter is. That's a misconception people have. The Seventh Letter is a clothing company and an art collective. It's our corporate identity, not a graffiti crew.

I know, everybody asked this before me: Why is the crew called "the Seventh Letter"?

Eklips: The Seventh Letter in the English alphabet is "G". "G" can mean anything to anybody. It's different for everyone. I also really like numbers, especially 7. It's a positive number. I could tell you more reasons but I want everybody to have their own meaning for it....

Seventh Letter went international since then (Roid, Gary, and Aroe are from the UK).

How do you stay in touch with the members?

Eklips: TSL is a family. We all speak all the time. The internet helps tons with communicating and sharing photos, ideas, etc.

Is it more difficult to manage such a big crew?

Eklips: We're all grown so we manage ourselves mostly.

Your people keep traveling across the globe to perform on different shows. Do you join them sometimes?

Eklips: Yeah, all the time. Tomorrow I leave to Canada with Revok, Norm, Push and Pose. Traveling is the best part of all this for me. I love to see new places and meet new people.

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Frank151's new book about the Seventh Letter says the following when introducing the crew: "The Seventh Letters tentacles have spread around the world to cities including (...) London, Paris, Milan, Naples, BUDAPEST" - What does that exactly mean? Do you have contact with any hungarian writers?

Eklips: It means we have people everywhere. I know a few graffiti writers in Hungary but mostly hustlers and business people.

Tell us a bit about how, when and why did you found Known Gallery.

Eklips: Known Gallery is our way to legitimize us in the art world. It's been going on for almost 10 years now. We just opened our new gallery in Los Angeles in February of this year and it's going really well.

Known organizes/participates a lot of art shows / exhibitions / events, it runs a shop and release art books. Is it all you behind who keeps the business running?

Eklips: I do a lot of it to say the least.

Any recent / forthcoming happenings you would like to highlight/promote?

Eklips: There is something new every week to be honest. I'm really proud of the new gallery.

Known artists participate with their graff aliases, while most of them also rocks the illegal side of graffiti. Never had any issues with the police / authorities?

Eklips: All the time. LA is no joke.

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Being in the graff business for more then 20 years now, does it still inspire you?

Would there be any reason for you to quit completely?

Eklips: I don't think I'll ever quit 100% but I definitely am pushing more towards the high end market in fashion and art.

Do you still write your name? When was the last time you painted?

Eklips: I write my name every day. I paint from time to time but mostly when a travel.

Any shout-out for the hungarian readers of graff.blog.hu?

Eklips: Thank you for your interest in what we do and hopefully we'll have a Known Gallery in Budapest one day soon. RIP Endre Szasz and my father George Jozsef. Hungary is the greatest country in the world and please respect that.

www.knowngallery.com / www.theseventhletter.com