We all have absolutely every talent in the world. It’s the little choices in life that make us special. I was attracted to the details found in the drawings. I am the youngest dreamer in a shy family. I began to recognize the drawings at school. I reproduced them. I put Obelix in my hand for a week, watched the shadow of Lucky Luke and the swaying step of Tintin, and became a little comic book forger. I wasn’t looking for quality. I just wanted these characters to belong to me. I was a mess. My left hand was shaking with style. But the imagination and memory of the lines were there. Copying a drawing meant that I could take its universe with me like a suitcase with infinite contents, like Mary Poppins. There is a double life for cartoonists. There are vivid memories of such

or such a drawing that, when seen, copied, or imagined, leaves an indelible trace as much as is possible. I remember my first painting on a small canvas. I could do it again. It was Nefertiti and Tutankhamun, with the Great Pyramid of Giza in the background and a setting sun, in a mix of Egyptian and Japanese influence. There are details in each drawing that can be read or read only by the drawing. The designers recognize the personality in the line, especially in those who have grown up with drawing.

I was socially fit to go to camp at seven, eight, nine... I was the only kid in a bunch of teenagers. I meant absolutely nothing to them. My only asset was my Walkman. I had MC Hammer tapes, a West Coast rap compilation, and MC Solaar in my pocket, along with a mullet cut anarchically by an unemployed friend of my mother. I used to go rollerblading or cross-country biking on weekends in front of my house. Mister freeze in the summer, I used to get my brother’s clothes. Pumps, sweaters (Waikiki or Simpsons). The guys were surprised that I listened to rap music. I had convinced my mom to go talk to the guys who were hanging out on the Parvis de la Défense a few days before I left. One of them had accompanied us to the FNAC and had conscientiously selected my first playlist. That’s what allowed me to accompany Enzo and his friend, who was fifteen years old, when they went to paint the tents of the camp. Colored letters, round or brittle, full, which appeared to me to be enormous. I especially remember their "shiny" effect: a white six-pointed star reproducing the shiny effect. It was beautiful. At the beginning of the school year, as a souvenir and to keep the vapors of the summer in mind, I drew on the beams of my room the three letters of this type: COB. This first act of vandalism was condemned by the local police. My parents then tried to instill in me the notion of "common space."

When I was thirteen, I took classes at the circus school in Nanterre. Three tents in the middle of nowhere, wedged between the Nanterre University and the A86. I learned to juggle on a giraffe (a unicycle as big as stilts). I was not interested in the omnipresent graffiti. I tilted when I saw the guys in action. I had no curiosity at the time, so I questioned the guys. The first one was from Los Angeles. He had painted a creepy chick with a big knife in her hands. I asked the Frenchman who had done the green lettering. His name was Darco. That was it for a week of jerky letters. I went back to take Kodak pictures, still flabbergasted that I had met a black American. My brother would pick up the first hoodies sold at Châtelet or the Saint-Ouen flea market. Dosse Posse. I had a few crappy copies bought at the Nanterre market. The characters were the first B-boy styles, such as Dready, which were later worn by teuffers. The beauty was in the black hood. B-boys had a square jaw. The simple and effective features are close to the other notorious inspiration of the moment: Dragon Ball Z, of course.

Among the aficionados of Club Dorothée, it was the story of Akira Toriyama that held the attention of all the boys. It took me a long time to learn how to make this pattern of jaw, hair, and shoulders that allowed me to create as many Super Sayana as I could. Ears, eyes, nose—absolutely nothing was drawn the way we were used to seeing it. The French comics were too complex for me; beautiful paintings were overloaded and weighed down the reading.

Middle school was a prison where the first gangs were formed. Nicknames abounded. There was a lot of carting around and regular beatings. There was hitting. We didn’t know enough about the pain in the body. I gave myself the nickname "Popo" after Mister Popo in DBZ. The only known black Indian in the history of manga Something hypnotic in the character’s round features and slow aesthetic had seduced me. My brother rode a moped. The Fox Peugeot, the one used by pizza delivery men He used to stash his pot bars in a box to sell them later to his friends. Schott Bombers. Lacoste outfit. Air Max or Caterpillar? Wu-Tang bag. Naughty by Nature sweater. Rolled-up sock. Jacquard sweater. Baggie Jeans. Pit bulls and Rottweilers The full adventure Growing up, the guy would get up at noon. He called me to turn the sound up. 2 Bal 2 Neg, Minister Amer, ATK, La Cliqua, Expression Direkt, Hostile Hip hop, ...

Tons of compilations and freestyles are recorded on the radio or patiently copied on tapes. It gave me a reputation as a rap connoisseur. Guys from middle school would come up to me to catch up or ask me questions.

« What’s a biatch?

"It’s a boat for the rich." Maybe I still had some gaps... I used to hang out in the square in front of my house if I wasn’t in my bathtub all day. In that square, there was a tag. I don’t remember the name of it, but it had arrows and lines all around it. I thought it was great. I imagined a monstrous guy with a black hood and red eyes going out at night and stamping his serial killer seal to scare the people.

Another notorious tag was the one that riddled my grandparents’ house. We had gone with them on vacation. When we returned, the house had been broken into. I was sad for them but also excited that something like that had happened. The burglars had written on the gate: « We’ll be back.» Extreme fright. Later, I would live in this house with my parents. Others would rob it and write "Dirty Jew" on the walls. Some guys from the neighborhood Different times, different customs. That, of course, is not graffiti.

In the end, I never actually saw the graffiti that inspired me. My brother was coming back from one of his adventures. He told me he had visited an abandoned factory near Bezon. Bezon was on the other end of the world. He had seen a giant fresco there. a dark room, or almost. Candles on the floor revealed a huge painting in honor of Candyman. He probably exaggerated the scene, but I was there. Graffiti and horror movies were the fertile breasts of my youthful imagination.

I wasn’t a very good drawer, but I drew and painted often. We had a neighbor I spent time with, Jean Claude Gal, a comic book artist who brought incredible toys back for his son when he came back from the States. He was a young old man, a fog machine, and he used to draw heroic-fantasy scenes with infinite details on his drawing board. I would ask to sit next to him. I would proudly show him my dung, and he would encourage me. Of course, I had about 15 minutes of concentration left, so he was a little annoyed. I would return to show his writer my stories to see if there was a way for me to break into the business. I would later learn that the scriptwriter in question was none other than Jodorowsky himself. Jean Claude Gal died of a heart attack. The cigarettes, I guess. I collected drawings from guys my age. Their style leaned towards Warhammer, Dongeon, and Dragon. I couldn’t go that far. I knew it wasn’t for me. not very free. not very singular. Big hands, big feet. Endless trolls and warriors The kind of Thorgal 2.0. mixed with the comics style: when Vanhamme tries to cross Stan Lee, in big and medium. Me, I was trying to imitate the whole team of the Petit Spirou. It’s a shortcoming that served me well in drawing, as it often does in art. When one learns to draw, one approaches the form with small back and forth movements of the pencil. We press the line as we go along. Some seek their image in circles—circles to put the eyes, the teeth, the legs, everything. This is what the fine art schoolers call "repentance. Not being aware of these techniques, I traced everything directly with a trembling hand. This weakness was my personality. Drawing is like playing the gypsy guitar. You lean on the right hemisphere of your brain. You bend over. You integrate the forms more than the techniques, and you open yourself to pure imagination. We move away autonomously. You stop incorporating other people's designs and begin to develop your own. Of course, I didn’t think of it that way in college. But simple strokes have changed my life and my way of thinking. The next summer, I smoked pot. That, too, must have changed my way of thinking. I moved to Suresnes, a city that was a bit bawdy. I looked for the curves of women on paper or in photos taken on the spot, as best I could. In Spain, I discovered Miro and Salvador Dali. The former because my mother thought I drew better than him, and the latter because he announced the possibility of living in this world while remaining eccentric. The house in Suresnes overlooked the railroad tracks. You could walk around by climbing the little stone barriers. The Poles slept in the old SNCF huts. At night, bands of skin passed silently by. They were planning a raid in who knows where. I found a barrel and ink in my brother’s drawer while trying to steal his weekend pot. It was a shoeshine barrel. Super large.

In second grade, a teacher put me in the back of the class for some reason. I had to talk or draw on the tables. They put me next to a guy who had a punk haircut. He was writing in a book of incomprehensible flies. The guy couldn’t take it anymore. I thought I was dealing with a Satanist bending over his incantations. He was practicing his tagging. I had to realize that a tagger wasn’t necessarily a hip-hop gangster. He was trying to bridge the gap with Arabic calligraphy. I myself had bought

a calamus to try my hand at Arabic calligraphy. Apart from punching holes in leaves, I didn’t get much out of it. My friend, he found the Satan style of tagging. He became a very technical tagger. We drank. We smoked. He told me about other taggers. So I took some leaves and ripped them with erasures to find my incantation.

I didn’t really see any point in stylizing the letters, to tell you the truth. I was just satisfied to simply mark my name and see it again the next day. I was on the street. I met other taggers while participating in a graffiti activity in the city above my house. I drew a boy with a pit bull. The other participants had super clean graffiti. Although they couldn’t draw, they were doing classic Parisian style lettering: big curves and big lines drawn at arm’s length without a gap and without a repeat. They meticulously applied their color plates, inline, outline, and 3D bubbles to land on a mountain of straight lines that bordered on wild style. The magazines began to write their history, to lay down codes and teams of big brothers to be recognized as a school in a world without the excessive communication of the internet, a world where the next town was already far away—a local world. So we put together a team of very different people. We didn’t know that we were going to repeat this name over and over again for decades. So we called it "peeled fat school. Reduced to Fatsk because it was too reminiscent of the True Skool. We attempted our first night outings to drop our filth, hesitant and flowing chrome plates, lettering that was not truly serene, toy tags, and lettering pins for far too ambitious models. So we went to the disused factories of Paris or the suburbs, ruining our clothes and making the style evolve. The articles in the magazines talked about adrenaline. It was an overrated vision. In reality, nobody likes to be caught by the cops. On the other hand, you soon realize that with a little training and a couple of bombs, you can make a bigger mess than you are. With addictive fumes in mind, going home with the satisfaction of having produced a piece that went beyond the A4 sheet was more than enough. For the most part, guys who didn’t know how to draw went directly through the composition and the colors of an almost abstract language. This is an important notion since it makes graffiti the first universal art whose practice adapts to all climates with the naturalness of a weed. An army of self-taught artists chooses four or five letters: a foundation for a lifetime of studying surfaces, lines, and tones. The French went towards schoolboy writing and sober colors: white chrome, black, and red. The Spanish went for extravagant shapes and warm colors. The Germans tend toward 3D and very technical, scrupulous pieces. The Americans have followed a very graphic trend, well representative of their hip hop imagery, which will be followed by the rest of the world in this impressive globalization of tastes and colors.

Other graffiti artists spoke of a pure political commitment, a way of shouting their rebellion to society. It was a bluff. The first pleasure came from the lack of judgment and doing something that wasn't simply about money or success. If you’ve ever tried to do an exhibition, you know what I mean. Judgment. You have to ask assholes to exhibit your work. They judge. Then other assholes judge again. And there you are, asking for a whipping and being told it’s okay to take that kind of risk. At the local café or the MJC, it’s even more gloomy. Going through graffiti was a childish wisdom that saved you from all that nonsense. It was the art of not making the effort and not asking for anything else. There was no question of whether it was legal or not. moral or not. useful or not. We wanted to paint at night and during the day. Under the heat of a wasteland or in the shelter of a street, I had in my features something of Tim Burton's because his drawings had marked me. The childish gloom evoked something in me. His romanticism was seductive. They were my candymen. When I would come back, having drawn huge monsters plated in a plastic bag, I would be able to see them. on the wall, I was satisfied. I thought no one would like it, and that’s why I was doing it. I felt full and fulfilled. I didn’t even take pictures, or I took them rarely, or I would lose the pictures. The marks, the testimony of the experience, were part of the evolution of my line. The pleasure was in the hours of drawing, warmed by the drawing lamp, softened by weed or pot, looped music, and reading.

We had all fallen in love with Johann Sfar, Trondheim, David B,... Their naive and freestyle had replaced the fumes we had been having about Loisel and his revisited Peter Pan. It was a time when I could still fall in love with a style and dive into someone’s universe. The center of the world was in what I was reading and drawing. It’s a pleasure that you lose with time. My crew was interested in drawing. Today, with street art, it seems banal, but at the time, at least in the suburbs, it was an outrage. If you weren’t interested only in lettering, you were disqualified.

I signed up for academic drawing classes to gain some confidence. I just wanted to draw and fall in love at the time—the only two things that really mattered. I didn’t have the ambition to be an artist; that pedantic fatness In academic drawing classes, I spent my time copying things that weren’t sexy: that picture, the class trash can, your buddy, the building, the deformed body of that old man.

I’m a model who's half naked and half in the sack. Recopy it all with your charcoal, your pencil, a pen, a brush, a pastel, and all those things that cost a fortune on sheets that cost a fortune to finally have the privilege of getting the same drawing board as everyone else at the end of the year. Finally... I was developing a knack for printing with a blood-red apple. Graffiti magazines were becoming more and more popular. But to want to be known by being published was considered cheating. You were always meeting more people and more teams. There are the first toys. A guy passes you again. You pass the guy again. Even if you’re pretty much a pacifist, you don’t let it happen to you. If you didn’t react to a coin drop, all your coins would be gone. So we would defend ourselves. Other times, you let it happen. The social structure became more hierarchical. You had to lift the dough in front of the elders and stick to the current style with clearly American letters. If you didn’t make New York revolve around you, you weren’t worth it.

I tried to stick from time to time, but the natural fantasy came back at a gallop. The underground of the Defense Department had been deserted. The Midnight Express and the Black Dragon’s had dissuaded everyone. So La Défense at night was nice. Metropolis' charming underbelly: reinforced concrete, heat, and the few bums who lived there. When you passed someone, they were scared, he didn’t want to know. Past the incestuous patrols of Puteaux, you could breathe in what was no longer the city but its artificial lung. learning to walk on the railroad tracks. Walking without noise was restful. I don’t think I have ever felt more natural in the forest. There were the perimeters and the highways that generated tons of stories. The graffiti artists liked to flex like hunters. A gardav, a broken leg, and a scuffle could also be found in the press articles. Everything that made a young man tick Gloves and beers were fetched from the gas station; marketers were afraid of running into a smart guy running a racket or even cops who didn’t know where to start their investigations. Whatever happened, it all took us out of the stifling intentions of life: trying to go to clubs, hooking up with chicks, working, and shining in society.

I went to an eleventh-grade school to prepare for the competitive exams. a chicken cage. breeding of artists in a cage. They were all about the money. They fed on the hopes of young people to get into school. Some teachers reduced the students to the same broken mentality and the same drawing board. If you got out of line, you were cut off at the hock, or the Procrustean bed, as they say. There, you could admire the beauty of the French approach to educating aspiring artists. The principle was very simple. They would want you to buy the stuff they had partnered with. In case you had never drawn with colored pencils that cost a hundred bucks, now was the time to try. Then came the psychological break. Whatever you proposed, it was a pain in the ass. The teacher had to break you. The boys were blocked by a mixture of hate and guilt. The girls would burst into tears and apologize. Everyone was reverting back to the early childhood stage. Everyone was imagining themselves as Whale in Full Metal Jacket. While the art history teacher was building your credentials, the others were cutting the weeds of your original intentions. It is said that they were preparing you for the game of pathos-free argument. During your competitions, other teachers would break you psychologically in order to warn you of the gallery owners who would break you in order to teach you how to deal with art critics and/or bamboozle an average collector. At the end of Gombrich's vision of art, the thirty-something professors took coke to try to concentrate on something other than the female students in the front row, their taut breasts that smelled of softener, and the call to adultery. No one would have batted an eye anyway. The weight of seeing their child become a bohemian was heavier than anything else. The second kiss-and-tell effect was that the teacher revealed little or nothing about his cooking skills. They themselves were struggling to make sure they achieved stable success. Potentially, you were in competition with the same number of students. It could go dangerously fast if they didn't keep some heads under water. I’m not saying that we already have a mature approach to work, of course; I'm just saying that there were absolutely no exemplary tutors to be found. Finally, every artist can achieve success as a result of a misunderstanding... It doesn’t matter how old he is. We come to the third point: the beginning. The first thing that jumped out at you when you arrived was that there were far too many of us who thought we were unique. In your school, there were thirty weirdos. Here, we could reflect on a generation in which many, many people had wished for a one-of-a-kind life, a generation that, for the first time, had the right to take a chance, a generation that had the embarrassment of choice. If they thought they were fortune tellers too soon, the consequences for their future are severe. So the schools made their money on the disillusionment industry. Confined. Concentrated on the same Malevich collage but in a cheap version, the exacerbated competition of the human who wants to survive was mixed with the hard realization of the surrounding nonsense. The truth was this: The merit did not belong to the best, because there was no precise goal to reach. Only obnoxious and disorderly prohibitions were in place to aid your education, similar to the Cours Florent, where the other half of the Parisian bobo was throwing money around. Talking about graffiti in the middle of everything was meant to elicit two minutes of rage from the students, possibly more than from the teachers. Suburban style was definitely not fashionable. I remember a ridiculous tirade from a student shocked to learn about my few tags. His wrath was directed at my lack of respect for the taxpayer, my gullibility in the movement, my desire to be a scumbag, and the ugliness of my acidic murals. Maybe he was right. Irony made me cross his path again. After passing the Beaux Arts, he became a graffiti artist of the organic-wild style and a muralist. In short, he did a little of everything that was possible to find his place in this environment. Thanks to God, it was an exceptional case. The majority of the assaults were carried out by Duperre- or profile-bitches, or by good cop/bad cop professors. With an air of concern, they explained to you that the practice of graffiti came from a lack of self-esteem. You needed social recognition on a small scale, so you sank into graphic delinquency, a communion that allowed you to bear the mediocrity of your existence. Maybe they were right too. But they were no better.

The year went by quickly. My drawing board was stolen in the last month before the competitions, another effect of the competition system pushed to its extreme and the archaic system of the drawing board. It was necessary to integrate this new information, which follows any artist throughout his career. Some men can win competitions by presenting the work of another. This is a general fact. Many artists steal. Many artists steal their entire lives. I redo my file, trying to reproduce my own theme. But the heart was not there anymore. At that time, I was mixing all the references without counting... I was a student, and students want to integrate everything right away, without refining or making distinctions. The originality of my work was based on the technique. I mixed oil paint with a brush and spray paint. The noble, academic painting of the classical period was represented by oil painting. A panel of bourgeois and riff-raff paintings on the same frame, in short, the French society I knew.

At that time, it was unthinkable to use spray paint on canvas. Canvas was far too expensive to be smeared with spray paint. A spray can was far too expensive not to be used on canvas. Canvas was far too expensive to be smeared with spray paint. A spray can was far too expensive not to be used. I would steal my material from Rougier and Plé, and occasionally from Virgin or BHV for small items. But that wasn’t enough, so mixing all these media was more like a waste for my meager audience.

The graffiti was being refined there. It was time for the cut technique. It consisted of covering a line drawn by another line and thus refining it. This technique allowed some people to create very detailed, tiny graffiti. Lettering in the shape of spaceships was seen on the streets. We, on the other hand, experienced the fat cap. The WC made us discover the world of the trainists, aka the graffiti geeks. Painting on trains or subways was a logical next step for those who wanted to continue to grow in graffiti, this endless sport. Trains attracted the curious, and the addicts were tired of street vendettas. The story of the idiot who challenged you to a duel because you were too visible was endless. It had driven many of them back to the trenches of the depots. The trains were indeed less violent, but more dangerous. You had to be organized because every time you committed an offense, you were investigated, and a flagu' hurt both your mouth and your wallet. Some of them got disproportionate sentences.

At home, shake out the paints. Have good gloves. Erase fingerprints. Delete any recent phone calls. Write names on cans. Throw away mock-up sketches and anything else that’s lying around before you leave. A slew of paranoid reflexes that had saved countless lives.

I successfully entered an art school. At first, I was motivated, but the cake quickly fell off. It was a hideout for the teachers as well as for the students. A quick primer on school codes: a classic promo featured a guy who couldn't decide between sewing and Warhol bis, a girl who worked on body performances or how to turn leather and latex photos into art... Chicks who drew their guy’s dick, guys who painted their chick’s pussy, punks who scribbled insults, roots who scribbled spirals, golden numbers, and mushrooms, professors who were tired after their nap, and bourgeois dreamy women Then, my colleague and I represented the guys from the suburbs: affirmative action, Benedictine promotion, Yoyo! We welcome you, but don’t act like a fool. In the hood, I had become unattractive because I was in a school for "bourgeois. And in the said school, I was automatically excluded by the associations of young, rich, white Parisians who had the art of intrigue and treachery in their blood. And all this beautiful world looked at each other in the white of the eye while rolling cigarettes and saying to themselves: «What the fuck am I doing here? big, big doubt about the merits of decentralization. At least it kept me from getting up at noon, a bit like a civil servant being reassured not to be unemployed. My work was criticized abruptly, with no real path to follow and no material to go further. I felt trapped. Talking to a fifth-grade guy made me feel even more hopeless. It felt like we were in a deserted village, with a bar in the middle and a moribund future around it. After a few attempts at painting, art books, and audio editing, I sank. A little bit of fatigue digested in anxiety attacks and depression. I turned in my badge. I fled to Spain for a month, seeking redress in the arms of a girl. I came back to find a temporary job, then two, then three... Rope walker, animator, cashier, machinist, receptionist, story boarder, physio, bricklayer, house painter, valet, storekeeper, graphic designer with the option of providing a false resume, muralist, parking lot attendant... As my grandfather used to say, when you’re good at everything, you end up good at nothing. Each time, I came across people who got into the job out of spite and who ended up staying all their lives. The story of the majority of us earthlings The years go by, and we find ourselves with nothing concrete because we have not taken care of the efforts we have to give to our own destiny. Sometimes dreams are wrong. I got into the decorating business. I met this guy. I vandalized the blinds for money. I met Jack. It was this love for drawing, art, rap, and graffiti that he was looking for in me. He took me through my first corporate life. He took me to the next level.