# = Invader ( artist ) =

Invader is the pseudonym of a well @-@ known French urban artist , born in 1969 , whose work is modelled on the crude pixellation of 1970s ? 1980s 8 @-@ bit video games . He took his name from the 1978 arcade game Space Invaders , and much of his work is composed of square ceramic tiles inspired by video game characters . Although he prefers to remain incognito , and guards his identity carefully , his distinctive creations can be seen in many highly @-@ visible locations in more than 65 cities in 33 countries . He documents each intervention in a city as an " Invasion " , and has published books and maps of the location of each of his street mosaics .

In addition to working with tiles , Invader is one of the leading proponents of indoor mosaics created using stacks of Rubik 's Cubes in a style he refers to as " Rubikcubism " . He is also known for his QR code mosaic works .

## = = History = =

Invader is a graduate of the École des Beaux @-@ Arts , a Parisian art school , though he tells interviewers he attended a tiling school on Mars . Invader initially derived inspiration for his creations from video games from the late 1970s to early 1980s that he played when he was growing up , particularly characters from Space Invaders , from which he derived his work name . Games of the era were constructed with 8 @-@ bit graphics , and so lend themselves well to the mosaic treatment , with each tile representing one pixel . Invader likes tiles for their robustness and permanence . Invader 's first mosaic was installed in the mid 1990s in his home city . It was a sleeper for several years before the full " invasion " programme was conceived in 1996 .

In this project , the idea is to bring the virtual world into reality . One can see many things in it , but it refers to the early days of digital and the video game .

The first wave of " invasion " began with his home city in 1998 , and then spread to 31 other cities in France . Since then , Invader 's works have appeared in 60 cities in 30 countries around the world . He has invaded New York five times , and Hong Kong on three separate occasions . He has tagged historic buildings and other locations . One of the more prominent places where the mosaics have been installed is on the Hollywood Sign . The first was placed on the letter D on 31 December 1999 to mark the Y2K bug . During subsequent trips to Los Angeles , Invader placed mosaics on the eight other letters of the sign .

In June 2011 , Invader marked the installation of his 1000th work in Paris with an exhibition at La Générale entitled " 1000 " . Since 2000 , the artist has installed in excess of 70 pieces of work dotted around Hong Kong ; the artist has declared the third wave undertaken in city , with 50 works , " probably my most accomplished city invasion wave " . By June 2011 , 77 cities have been invaded , 2 @,@ 692 Space Invaders placed comprising some 1 @.@ 5 million ceramic tiles ; 19 invasion maps have been published . Invader estimates that more than 15 % of his early pieces , ones that were small and placed rather low , have been removed . To combat their removal or damage by building owners , thieves or fans , Invader places many out of easy reach .

In 2012 , Invader made a short film Art4Space documenting his attempt to launch one of his aliens into space on a modified weather balloon . Invader is also known for his QR code works . Created using regular black and white tiles , the patterns can be decoded using apps installed on smart phones . One decoded message reads " This is an invasion " .

## = = Identity = =

Invader works incognito , often masked and largely at night . To guard his anonymity on camera during interviews , he pixellates his own image or wears a mask as a disguise . He claims that only a few people know his real name and his face , and that even his parents think he works as a tiler in the construction industry .

By June 2011 , Invader had travelled around the world six times and spent 22 nights in prison cells . Invader accepts arrest as an occupational hazard . He was arrested in 2010 for placing a mosaic on

the Hollywood Sign , charged with vandalism and made to pay a fine . In July 2011 , the Los Angeles Police Department detained two French nationals on suspicion of vandalism near MOCA 's Little Tokyo gallery with tile and grout in hand . The police asserted that one of them was Invader , but released the pair without charge . He was also arrested by plain @-@ clothed police in October 2013 in New York , just as he had completed installing a mural in Orchard Street in East Village in the early hours . He was again fined ; the owner of the building took down the work featuring Princess Peach and had it preserved . Invader said that whilst creating installations he had been accosted by police in Hong Kong , but was left alone once they realised he was not committing any crime .

= = Modus operandi = =

Invader sees himself as a hacker of public space spreading a virus of mosaic ; the streets are his canvas , his invasions gifts to the city and its people . He believes that museums and galleries are not accessible to everyone , so deliberately makes his works public by installing them at street level for ordinary people to enjoy on a daily basis .

The sites for the mosaics are not random . These are scouted and carefully researched , often with local support , and are also chosen for the visibility ( strategic ) , local interest ( aesthetic ) and symbolism ( conceptual ) they provide . Although high visibility is one objective , Invader may choose locations that are less prominent . He has said that " A spot is like a revelation ... it jumps out at you . "

Although many of his works feature the signature aliens , no two pieces are alike . The subject matter may also be themed and adapted to their context . Invader 's repertoire of subjects now includes Star Wars characters ( London ) , as well as the Pink Panther and Mega Man ( Paris ) . Sites near major bank buildings are marked with dollar sign mosaics . His works in Hong Kong have a more oriental theme : with some martial arts characters ; gold and red colours have been employed more often to reflect the traditional Chinese colours for fire and earth .

Typically , mosaics are placed ten to fifteen feet above the ground , and on street corners in areas of high visibility . He has developed methods and techniques to attain those potentially dangerous and hard @-@ to @-@ reach locations . Invader unveiled a massive Spider @-@ Man ( PA 1040 ) very high up in the 11th arrondissement April 2013 . In his invasion of Hong Kong in 2014 , he planted mosaics that featured Hong Kong Phooey , Thomas from Kung @-@ Fu Master and Popeye .

Invader has said : " I don 't know what ' holidays ' means because anywhere I go , I can 't resist bringing tiles and cement with me . " His mosaics are half @-@ built in advance . The weight and fragility of the tiles are constraints that influence his planning and site choices . When Invader arrives in a city , he usually stays in a city for two or three weeks . He obtains a map and spends at least a week installing the mosaics , which are catalogued ( each given an identifier with the city code and sequential number ) , photographed ( one close @-@ up and one in its context ) and mapped to indicate their locations within the city . He prints and distributes " invasion maps " within the city he is visiting , and they are later sold in his on @-@ line shop . In Montpellier , the locations of mosaics were chosen so that , when placed on a map , they form an image of a giant Space Invaders alien .

This catalog of the mosaics also serves as the basis of what Invader calls a " reality " game ? using the " FlashInvaders " smartphone app , players can hunt globally for installed pieces . Using the camera and geolocation functionality , users can submit photographs via the app which are then validated against the catalogued works . Successful hits or " Flashes " earn points , and the associated photos are displayed on Invader 's official website .

As his works have proven collector value since the 2010s , Invader adopted a new strategy to avoid his works from being removed by profiteers . In late 2015 , Invader planned a series of art pieces in New York City , putting out a call on social media for building owners who would be willing to host his mosaics legally . In addition , an additional consideration in the choice of placements include the existence of natural protections against scavengers ? sites with architectural features such as

recesses and blocked out windows become more attractive . Works may be larger and employ more delicate tiles so that works cannot be removed undamaged in one piece .

= = Rubikcubism = =

Since about 2004 , Invader has been working on another project that involves making artworks exclusively using Rubik 's Cubes . He may be the originator , and is certainly one of the foremost proponents of the art form he calls " Rubikcubism " . Invader takes an image from popular culture , uses a computer program to work out the precise disposition of the six colours for each image . He then manipulates nine pixels for each Rubik 's Cube to give the required pattern ? taking perhaps ten seconds per cube , constructs a full image by stacking them , after which the cubes are glued to a backing board . A piece typically composed of approximately 300 cubes , measures about 0 @.@ 9 by 1 @.@ 3 metres ( 3 ft × 4 ft ) , and weighs approximately 36 kilograms ( 80 lb ) , but the exact size depends on the subject and the desired level of detail .

The works are themed along three axes : " Bad Men " , where he reinterprets villains such as Osama bin Laden , Jaws and Al Capone ; " Masterpieces " where famous paintings by artists such as Delacroix , Warhol , Seurat , Lichentenstein are given a workover ; and " Low Fidelity " based on iconic album art such as Country Life , The Velvet Underground & Nico , and Nevermind . He has created images of the Mona Lisa and the Dalai Lama with this technique . He received a lot of attention for the 2005 portrait of Florence Rey he made with the technique , which has since been much imitated .

= = Reception = =

Invader has had solo exhibitions at art galleries in Paris , Osaka , Melbourne , Los Angeles , New York City , London and Rome . Space Invader has shown in many galleries , art centres and museums , from the 6th Lyon contemporary art biennale ( 2001 ) , the MAMA Gallery in Rotterdam ( 2002 ) , at the Paris @-@ based Magda Danysz Gallery ( 2003 ) , at the Borusan Center for Culture and Arts in Istanbul , Subliminal Projects in Los Angeles ( 2004 ) .

In 2010 , he was one of the featured artists in the Banksy production Exit Through the Gift Shop shot by Thierry Guetta ( Mr. Brainwash ) , Invader 's cousin . In 2011 , he took part in the MoCA LA show at the Geffen Contemporary : " Art in the streets " curated by Jeffrey Deitch . His work , when sold in galleries , often fetches six @-@ figure sums .

Fellow street artist Shepard Fairey wrote in Swindle :

Invader 's pop art may seem shallow , but by taking the risk of illegally re @-@ contextualizing video game characters in an urban environment that provides more chaotic social interaction than a gamer 's bedroom , he makes a statement about the desensitizing nature of video games and consumer culture . In a postmodern paradox , a game like Grand Theft Auto takes the danger of the streets and puts it in a safe video game , while Invader takes a safe video game icon and inserts it into the danger of the streets .

Invader 's work is not universally welcomed . During his Hong Kong invasion in early 2014 , Invader installed 48 works all over the city . However , the city 's Highways Department admitted to removing at least one work later that month , taking down a roadside mosaic in Fortress Hill " to ensure safety of road users " . Local residents were disappointed , and saw the removal as an example of the government only paying lip @-@ service to promoting the arts in the city . The artist expressed his sadness , saying he " never faced a situation where a public authority would systematically and rapidly remove the art from the streets " . In early 2015 , a replica of the life @-@ sized Hong Kong Phooey ( HK 58 ) , the original of which was removed by the government a year earlier , achieved HK $ 1 @.@ 96 million ( $ 250 @,@ 000 ) at auction by Sotheby . NY 145 , featuring an invader and an old Apple Computer icon , sold for HK $ 562 @,@ 500 ( $ 72 @,@ 000 ) .

A solo exhibition of new and retrospective works ? called " Wipe Out " ? was held by the artist in May 2015 in association with the Hong Kong Contemporary Art Foundation and Le French May ,

= = Publications = =

L 'Invasion de Paris , Invader , Editions Invader , 2003 , ISBN 2 @-@ 9520199 @-@ 2 @-@ 4
Invasion Los Angeles , Invader , Editions Invader , 2004 , ISBN 2 @-@ 9520199 @-@ 4 @-@ 0
Invasion in the UK , Invader , Editions Invader , 2007 , EAN 9782952019972