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Asphalt Renaissance:

The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner

"Making a street painting is a lot like constructing a sand castle: while working on one part, another part is eroding... Street painting is a constant reminder that art is about process rather than product." -- Kurt Wenner

***ASPHALT RENAISSANCE** brilliantly recounts the creation of 3D pavement art by innovative artist and Internet sensation Kurt Wenner. Wenner revolutionized this ancient art by inventing a unique technique that produces astounding 3D images that appear to reach out of the pavement toward the viewer and seem perilously deep.*

Featuring photographs of hundreds of his paintings, this volume spans Wenner's career and captures his thoughts on art and the ephemeral nature of his work.

Publication Date: **August 2, 2011**

Includes a free poster!

About the Author

Kurt Wenner worked for NASA as an advanced scientific space illustrator, but left to pursue his love of classical art. In Rome, he began creating street paintings to finance his travels and study; within a few years, he had won several gold medals in European competitions. Wenner is widely credited with inventing 3D Pavement Art in Rome, Italy and is responsible for bringing the art form to the US and around the world. His work has garnered national exposure in 1985 with a documentary on his work by

National Geographic called *Masterpieces in Chalk*; a print ad for Absolut Vodka as part of their prestigious artist ad series; in-flight video segments; and coverage on major morning network news shows. In addition, Wenner was awarded the Kennedy Center Medallion in recognition of his outstanding contribution to arts education. He has since gone on to create Interactive 3D art, which has proved to be another global phenomenon.

Biography

Kurt Wenner is an artist with an international following. He is best known for his invention of 3D pavement art. Wenner was inspired by anamorphic perspective, but had to invent an entirely new geometry in order to create his stunning 3D pavement art images.

Wenner's images always tell a story and challenge the public to reconsider the use of classicism (discarded during the era of Modern art). Wenner believes that the language of classicism is a critical tool that has been overlooked for far too long. He developed 3D pavement art precisely to illustrate that a new art form can be expressed within this language. Wenner has not only become known for his own body of work, he has inadvertently become the father of an art movement.

An often-overlooked fact of Wenner's career is that he dedicated one month every year, for 10 years, to teach more than 100,000 students from elementary through university level how to work with chinks and pastels. For his dedication, he was awarded the Kennedy Center Medallion for his outstanding contribution to arts education.

Wenner lived in Italy for 25 years before returning to the United States. His work has been seen in 30 countries, and he currently creates work for clients all over the world.

The New York Times

Sunday Book Review

By STEVEN HELLER

Published: December 2, 2011

Today realism is just one more fashion, which can leave a Renaissance talent out in the cold.

That's exactly where Kurt Wenner often works. A former scientific illustrator for NASA, Wenner is a street artist par excellence, who draws amazing original works (and occasional reproductions) in chalk and pastel directly on the street.

ASPHALT RENAISSANCE: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Sterling Signature, paper, \$24.95), by Wenner with B. Hansen and M. Hospodar, exhibits his sidewalk murals of classical compositions — destined to be washed away by time and rain — that might have put Michelangelo to shame (at least the church let him do his indoors). Wenner, who learned perspective and dimension in Italy, is one of an increasingly popular breed of street performers who earn tips for their artistic labors. At least the bills are higher denominations these days, as Wenner is invited the world over to decorate various public spaces. “It is interesting for me to see the way in which the different cultures perceive my work,” he writes.

“In Europe and the United States, the impermanence of street painting is foremost in the public’s mind. . . . To Eastern minds, the impermanence of street painting is completely natural, even unremarkable. They are most fascinated by the drawing style itself, which is very exotic and intriguing to them.”

“Asphalt Renaissance” is an art book, with startling color photos of the work *in situ*, often with observers standing around providing context. But it is also a process book. Although Wenner’s own comments are sometimes inspiring and the text is enlightening (“The invention of an entirely new form of perspective was born out of Wenner’s need to make an irrefutably original artistic statement within the context of classicism”), I could have done without the layout tricks, including photo captions in obtrusive color bars with faux chalk shadows. The monumentality of the work also begs for a larger format than this. But no book could be as incredible as Wenner’s live work, which would be difficult to reproduce under any circumstances.

Amazon Book Reviews

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful:

5.0 out of 5 stars

Great read with FABULOUS IMAGES!, August 9, 2011

By

Theodore W. Miller (Minato-ku, Tokyo Japan) - [See all my reviews](#)

Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D

Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

With all the amazing images in this work, one could be forgiven for expecting just a coffee table book, but just wait till you start reading it!

Asphalt Renaissance explains the history of the street painting and how Kurt Wenner converted this very traditional and impermanent art-form into a breakthrough medium that is cherished today by art appreciator and commercial client alike.

The anecdotal stories behind the amazing literal and figurative journey he has taken along the way make the read all the better.

Enjoy!

5.0 out of 5 stars

A Must Book to Read, November 14, 2011

By

David A. Ralston - [See all my reviews](#)
(REAL NAME)

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

Asphalt Renaissance is a book I literally could not put down until I finished reading it. Now, I find I can't keep a copy at the house because I keep giving it away to friends who read it and share my enthusiasm. Kurt Wenner is an amazing American artist. His personality comes through in this highly entertaining story. But seeing is believing. If you read the book, I'll bet you decide it is the perfect Christmas gift for more than one friend.

5.0 out of 5 stars

Asphalt Renaissance, November 15, 2011

By

dolpali - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

Amazing art work by Kurt Wenner! He is truly a pioneer of 3D chalk art, and more people needs to see his amazing work all over the world.

The book not only covers his amazing 3D art, but other renaissance and architectural art as well.

5.0 out of 5 stars

Fascinating Read: Amazing Art, November 15, 2011

By

PDXGirl - [See all my reviews](#)

Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

I was given Asphalt Renaissance as a gift. When I picked it up to look over, I found I couldn't stop reading. It tells the incredible story of an artist finding his passion in classical art and pursuing that passion throughout Italy. There has been a true 'asphalt renaissance' and Kurt Wenner is the cornerstone to this fascinating art form taking place on pavement. This book is full of clear color photos of his artwork and fascinating asides that answer all the nitty-gritty questions - like, what does he do when it rains? Or, what does he use for chalk? The book goes on to portray his next step in his career - interactive art. Now people can interact with his art and become part of his illustrations. He brings classical art to life. Truly an artist who leads the way in the art world. I am a high school librarian and I am buying a copy for our school library and one for my mother. I think this book belongs in as many hands as possible. Inspiring story!

5.0 out of 5 stars

It will TWIST your eyes and minds!!, November 15, 2011

By

Justin Kim - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

WOW!! I think every person on earth should check this out. It's 3D with no 3D glasses. Absolutely amazing concepts of drawings and Kurt Wenner sets a new bar of pavement art and 3D illusions. If you're not familiar with it... it's time you've seen it. I love it!!

5.0 out of 5 stars

Asphalt Renaissance - awesome gift, November 20, 2011

By

pat - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

Asphalt Renaissance is a beautiful book rich with images of Kurt Wenner's breathtaking renaissance street paintings. Wenner's amazing story as a young artist studying in Italy and his found passion for pavement art / 3-D illusions is an inspiration for anyone who appreciates artistic magic and mastery. This book consists of more than 100 of Wenner's paintings and includes his personal experiences woven into his vision of the art form. A must read for those who love art.

5.0 out of 5 stars

Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner, November 22, 2011

By

Tanawa "Remy" (L. A. Calif) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

As a professional artist myself I am always on the hunt for an inspirational art book. Kurt Wenner exceeds all my expectations of a fabulous art experience. This book is a great read and visually stunning. If you have ever seen his work in person, you will buy this book, if you are new to Kurt's work you will learn a tremendous amount about the way a great artist thinks and accomplishes modern masterpieces. This book is a must have.

5.0 out of 5 stars

Great read, November 27, 2011

By

Gretchen (California) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

This is a fascinating book, and not a huge coffee-table tome that you can't take with you (or won't really read).

The images are of course great, but the writing, some in the third person and some in first person from the artist, weave a

wonderful and interesting story.

This was given to me as a gift and though I'm not an artist I loved it. Highly recommended.

5.0 out of 5 stars

Essential to Any Serious Scholar or Student of Contemporary Art, November 28, 2011

By

NGA Sgropino - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

Asphalt Renaissance is a beautifully illustrated and sensitively written account of artistic creativity in today's world. Kurt Wenner is a long time practitioner of the popular art of street painting, the pavement art of the madonnari. This volume provides both a long needed history of street painting, and an invaluable presentation of Wenner's extraordinary achievements. A great scholar of perspective theory, Wenner wasn't content to be just another street muralist, painting copies of familiar works on the pavement. He was intrigued by the many other expressive possibilities of the street surface. This book traces Wenner's evolution from his early two-dimensional imagery in Rome to his stunning mastery of three-dimensional illusionistic space. Along the way, Wenner assumed the mantle of leadership among the madonnari, elevating street painting from the mundane to the highest levels of artistic accomplishment. Asphalt Renaissance is a perfect holiday present for art aficionados, both scholars and novices.

5.0 out of 5 stars

Fabulous Read - Inspirational Tour de Force!, November 28, 2011

By

Lori Escalera - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

Kurt Wenner's "Asphalt Renaissance" is an enchanting book - not to mention visually stunning! From the moment I purchased it, I

have cherished this book. It is amazing to read how the most important artist of our time chronicles his artistic career. The images in the book are riveting. Ironically, I have not read this book from beginning to end, but rather open the book to a section and either read about a topic or find myself lost in the visual imagery of artwork on the page I've opened. The book is beautifully executed, a great conversation piece, and I love sharing it with others. If you have a student artist that needs the perfect and unique quality gift this holiday season, this book is certainly something that will be enjoyed and cherished for years to come. Can't beat the price for the value of the information and imagery. I can't wait for more books by Wenner!

5.0 out of 5 stars

Asphalt Renaissance, November 28, 2011

By

Historical Novel Reader "Elaine" (California, USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

Amazon Verified Purchase ([What's this?](#))

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

I received this book as a gift and could not put it down. Kurt Wenner is a master in such an unusual form of art. I can only begin to imagine how beautiful his work is in person since it is magnificent in the book. I loved the book so much I purchased 15 copies for family members!

5.0 out of 5 stars

Awesome book for an awesome artist!, November 29, 2011

By

Pamela Sheldon Johns "Pamela Sheldon Johns, a...

(Tuscany) - [See all my reviews](#)

(REAL NAME)

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

Finally! a book to showcase this absolutely amazing artist. I have been following Kurt Wenner's career for many years and his talent never ceases to impress me. His ability to turn a flat surface into a living, writhing, singing object is well documented

in this lovely book. It is on my coffee table and soon to be on several of my friends' as it is a great gift item.

5.0 out of 5 stars

Great Artand A Great Read!, November 29, 2011

By

Karen Schmidt - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

This book is AMAZING! Kurt Wenner is an incredible artist and a fantastic writer. He brings the history and the street painting revolution that he started to life. The poster that comes with the book is an extra treat. The art and story are worth much more than the cost of this very affordable book. If you have ever had the chance to see his work in person (or even on the internet), you have been amazed --- now Kurt tells the story of the evolution of street painting from the original madonnari to today....There are many who have paid homage to Kurt by imitating his illusionistic techniques -- but this is the whole story from the man who left the US to study the masters and became a master himself...and started the "3-D" street painting revolution. Read and Enjoy!

5.0 out of 5 stars

Compelling images and personal story of an artist,

November 29, 2011

By

sarahorr - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

"Asphalt Renaissance" provides beautiful graphics of Wenner's amazing three-dimensional street painting, while interweaving this with the story of a young (and now not so young) tale of a modern artist, studying and executing art in the way of the old masters. Wenner is a genius in his own right, and his art speaks for itself. This book makes a compelling read for those of any age, and the mix of beautiful images with interesting text, including first person commentary by the author, will hold the reader's interest.

A fantastic choice for holiday gifting - it's definitely on my list! I received my copy as a gift, and will be passing on the favor.

5.0 out of 5 stars

An Enlightning view of Asphalt, December 6, 2011

By

Marnie - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Asphalt Renaissance: The Pavement Art and 3-D Illusions of Kurt Wenner (Paperback)

The Sarasota Chalk Festival in November of this year was amazing and our realty company, J Wood Realty sponsored Kurt Wenner's visit. His book is every bit as entertaining and interesting as the man himself and we enjoyed every minute that we were able to spend with him. He is so multi-faceted that I had to read the book and I enjoyed every page of it. From his adventures at NASA to his life in Europe, he pens an entertaining and yet very educational read.

Buy the book on Amazon:

<http://www.amazon.com/Asphalt-Renaissance-Pavement-Illusions-Wenner/dp/1402771266>