

RETNA

I want to create work that's so awe-inspiring that it motivates others to get into art.



EARLY YEARS

Private Schools, steak sauce, album covers and an Opera!

Born in 1979 Marquis Lewis or as he is more commonly known as RETNA, was born and raised in Los Angeles. Like many other Street artist RETNA took an interest in art at a very young age. Retna recalls he learnt about graffiti in the late 80s when his mother sent him to St Anne's private school in Santa Monica with the goal of keeping him away from the gang scene. Unfortunately for Retna's mother this would backfire and it was here he learned about graffiti from seasoned gang members and after school programmes. After developing his penmanship and aesthetic skills by his early teens he was recognised locally as a fully fledged graffiti artist. Retna started out in the scene as a muralist and his main emphasis was a text based style approach. Retna got his first arrest in 1993 when he was caught at only 13 years old and unfortunately wearing his catholic school uniform.

As we know all graffiti artists need a name and Retna as we now know him was originally called A-[one supposedly named after the steak sauce of the same moniker. Unfortunately for Retna there was another artist on the scene by the same name and he later changed his tag to zoom. Retna kept his former tag for a number of years until his current name was chosen from none other than the Wu Tang Clan song Heatez taken from the line "Kinetic globes light will then shine, burns your retina." It was in 1997 that Retna's art really began to gain recognition, thanks to Chaz Bojorquez who has been dubbed the godfather of Cholo style writing. Chaz gave Retna his first show which he credits as a turning point for his work and his following. Retna went on to become the leader of one of the biggest graffiti collectives in LA MSK.

In the years that followed Retna gained a massive following not only in the mainstream scene but also the celebrity one. Retna has commissioned works for the likes of Usher and his work was also featured on the cover of Justin Bieber's 2015 album Purpose, as well as this he has done works for global brands such as Louis Vuitton, Chanel, and Vista Jet. Retna is also credited as being the 5th richest graffiti artist in the world only 2 places behind the infamous Banksy.

Retna's self-styled unique language which he uses in his work draws inspiration from multiple sources ranging from Old English, Asian calligraphy, and ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics - to name a few. All of Retna's artwork comes in sequences or pairs and there is said to be an underlying message that only his inner circle can decipher. The result is a complex, striking and deeply personal original alphabet that Retna uses to inscribe his thoughts and enhance his art. When speaking of his art he explains, "I want my text to feel universal. I want people from different cultures to all find some similarity in it—whether they can read it or not."

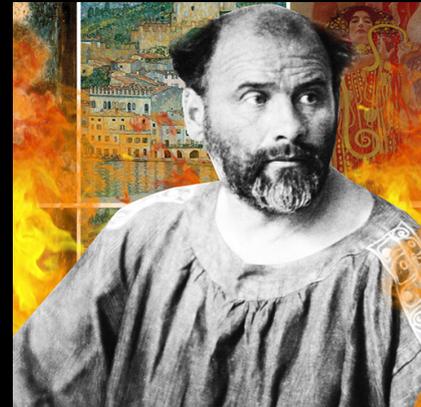
I'VE BEEN INFLUENCED BY THE WORLD, REALLY, BUT I NEVER COMPLETELY FIT IN ANYWHERE MYSELF. I WANT PEOPLE TO TAKE AWAY SOMETHING FROM THEIR OWN CULTURE IN MY WORK.

INFLUENCE

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RECOGNITION & ACCOLADES

Retna gained a massive following not only in the mainstream scene but also the celebrity one. Retna has commissioned works for the likes of Usher and his work was also featured on the cover of Justin Bieber's 2015 album *Purpose*, as well as this he has done works for global brands such as Louis Vuitton, Chanel, and Vista Jet.

Some of Retna's solo shows include:

2013: **RETNA: Para mi gente** - Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles,

2017: **MARGRAVES**, Maddox Gallery, London, UK

2017: **LA Art Show**

2017: **MANO A MANO**, New Image Gallery, Los Angeles

STAND OUT PIECES

A SELECTION OF SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE WORKS

"Be the best person you can dig deep inside your soul and continue the legacy of the arts to the enhancement of the human condition"



ART AS AN INVESTMENT

Whether its the etchings of Doré, the sculptures of Michelangelo or the abstract works of Damian Hirst, Art captures the imagination and creates emotion, yet many investors worry about adding art to their portfolios. If you don't know Rembrandt from Monet, Banksy from Cezanne or simply which art will add growth to your portfolio then have no fear, Altvest can help.

Altvest Capital Partners offer clients exposure to some of the Art Worlds top emerging talent. You too can enjoy beautiful works like the ones above, not simply from an aesthetic point of view, though also the returns which these works bring. Our dedicated team assist, advise and also facilitate the purchase, storage and resale of the artworks for you. Whether it's to hang on your wall at home or be presented within our galleries and exhibitions, we can also seek specially commissioned pieces, direct from our repertoire of artists. You can have significant input to truly create magnificent, bespoke pieces for investment or personal enjoyment.

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