

mass appeal

**A DECADE IN THE
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GREG LAMARCHE

words: **Brian Scotto** photo: **Stephen Schuster**

He ain't Spanky no more, that got shortened to SPY back in '80 and then to SP ONE and now a quarter century later it's just Greg Lamarche. Easy folks, that doesn't mean the artist formerly known as SP is forgetting his roots, actually he stills remembers where in Queens he sprayed his last can of Jungle Green. But over the past ten years, Lamarche strived to create something different. By fusing what he learned from his all-city days with other mediums and collage aesthetics, Lamarche created, yet again, another unique style (well, that is until all your toys copy it, we watching!). Anyway, from the first SP throwy that appeared in the early pages of Mass Appeal to the t-shirts and the issue 16 cover, we can't front—MA hearts SP...err Greg. greglamarche.com.

My first fill-in was next to a red, white and blue SP ONE burner, but that was '92. Why don't you fill in the years before that?

I did my first piece in '81. Out of the crew of people I rolled with when I started, I was probably the one dude that could piece. Everyone, myself included, was a bomber. It wasn't until later when I moved up to Boston that I did a lot of pieces—all those kids were into doing burners and productions like that!

Okay, slow down there, you definitely skipped a few years. What about ya partner in crime?

A lot of the dudes that I wrote with really didn't get much farther than the neighborhood, but then this dude Dash came up around '84 and we just kinda really ran with it and tried to take it all-city.

Twenty-five years later, things have changed a bit though. For starters, it's Greg Lamarche now.

What's it like to leave SP behind?

People who know, know, and for the people who don't, that's okay. I spent 20 years or so on getting [SP ONE] famous...now, I want people to know my name. Being a writer for so long, you have so many things ingrained. You spend so much time trying to be secret and keep things on the low, it took me a while to be comfortable.

How did the collage work start?

I've pretty much done collage and graf all along and stuff like that, but in the past few years, they've melded together. I took that energy [from bombing] and put it towards my artwork. But at the same time, what I'm known for is my letters and stuff, so I still do a lot of stuff around letters and fonts. I'm trying to use my experience of the aesthetic of graffiti to create something different, to really go beyond what people think of when they think of graffiti. I think graffiti today is oversaturated with people and has crossed over to the commercial world. That's fine, but my goal is to keep going forward and keep ascending rather than doing a couple great things and then nobody hears from me ever again.

Now, every great artist has great influencers. What are yours?

Obviously everything I see influences me a little bit. But it is still 90 percent graffiti. Someone who knows some graf or has a trained eye like that would know that even though my collage work I do is not directly graffiti looking, it's very much inspired and rooted in graffiti. I like to look at my style as somewhere between Kurt Schwitters and the RTW crew.

Your collage-meets-graf found its way on the cover of this fine publication before...heard it was a mistake? (Issue 16 sold out...try eBay you thirstbuckets)

That design was really supposed to be for a t-shirt. I was doing some designs for [Adrian and Pat] and I dropped them off and was driving up fuckin' Van Brunt [by the old Red Hook office] when dudes called me and said "That shit's off the hook—it's gonna be on the cover!"

It's been ten years for *Mass Appeal*, and things done changed for both of us. What were you doing in '96?

Trying to get represented by a gallery. To an extent, that's still true, but at the same time it's not the end of the battle.

Aight, since you got your gallery gangsta on early, let's double that.

[Laughs] Twenty years ago I was listening to fuckin' "Eric B. for President" on my Walkman doing insides on the R-train layout.

That's what we wanted to hear, and now the million dollar question, what is Greg Lamarche doing ten years from now?

Running shit.