

ENTER

THE

SUMMO

VERSE

— FÉVRIER 2024



WELCOME
TO THE ~~MY~~
JUNGLE



BADMAN

DESIRE





PRÉFACE

La Banque Internationale à Luxembourg (BIL) se réjouit d'accueillir à nouveau en ses murs l'artiste Sumo, pour une immersion dans son univers captivant, le Sumoverse.

Foisonnant d'œuvres colorées et originales, le Sumoverse nous invite à naviguer à travers le temps et l'espace, reflétant l'évolution dynamique et continue que Sumo et la BIL incarnent tous deux.

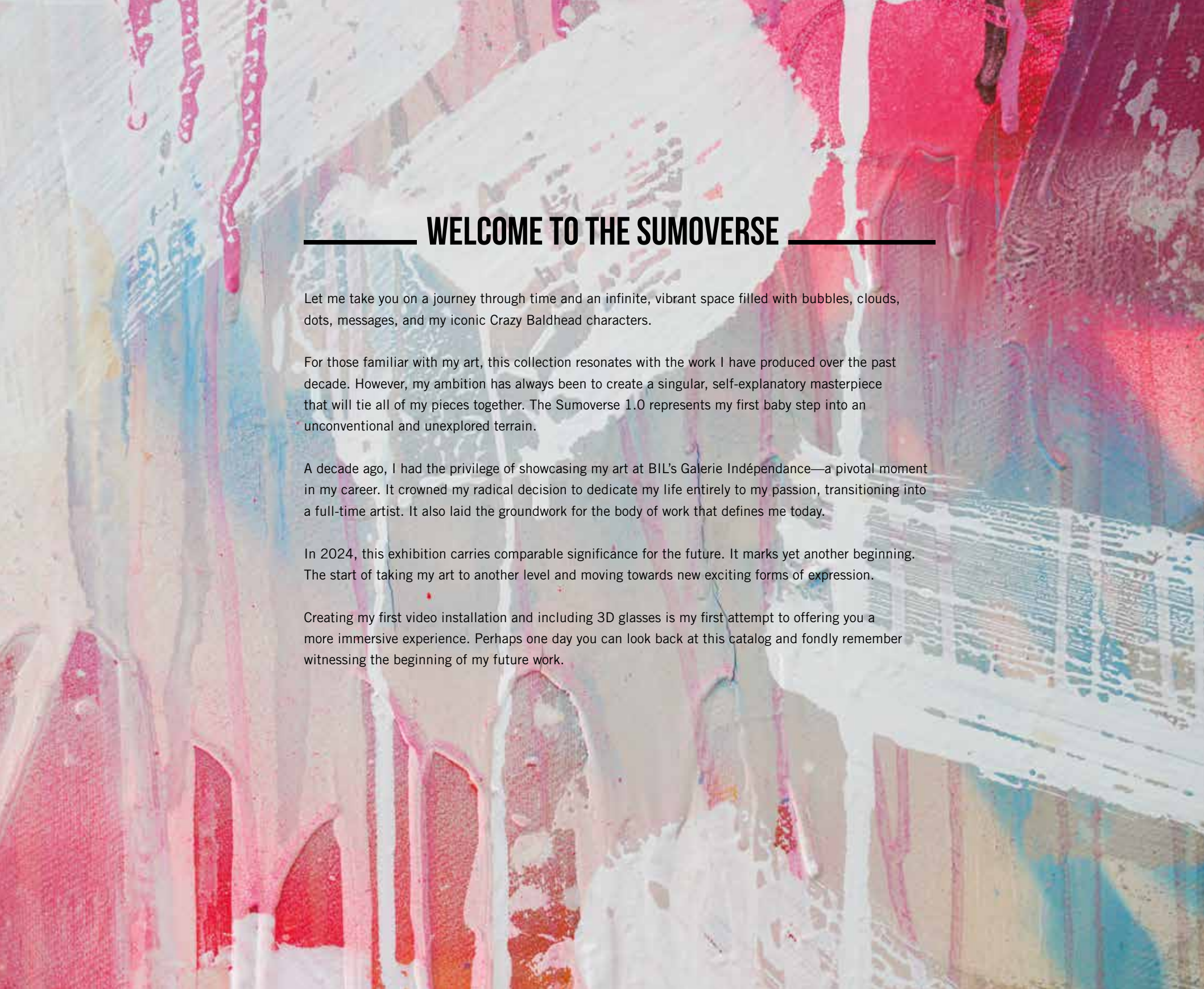
La BIL, profondément ancrée au Luxembourg et dans la Grande Région, a à cœur de soutenir ses artistes locaux, convaincue que son rôle dépasse la sphère financière. Notre ambition est de contribuer au développement de l'économie, de ses acteurs mais aussi aux communautés locales auxquelles nous sommes profondément liés.

Notre collaboration avec Sumo en est un exemple. C'est à la Galerie Indépendance de la BIL en 2013 qu'il a tenu sa première exposition solo, «Bad Meaning Good», marquant un tournant dans sa carrière. C'est donc avec une fierté renouvelée que nous observons le chemin remarquable qu'il a parcouru depuis, et nous sommes honorés de participer, à notre échelle, à l'écriture de son histoire.

Alors que vous vous apprêtez à entrer dans le Sumoverse, savourez-en chaque instant qui se révèle être une véritable œuvre d'art.







WELCOME TO THE SUMOVERSE

Let me take you on a journey through time and an infinite, vibrant space filled with bubbles, clouds, dots, messages, and my iconic Crazy Baldhead characters.

For those familiar with my art, this collection resonates with the work I have produced over the past decade. However, my ambition has always been to create a singular, self-explanatory masterpiece that will tie all of my pieces together. The Sumoverse 1.0 represents my first baby step into an unconventional and unexplored terrain.

A decade ago, I had the privilege of showcasing my art at BIL's Galerie Indépendance—a pivotal moment in my career. It crowned my radical decision to dedicate my life entirely to my passion, transitioning into a full-time artist. It also laid the groundwork for the body of work that defines me today.

In 2024, this exhibition carries comparable significance for the future. It marks yet another beginning. The start of taking my art to another level and moving towards new exciting forms of expression.

Creating my first video installation and including 3D glasses is my first attempt to offering you a more immersive experience. Perhaps one day you can look back at this catalog and fondly remember witnessing the beginning of my future work.



INTERVIEW

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER YOUR PASSION FOR ART, AND WHAT LED YOU TO BECOME AN ARTIST?

My story begins with my passion for music and the artwork that came with it, particularly heavy metal album covers. The distinctive typography of Motörhead, Metallica, and Iron Maiden ignited my interest in drawing and later, graphic design. I started small. In my first years of high school, my peers asked me to create their flyers and invitations for parties, which led to me being invited to all kinds of events including all of the perks that came with it. And before I knew it, I was hooked!

However, it wasn't until a school trip to Munich that my love for graffiti truly took flight. Seated on the train, I gazed out the window and witnessed graffiti along the tracks from Luxembourg to Munich. Unable to resist the urge to explore, I, along with two friends, grabbed my camera and ventured onto the train tracks to capture the stunning artwork. This experience solidified my passion for graffiti and steered me towards a career in graphic design. I painted my first official wall in 1995.

I pursued graphic design in London at Ravensbourne College and later at the London College of Communication, refining my skills in typography and printing techniques. Post-graduation, I spent six years working in various graphic design studios. Eventually, I made the decision to break away from the office grind, opening a concept store and urban art gallery. My time in the gallery ultimately propelled me to focus on creating art full-time, and today, I operate from my studio and run my own showroom, Gallery 1:1.

My graphic design background continues to prove valuable, especially in my personal communication, various art projects like creating the Luxair planes, merchandising, art installations and my recent venture into digital art and NFTs.



WHAT IS THE SUMOVERSE?

The Sumoverse unfolds as an endless and vibrant world filled with bubbles, clouds, dots, messages, and the iconic Crazy Baldhead characters. The use of bright and pure colours is inspired by my joyous childhood memories of candy wrappers, toy packaging, skateboarding, album covers, and the shimmering colours of early MTV.

At the core of the Sumoverse lies the theme of endless time and space, a celebration of moments captured and time encapsulated on my canvas. Inspired by my surroundings, I infuse cultural references and relatable, often humorous wordplay into my creations. Each painted element constructs layers of time, with the initial layer at the back representing the past and the forefront embodying the present.

My visual language draws heavily from my roots as a graffiti writer. Through my art, I aspire to celebrate life and freedom, channeling positive energy through vibrant colors and uplifting messages, with the aim of leaving a positive impact on the viewer's state of mind and the world around them.

My ultimate vision is to create immersive art offering a unique experience of traveling through the infinitely large and small within the Sumoverse. By continuously revealing new details as one zooms in and out of the layers of time, I seek to offer viewers a fresh perspective on life and scale, fostering a profound connection with the artwork on a deeper, more meaningful level.





HOW DID YOU CREATE THE CRAZY BALDHEAD? ---

It all began with my love for drawing and an unwavering obsession with graffiti. The catalyst was 'Subway Art,' my first book on graffiti, which sparked the inspiration to create my own characters. However, the B-Boy characters in the book didn't resonate with my identity. So, I got creative and came up with a pig character inspired by the German/Luxemburgish/French phrase «Schweinerei» or «cochonnerie,» translating to «pigsty» or «nasty mess» in English. The phrase fascinated me, creating a visual link to graffiti.

Yet, the cute and friendly image the pig projected fell short. As a graffiti writer, I sought the ultimate persona that would leave an impressive and unforgettable mark. Determined to stand out I developed a character with a bold and memorable vibe, conveying the message that I meant business.

In 1999, weeks and months of experimenting with various characters proved futile. In a moment of frustration, I randomly drew a potato, declaring it my last attempt before reverting to drawing pigs. Yet, it was in this moment that inspiration struck. Adding a sharp nose, a tooth-filled mouth, round frog-like eyes, and long arms with short legs, the Crazy Baldhead was born!

Despite experimenting with other characters, my heart always gravitated back to the Crazy Baldhead. Over time, I refined him by changing his eyes to shiny, pointy slits, adding an enigmatic and menacing aura. The introduction of different pairs of glasses further enriched his personality.

The Crazy Baldhead swiftly became my signature, making my art recognisable. Continuously pushing my artistic boundaries, I experimented with diverse mediums and techniques, breaking away from traditional graffiti. Today, I stand as a full-fledged independent artist, all thanks to the Crazy Baldhead.

WHAT IS YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS? ---

The first ritual upon entering my studio is to immerse myself in music. Given my eclectic taste across various genres, the choice of music aligns with my mood for the day. It typically takes an hour or two for me to truly enter the creative zone – a state similar to a trance. During this phase, I organise my materials, enveloping myself with paints, colours, and brushes that resonate with the moment. I rearrange my paintings, peruse through my unfinished pieces, discerning which ones inspire me the most. In this process, I consciously release any competing ideas and external influences. My phone is silenced, the music envelops the space, and I fixate on my paintings.

In my mind's eye, I visualise the images, elements, and colours destined for each artwork. I imagine the layers yet to be applied, envisaging the delicate balance between colours awaiting their place.

On certain days, inspiration flows abundantly, prompting me to sketch numerous creative elements, characters, or messages. When the influx of ideas becomes overwhelming, I take a deliberate moment to empty my mind into my sketchbook. Conversely, on uninspired days, I find satisfaction in filling and colouring shapes. Occasionally, I dedicate my time to partially deface my prior work, as the act of destruction is an important part of my creative process.

Destruction, for me, is an integral aspect that mirrors life's unpredictability—random, uncontrollable events, and reactions. Paint that drips, flakes off, or gets scraped over contributes to this dynamic. Interestingly, the more severe the destruction, the greater my need to engage and rescue the ruined piece, resulting in a more captivating outcome.

I simultaneously work on multiple pieces, allowing layers to organically build over time. Sometimes, I may pause working on a specific piece for an extended period, letting myself be guided by the relevance of the moment. I treat the canvas as a dynamic journal, writing on one day and adding to another the next.

One could argue that my pieces are never truly finished. I stop the process and declare a piece finished once I am satisfied with its composition. At that moment, I pause and metaphorically freeze time.



Achetez
de l'

Art



YOU MENTIONED NFTS AND DIGITAL ART. HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO YOUR WORK? _____

In my journey as a painter, I've always been captivated by the idea of incorporating digital elements, such as video installations, to enhance and add complexity to my physical exhibitions. However, the challenge lay in the perception of digital art as a mere 'nice to have' or gimmick, deterring both artists and audiences. For that reason, I never really delved into creating any digital art installations.

It wasn't until I discovered blockchain technology and the rise of NFTs that the landscape shifted for me. The ability to tokenize and authenticate digital art through blockchain has not only provided a solution to the authenticity dilemma but has also elevated the value and recognition of digital creativity.

Now, as I explore digital art within the realm of NFTs, it opens up so many exciting possibilities, prompting me to invest more time in this medium. Individuals now have the opportunity to own and invest in a limited edition collectible or an original, one-of-a-kind digital art piece that can be easily authenticated, possesses scarcity, and is tradeable on specialised exchange platforms.

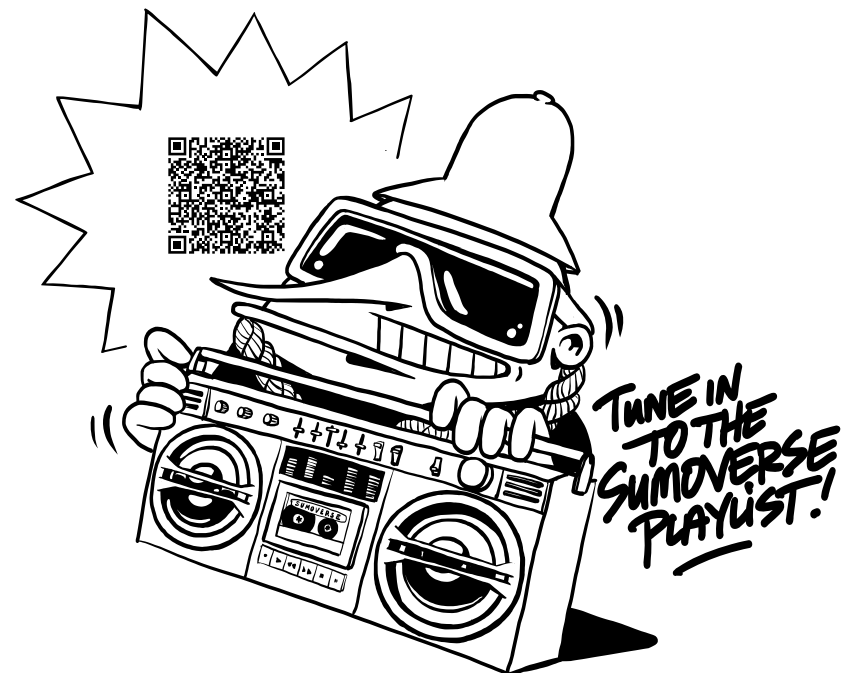
The attractiveness of NFTs is that you can attach multiple use cases to them. The more I research and discover about NFTs, the more excitement builds within me. I witness the future unfolding before my eyes. To put it boldly, I consider NFTs to be the most exciting discovery since my teenage encounter with graffiti in the '90s.

However, rest assured that this digital exploration doesn't signify a departure from my traditional painting. The digital facet is intended to enrich your experience of my art, adding depth and enjoyment. It will always complement but never replace my paintings.

ANY FINAL THOUGHTS? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR AUDIENCE TO TAKE AWAY FROM THIS INTERVIEW? _____

My work is about creating positive energy and excitement. It is not important that you remember the concept discussed in earlier responses. All I want for my art is to be like an 80s feel-good song, leaving you feeling uplifted and energised.

I hope you had the chance to personally engage with the exhibition, and I sincerely hope it brought you joy.





WELCOME
TO THE ~~MY~~
JUNGLE

BADMAN





BLOWING UP THE SPOT
2023
Acrylics & aerosol on canvas
140x140cm





THE BLUE OF MY OBLIVION
2023
Acrylics & aerosol on canvas
140x140cm

NOT EVEN CLOSE

2023

Acrylics & aerosol on canvas
140x140cm





BUCKLE UP
2023
Acrylics & aerosol on canvas
150x70cm





ROLL WITH THE FLAVOR
2023
Acrylics & aerosol on canvas
200x90cm



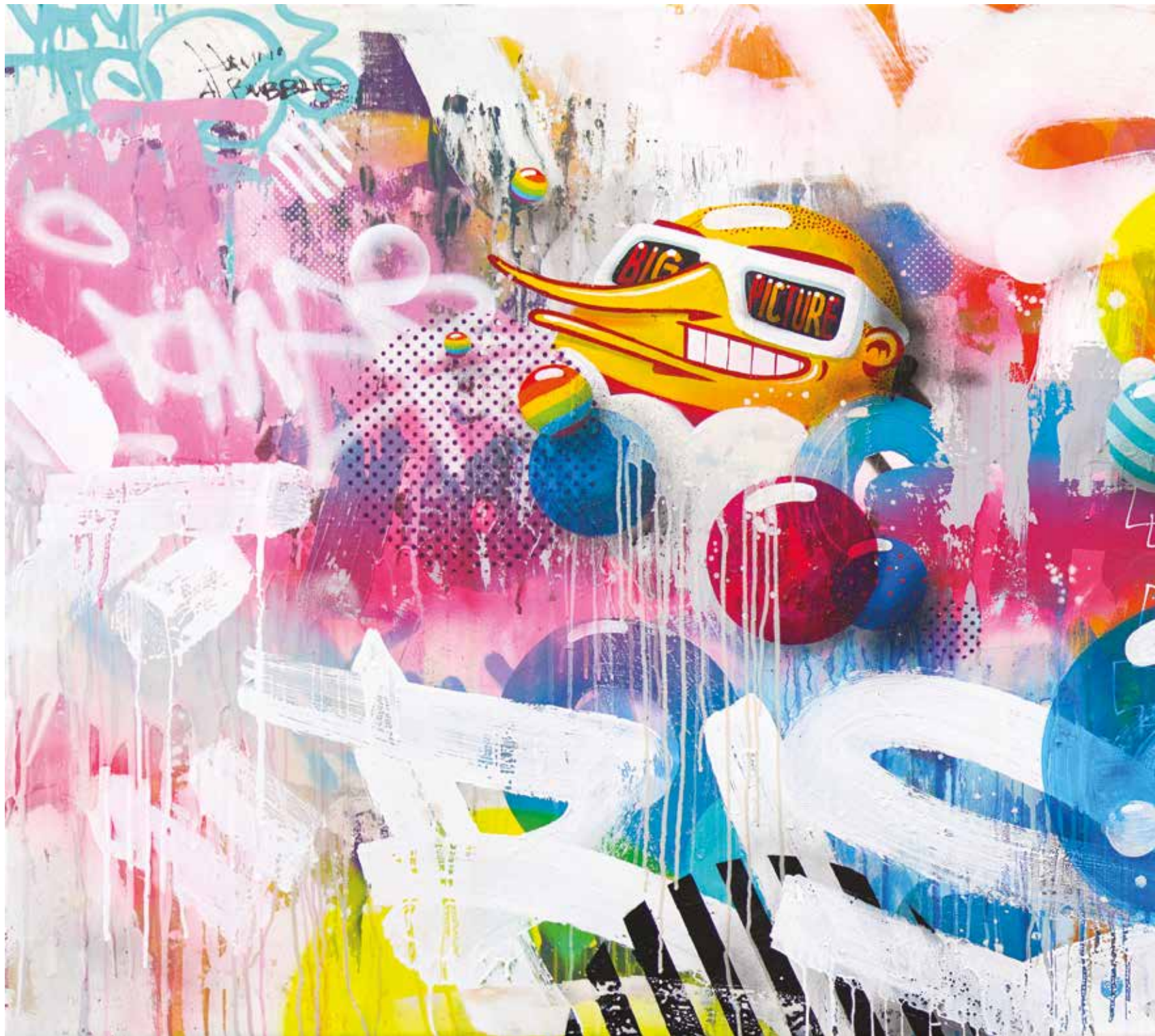
FLOW WITH THE GLOW
2023
Acrylics & aerosol on canvas
100x100cm



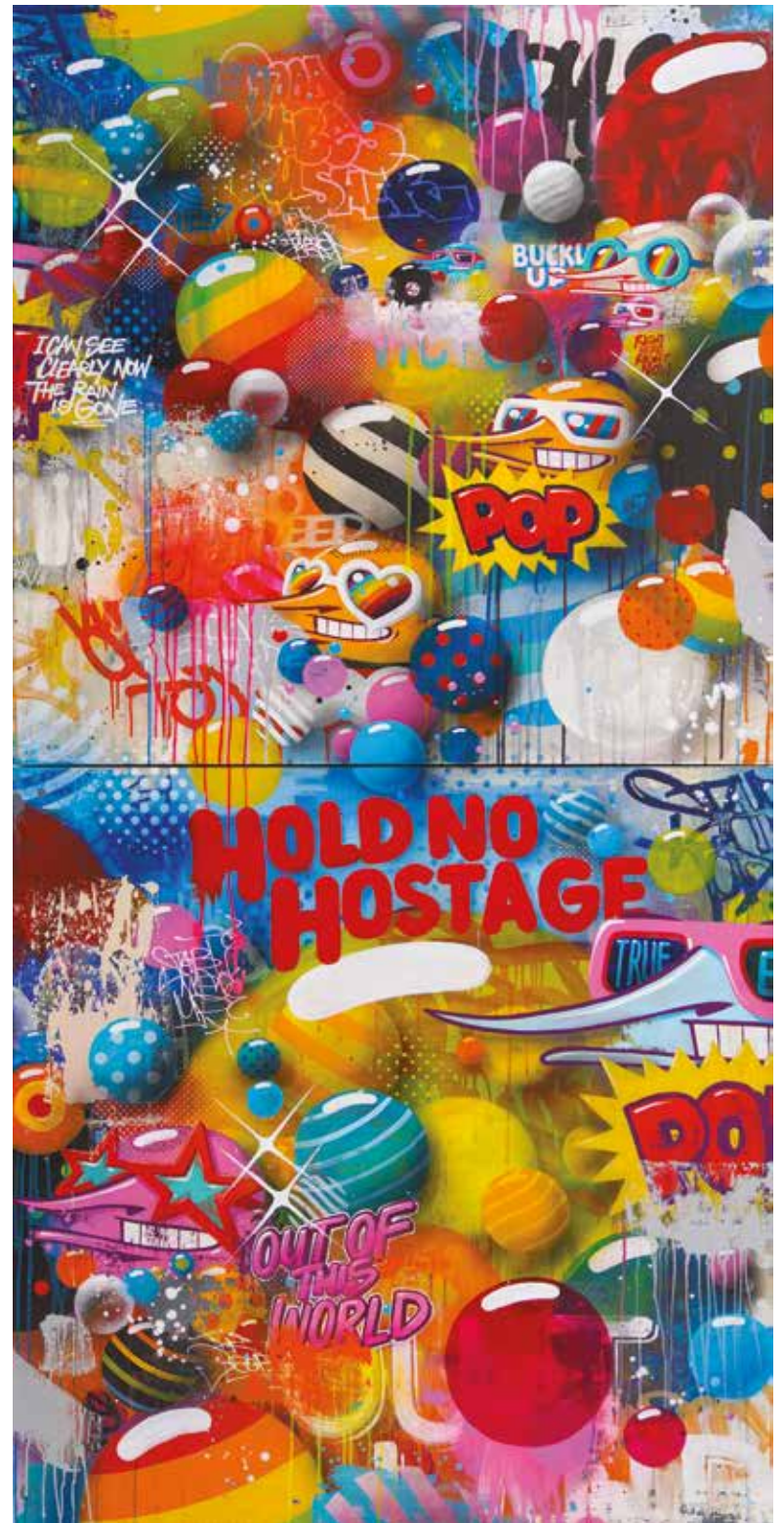
BIG PICTURE

2023

Acrylics & aerosol on canvas
240x100cm









HOLD NO HOSTAGE

2023

Acrylics & aerosol on canvas

Diptych

2x 100x100cm



I CAN SEE
CLEARLY NOW
THE RAIN
IS GONE







NO TIME TO WASTE

2023

Acrylics & aerosol on canvas

Diptych

2x 100x100cm





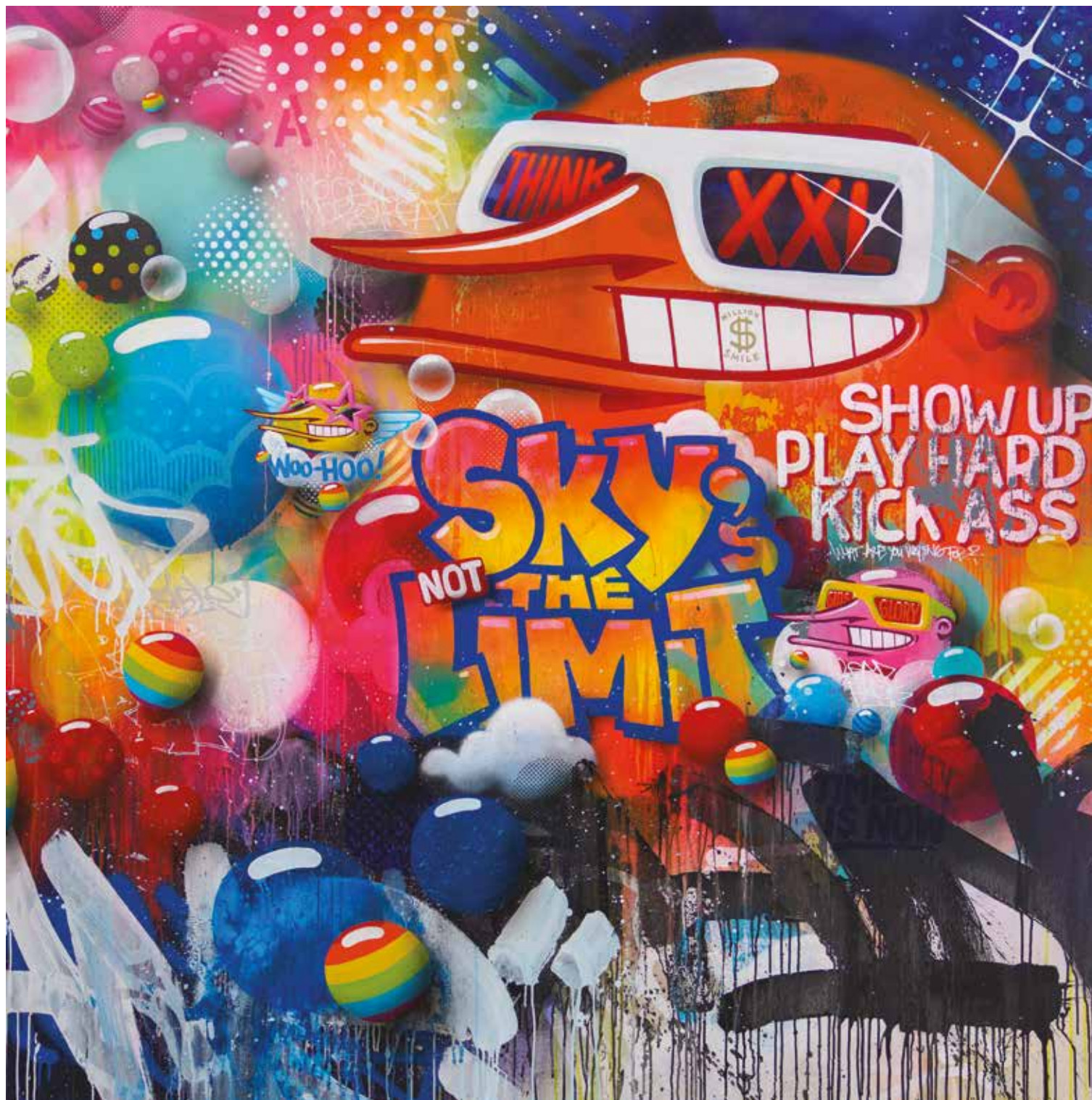
OUT OF THE BLUE

2023

Acrylics & aerosol on canvas

200x110cm





SKY'S NOT THE LIMIT
2023
Acrylics & aerosol on canvas
180x180cm



GET ON
UP!
STAY ON
THE
SCENE

OD



SHOOT
FOR THE
MOON

SHOOT
FOR THE
MOON

GET ON
UP!
STAY ON
THE
SCENE

OD
TO







STAY ON THE SCENE

2023

Acrylics & aerosol on canvas

Diptych

2x 160x70cm





STAY YOUNG AND INVINCIBLE

2023

Acrylics & aerosol on canvas

160x120cm





THIS IS HUGE
2023
Acrylics & aerosol on canvas
90x180cm





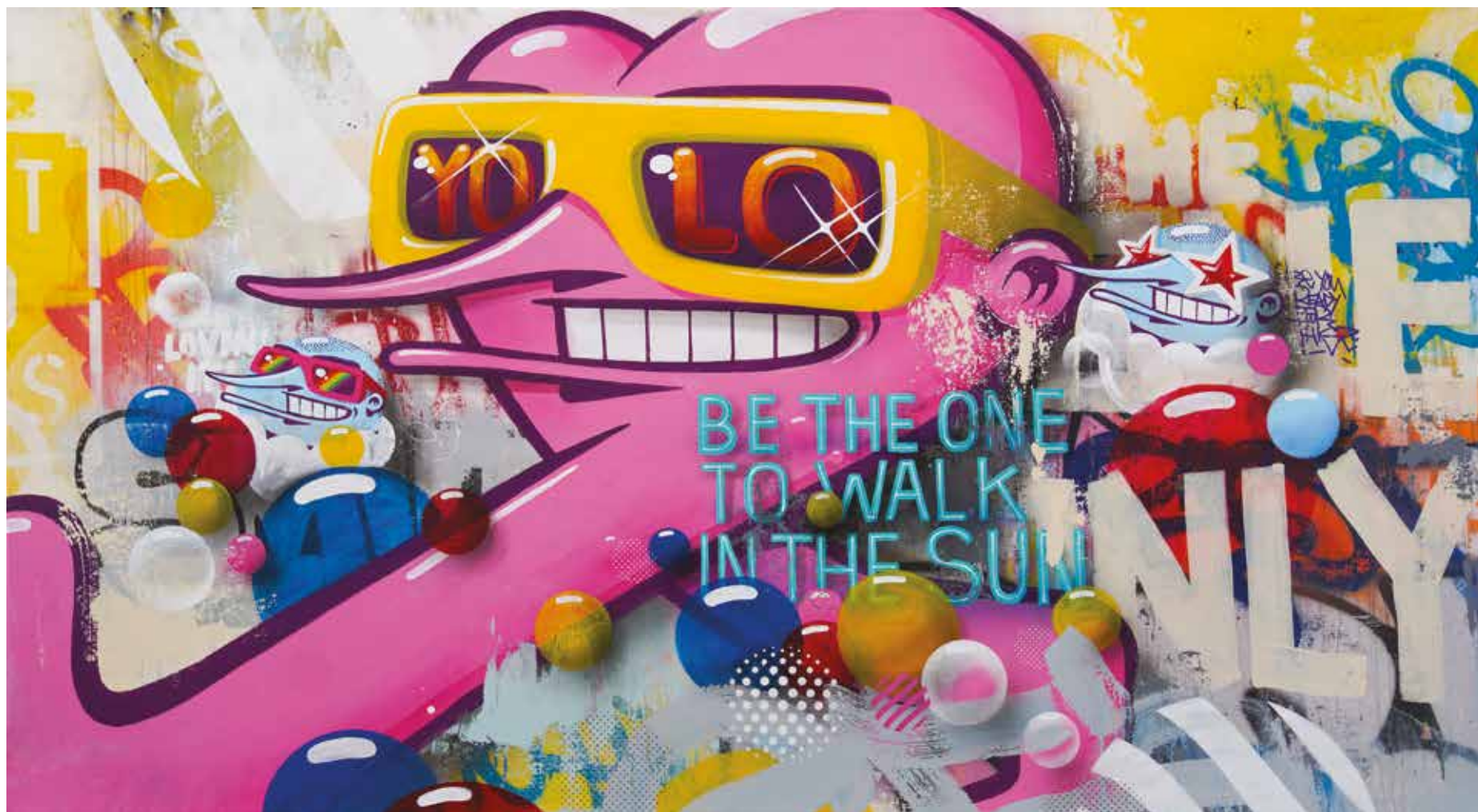
WELCOME TO MY JUNGLE
2023
Acrylics & aerosol on canvas
160x120cm

BE THE ONE
TO WALK
IN THE SUN





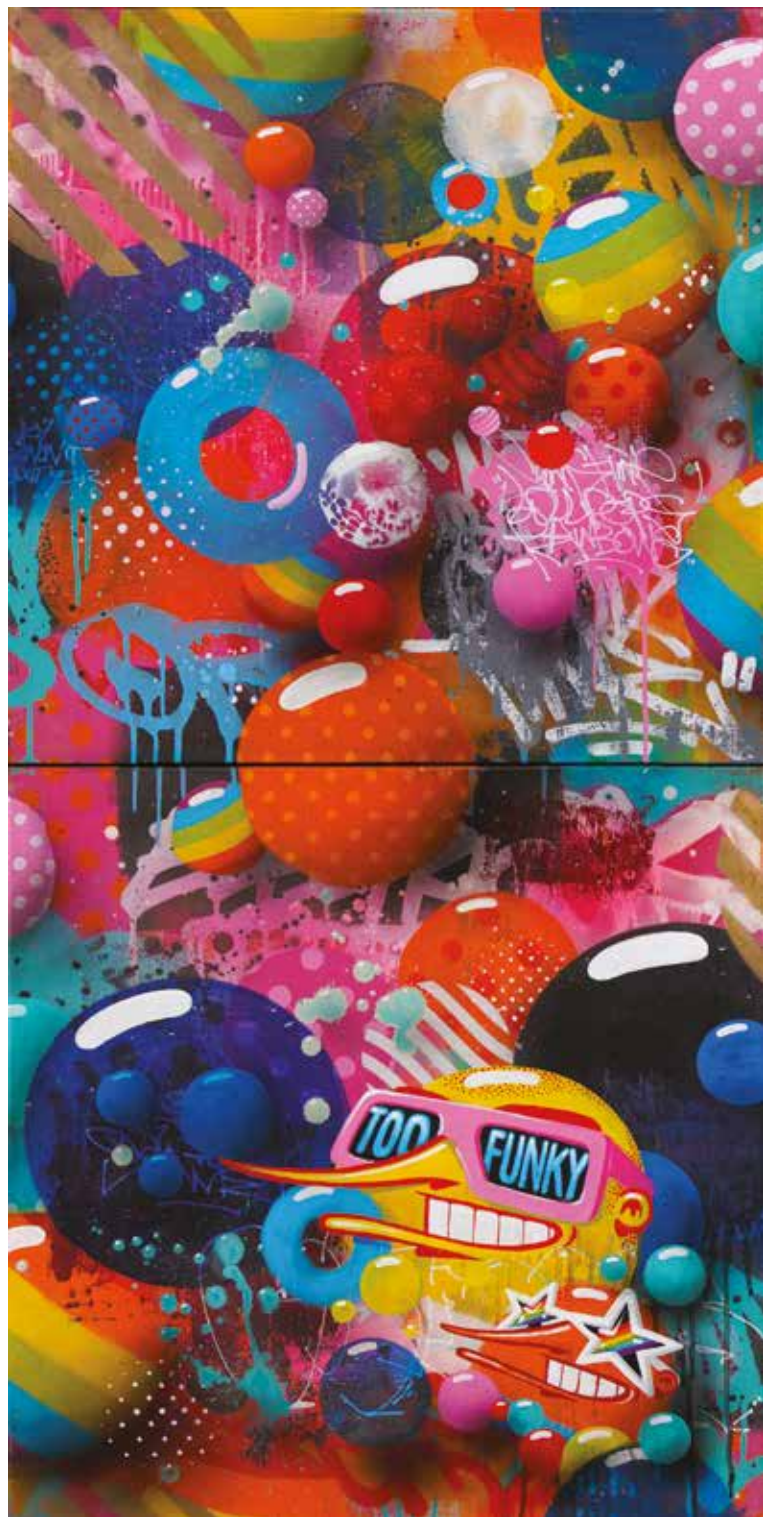




YOLO
2023
Acrylics & aerosol on canvas
200x110cm









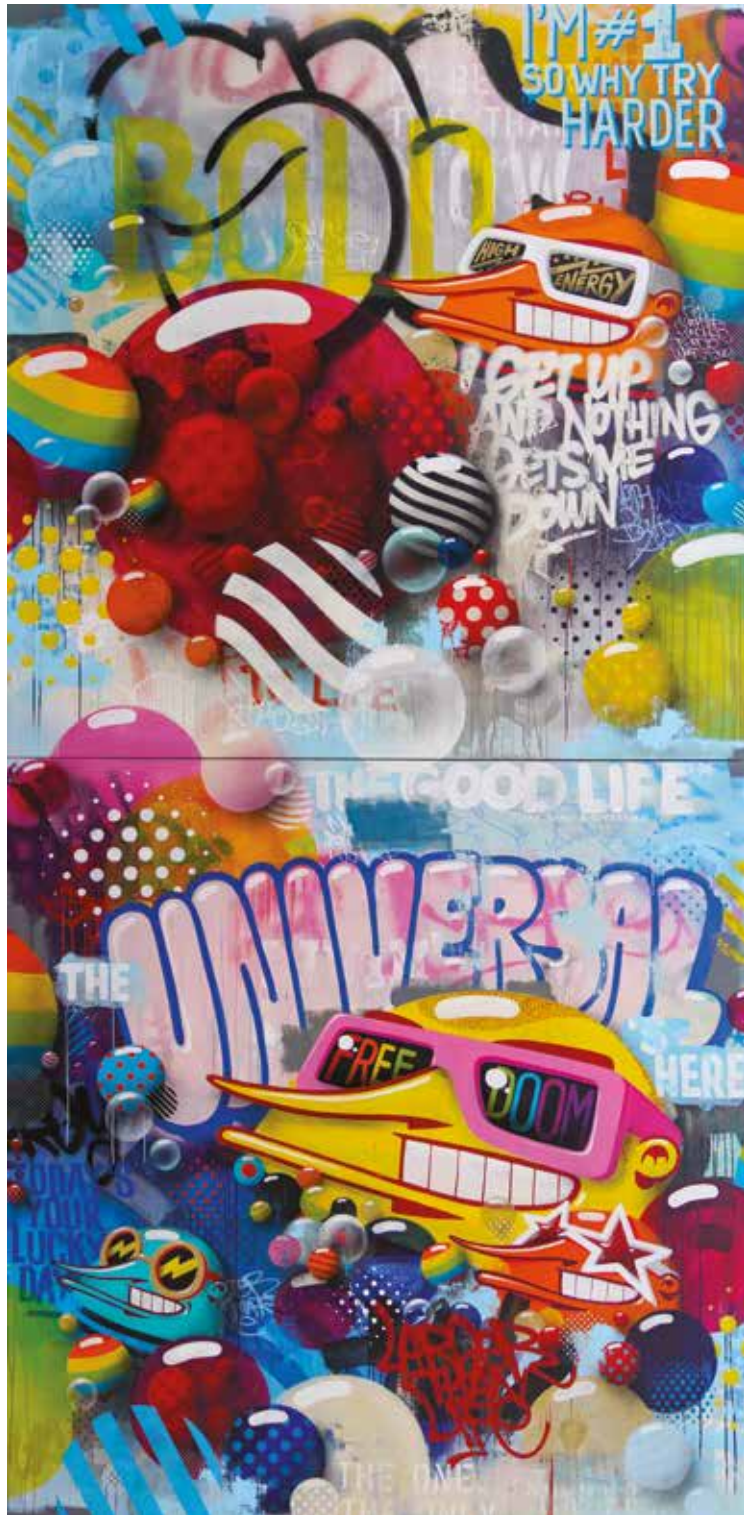
TOO FUNKY

2023

Acrylics & aerosol on canvas

Diptych

2x 60x60cm





UNIVERSAL

2024

Acrylics & aerosol on canvas

Diptych

2x 180x180cm



HIGH

ENERGY

GET UP
AND NOTHING
GETS ME
DOWN

Feel
the
punch
of
the
beat
to
what's
real

NOTHING
GETS
ME
DOWN





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