



ISSUE #7

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***“It’s so liberating to put work out on the streets, you’re not asking for anyone’s opinion.”*** -Kev Munday



## Kev Munday

### Holding Down The Suburbs



“If you’re a broke street artist from suburban Basingstoke it’s not like you can just sell the whole side of that commuter train carriage you painted, or uproot that brick wall and flog it on eBay. And it’s not like, being in Basingstoke, there’s a massive audience for it anyway. So you watch your work disappear piece by piece under several coats of district council beige and you try to figure out how you’re ever going to crack the urban art scene when the big boys from the inner-cities are stealing the limelight with their stenciled suicide bombers and Guardian readership political messages. What to do? Well, you embrace your humble origins and say ‘fuck it, I’ll bring my art from the street and put it in their faces and they will love it and they will know my name is Kev Munday!’”

And then Kmag interviews you and I was interested to read you describe your work as ‘sub-urban’. Seems to me like there is as much, if not more, suburban street art than there is inner city street

art, but it’s not given the same credibility because it doesn’t seem as subversive. Do you feel like your work gives a voice to less-recognised artists who’ve come from the same background as you?

For sure, there are plenty of people painting outside of the cities and scenes going off all over the place, it’s much more real. So many Nathan Barley type ‘street artists’ spray a half-witted pseudo-political stencil on a wall for their fellow hipsters to gawk over and throw fistfuls of cash as and that’s fine but it doesn’t do it for me. Basingstoke and the surrounding suburbs have an awesome street art scene. I’ve put on a few Visual Tourettes shows there and we have literally had over thirty different people putting their work up on the walls at a time.

***“the big boys from the inner cities are stealing the limelight with their stenciled suicide bombers...”***

You mentioned Visual Tourettes before, presumably you are not referring to some kind of socially awkward neuro-psychological affliction?

Visual Tourettes is ‘an open mic night for the art world’. Basically what that means is that we take over venues and the walls of the place are open to anyone who wants to put their work up. We have a collective of artists who paint live at the events in rotation and get locals involved too. We’ve organised shows in cities all around the UK and recently, some in Stockholm.

Do you find that taking something that has historically been a covert and secretive art form and bringing it to a live audience changes the message of the work, in that you have more immediate conversation with them whilst they watch it being created?

I guess that it does change the message of the work to some extent, mainly because the artists have a lot longer to create their work than they would on the

streets. It’s always surprising how many different types of people turn up to watch the live painting, it attracts such a varied audience.

You’ve made a very successful transition from anonymous street artist to now a successful commercial artist. Was it difficult to cross over? Also, are certain types of street art better suited to the commercial market than others?

It’s so liberating to put work out on the streets, you’re not asking for anyone’s opinion. It’s about never asking for permission. When I was starting out people were telling me I was doing it wrong: “That’s not graffiti, it’s art!” now people look at my work and say “That’s not art, it’s graffiti!”. At the end of the day I paint whatever I feel like and I think that is what people are after; something different.



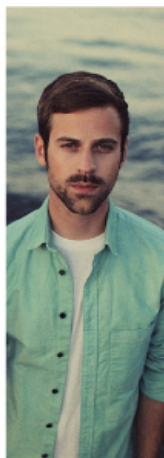
# MACKLEMORE

*& Ryan Lewis - Find Clarity*



*"A lot of mushroom trips around that time. I was just trying to figure out who I was..."*

*-Macklemore*



## Macklemore & Ryan Lewis's

popularity doesn't entirely make sense. They're not only two white guys from Seattle making hip-hop, they're two white guys from Seattle making hip-hop unlike any other.

As musicians who blend pop-anthem production with mindful lyrical content, the duo stand between two distinct worlds. One is a land of boasts, women, and riches, expertly detailed by new pop legends like Drake and Rick Ross; and the other is a grittier world, marked by an uprising internet-based mainstream where hardcore young rappers like Chief Keef shoot homemade videos about gang violence, and blow up with such white-hot speed that major labels and journalists alike can't keep up.

Despite being the odd ones out, Macklemore and Lewis have made a case for their recent success with a string of honest, challenging songs like "Wings," an ode to the sneakerhead and the unrelenting consumerist culture that engulfs him; "Otherside," a Red Hot Chili Peppers-sampling rap ballad detailing a hard-fought return to sobriety; and most recently, "Same Love," a soft and beautiful statement on sexuality, homophobia, and gay rights.

As a lyricist, Macklemore presents himself as a flawed individual, a scarred artist who has seen the other side and has come back to inspire his fans and listeners with not only cautionary tales but also confessions of his own missteps. In a time when most of his contemporaries aren't saying much of anything, he's saying a lot.

A day before the release of *The Heist*, Macklemore's debut LP with producer Ryan Lewis, we spoke with him about his faith, same sex marriage, and rapping for 10,000 hours.

**"Ryan is one of my best friends in this world. He's my producer. He's my business partner. And he's probably one of my toughest critics, which is an imperative trait of a teammate."**

## Q&A

### DAN BUYANOVSKY:

People call you a conscious rapper, and you do make conscious, socially aware hip-hop music, but you're never pandering or heavy-handed. How do you think you have been able to pull that off?

### MACKLEMORE:

I put myself in the place of the listener when editing my writing. The last thing that I want to do is be preached at and told who to be or what to think when listening to an artist. However, I do want to be inspired. There's a fine line. I also have a producer that is critical as shit, and picks apart everything I write. That definitely helps.

### BUYANOVSKY:

On some of your songs, you sound like you're smiling while rapping, especially on "The Town"—where you're reliving all of these fond hometown memories. Is that something you're aware of while recording?

### MACKLEMORE:

I definitely use "smiling while rapping" as a tool in the booth. I want to have fun while recording. At times it can get tedious and stressful when it's not sounding the way you heard it in your head, but you've got to remember to just smile and appreciate the fact that you're even in the booth.



### BUYANOVSKY:

Tell me about what you were going through before *The Unplanned Mixtape* [2009]. Where was your mind? Had you given up?

### MACKLEMORE:

I was close to giving up. I was broke, unemployed, freshly out of rehab, and living in my parents' basement. It was a "If this doesn't work, I gotta get a real job" time in my life. I'd always thought that if I could get sober and stay sober, I would be able to have a career making music. My drug and alcohol addiction was the one thing holding me back. I had finally gotten the tools to stay sober, and it was just a matter of writing the songs. There was no choice but to go all-in.