



## COPE 2 – TRUE LEGEND

Cope 2 has lived his whole life in the Bronx, in the public housing projects on the opposite end of the earth from Wall Street in Manhattan. He came to graffiti like everyone else in those days, at the age when young men and women begin to explore the urban labyrinth where we all live.

### Coloring outside society's lines

The subway system, the main way people get around in New York, was appropriated by youth who made it into their medium of expression. Their intention was never to make it stop operating, running and carrying passengers from point A to point B. They needed the trains to run. Their goal was to be the very best at what they were doing, and to that end they established a social and cultural mechanism that was unsanctioned by the authorities. The train system, especially the "el" (elevated) lines in the ghettos and working class areas, put their language into circulation.

Graffiti is a mode of visual expression, and what better way to take it public than putting it directly on trains? That was the idea for a number of years. Young people write their names on subway cars and covered them with images from top to bottom. The city was caught in a serious economic recession and could not stop this movement from spreading over every paintable surface in town.

### Cope 2, a living legend

Cope 2 never really put down his spray cans for something else. Along with many other people he was very active in the 1990s, taking graffiti to new media such as city walls. Bringing together many local and foreign writers, he came to be called the "ambassador" for New York graffiti because he was so good at organizing collective projects, as this book bears witness to. Graffiti motivated him to develop friendships and work with people from the four corners of the world who came to New York just to paint. A documentary about him released in 1999 shows that it was still possible to paint New York trains despite the media hype that claimed that subway graffiti had been dead for a decade. You can also see how painting in the street and doing permission pieces can eliminate the risk factor from the equation. In this way writers have been doing work that is increasingly large format but no less urban.

The authorities see him as a ringleader of a movement they have never really been able to wipe out despite their claims. They've tried to make an example of him, applying their usual tactic of trying to single out certain people. The city of New York has pressed major charges against him twice. Both times he came out of the courthouse with not much more than scratches, thanks to the tireless defense of an attorney.

Out of the sum total of photos in this book, at most two percent are still visible as this first edition goes to press.

**Title** (bilingual Fr & Eng edition) : **Cope 2 "True Legend" Facts** : A4 – 272 pages (4 colors) with a hard cover. **Price**: 40€.

**Press kit** : <http://www.righters.com/presse/Cope2-TrueLegend/presse.pdf>

**Visuals** : <http://www.righters.com/presse/Cope2-TrueLegend/cope2.zip>

Cope 2 "True Legend" published by Righters.com first published in June 2003

**ISBN** : 2-9520-0680-6 **EAN** : 9782952006804

#### Table of contents :

P003 : introduction and interview of Cope 2 (English version)

P008 : introduction and interview of Cope 2 ( French version)

P012 : Works on paper

P018 : "My signature is the essence of what i do and who i am"

P022 : Throw ups, graffiti wars and going "all city"

P038-087 : Trains from the "fame" lines to exportinf the art from where ever it can go.

P040 : From the early 1980's to 1988 when the city decided that painted subway cars were made an absolute priority to remove them as soon as spotted.

P060 : Life after the "death of graffiti on subway cars". The "clean" trains movement, and the rise of painting freight trains and scrap cars. Traveling and painting trains abroad.

P088: Pieces on walls and the rise of big productions; Organizing get-together with foreign writers visiting New York. Accomplishing a very large networking among many actors of the international scene. Traveling to Germany and Franc to piant big productions.

righters.com | 26, rue des rigoles |75020 Paris | France  
 Fax: (33)(0)1-43-60-07-76 | Phone: (33)(0)8-71-23-99-17