

Olivier Catta is a French artist born in 1957 in Rouen, France. He is known for his work with recycled cardboard, which he uses to create thought-provoking reflections on urban structures. Catta's art is held in numerous private collections and he has exhibited at galleries in Paris, Brussels, Germany, Mexico, China, USA and Japan.

His art is unique in that he does not use collage techniques. Instead, he tears and inks the cardboard, finding a certain degree of randomness in the material. The cardboard itself is significant, as it refers to both its practical use in transport and storage and its eventual fate as a symbol of throw-away society.

One of the ironies of Catta's work is that the material he uses to create images of urban life and its structures is the same material that is often used to shelter the homeless around the world. Catta's cityscapes are sometimes literal and representational, but they also reflect his inner resonance with the geometry of how we live. Overall, Catta's work is a unique and thought-provoking exploration of urban life and society. His use of recycled cardboard as a medium highlights the issue of waste and sustainability, while his cityscapes offer a reflection on the structures that define our urban existence

Catta's art captures the essence of urban life and the human experience in depersonalized metropolises. He sees the fragility in the rigor of urban planning and the accident in the orderly layout of cities. Through his use of recycled cardboard, a symbol of consumption and industry, he creates abstract landscapes that reflect the mutations of the architecture.

His unique technique is characterized by scratches, scrapings, cuts, lacerations, and splashes of ink and paint, which serve as tools for him to create cities that are alive and constantly evolving. He observes the play of light and shadows in the dense and labyrinthine urban fabric and gains height to provide viewers with an overview of the fabric of the city.

Catta's work also integrates more evanescent elements, such as organic forms and elements from nature. In his Chinese residence in Zunyi in 2016, he returned to more organic forms, inspired by the Shanshui landscape painting tradition. Mountains and forests compete with industrial areas for space on his canvas, and the greyish smog that clouds the polluted sky forms clouds and curls that cover the city and circulate within it like its sick breath.

Overall, Catta's art is a reflection of the modern landscape and the human experience in the urban environment. Through his use of recycled cardboard, he highlights the issue of waste and sustainability, while his cityscapes offer a reflection on the structures that define our urban existence.

Through his art, Catta does not make a moral judgment on the balance between nature and urbanization. Instead, he presents a modern landscape that is inscribed with the very material of his works. He is a storyteller of the contemporary urban experience, where order and chaos, rigidity and fluidity, and permanence and impermanence coexist.

Charles Freck, March 2023