

An aerial photograph of a harbor in Finistère, France. The harbor is filled with numerous white sailboats of various sizes, their masts reaching up. The water is calm, reflecting the sky. In the background, a town with traditional European architecture is visible, including a prominent church with a tall, dark spire. The sky is overcast with soft, grey clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

*Cinephilia
in Finistère*

LES FRÈRES
RIPOULAIN



On January 4, 2018, an article appeared on the Ouest-France Bretagne local newspaper's website announcing the arrest of the man Douarnenez residents call "MONSIEUR CINÉMA" (Mr. Cinema), and for whom they expressed their support on social media. For several years, this graffiti writer has meticulously inscribed lists of movies and TV series on street furniture in various neighbourhoods of the city—signs, traffic signs, street signs, bus shelters, and bus timetables; utility poles, PVC conduits and ducts, cable ties; garbage, glass, and recycling containers; lampposts, fire hydrants, various sidewalk cabinets; bollards, barriers, and railings. His arrest reveals the complexity of his personal situation, while the City and the inter-municipal authority estimate the damages at €85,000. Unable to pay the fine, the criminal court sentenced him to two months' imprisonment, suspended. But the graffiti writer remains silent about his motives and the meaning behind his actions.

Among the various online resources about his graffiti practice are several articles from the blog *Le Poignard* subtil by Bruno MONTPIED, a researcher and mediator of outsider and spontaneous art, published between 2017 and 2018. While in Finistère during the summer, he took the opportunity to visit the town with his friend Régis GAYRAUD. Together, they laid the groundwork for a visual investigation and formulated some hypotheses to try to understand the ins and outs of this obsessive writing.

In the summer of 2021, David RENAULT and Mathieu TREMBLIN of the duo LES FRÈRES RIPOULAIN spent two weeks in Douarnenez with the support of the Morlaix-based art space *Les Moyens du bord* to conduct a near-exhaustive survey of the graffiti in the Tréboul and Ploaré districts, extending to the coastline, before it was erased. The streets were traversed and scrutinised one after another, resulting in five hundred locations being mapped. This systematic survey also provides an opportunity to verify the theories developed by MONTPIED and the residents with whom he interacts on his blog. Having spoken with him on the phone a few weeks prior, it seems clear that the graffiti writer wants to maintain his "right to opacity"—to borrow the expression of the poet and philosopher Édouard GLISSANT to describe the desire of individuals not to be seen. The aim is to record and interpret the signs present in the city, but without contacting their creators. The focus of the collection is on the act of graffiti and its interpretation, while the duo seeks to identify the dynamics driving this specific form of graffiti.

By carefully examining the palimpsests of inscriptions one after another, it becomes apparent that the oldest were likely first created in blue or red, then gradually covered with white text. Approaching the Kermabon social housing complex, mentioned by various sources as the starting point of the graffiti frenzy, Google Street View reveals an absence—supposedly according to the Google Car’s perspective—of inscriptions on the recycling container in July 2015. It is on the fire hydrants that the most layers of inscriptions in different colours are found. Further searching uncovers images also dating from July 2015 where a palimpsest already exists on several fire hydrants in the Port of Tréboul area. These hydrants constitute an interesting reference point for online temporal exploration, as they are located on public roads and the main traffic routes are also the most documented by the Google Car. Furthermore, the presence of inscriptions is immediately recognisable when they are created around the signage that identifies them. For example, the marker at 78 rue Henri Barbusse was unmarked in July 2014, while a red “TANGO” appeared in August 2015, as did marker 005 quai de l’Yser, which was already marked with several colours in July. Marker 035 rue du Président Salvador Allende had no markings in September 2013, but was marked in October 2016. The graffiti writer’s first markings were probably made in late 2014 or early 2015.

As former graffiti writers, LES FRÈRES RIPOULAIN are particularly attentive to the tools used for marking. Some people have suggested the use of Posca brand markers. However, the difficulty in accessing this specific type of marker in the area seems to contradict this hypothesis: these markers are only found in art supply stores, and occasionally in stationery shops. Furthermore, the viscosity of the ink deposit on the surfaces, as well as the shape of the letter strokes, suggests application with a brush. Even when crushed, the felt tip of a Posca marker ensures a consistent ink flow; ink buildup would cause drips, especially when used vertically, which is never the case with these inscriptions. A few tests with different tools carried out on the same surfaces—concrete, wood, metal, and plastic—seem to confirm the chronological use of nail polish for the coloured markings, primarily blue and red, followed by white correction fluid with a brush for the white markings (Tipp-Ex).

While local newspaper delivery drivers admit to having seen the graffiti writer during their early morning rounds, the time required to create a piece of graffiti using correction fluid is indeed very significant—on the order of several minutes. It is undeniable that to achieve such a profusion of graphic elements, the graffiti writer must have created the inscriptions at night, spending several hours a night, for years, wandering the streets of Douarnenez.



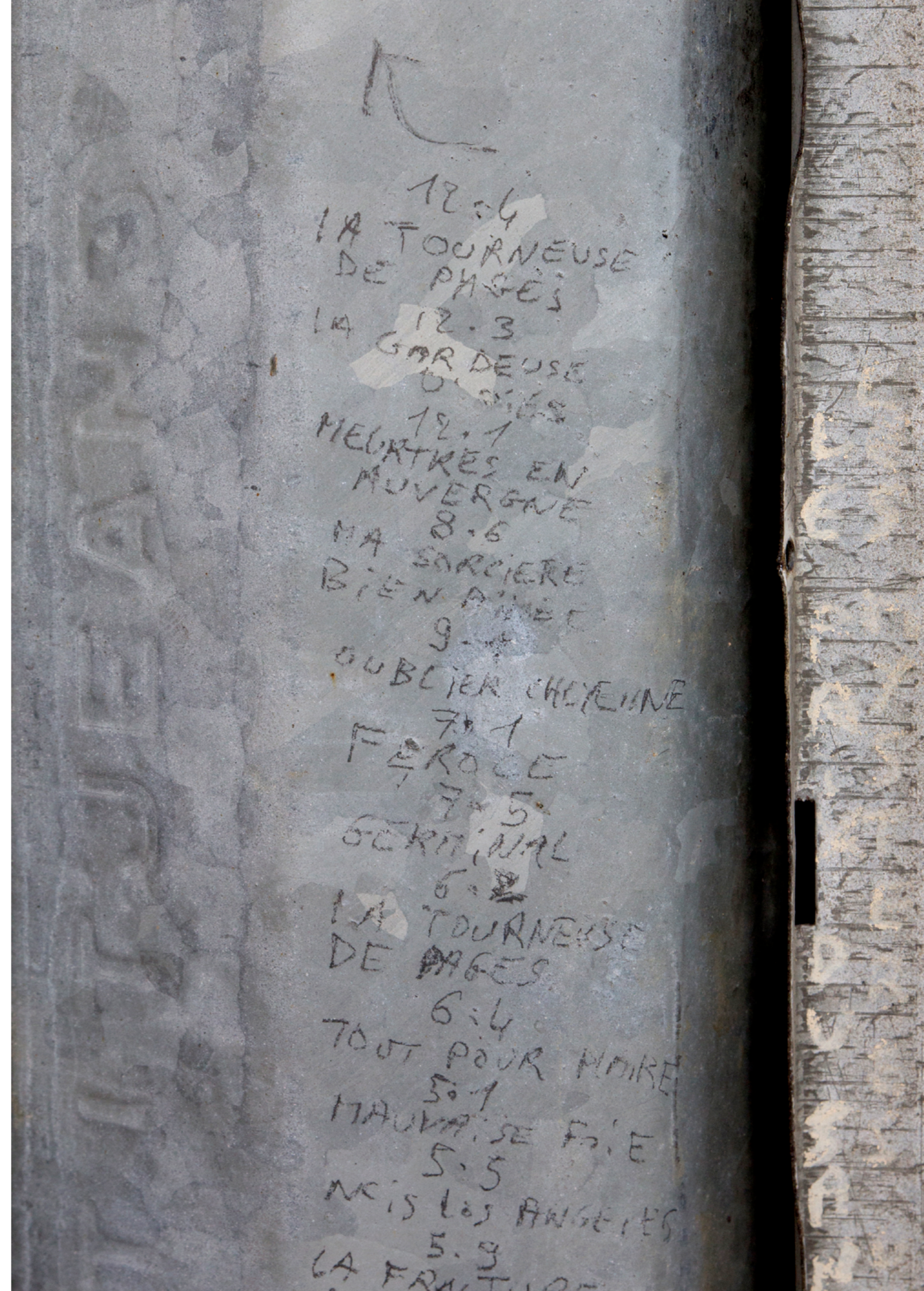
To the surprise of Captain LACHIVERT, who led the investigation, the search of the graffiti writer’s home yielded a complete absence of DVD or VHS tapes. Clearly, this film buff is also a television enthusiast. A review of the films and series listed in the graffiti reveals the presence of French series broadcast exclusively on television, such as *Dolmen*, *Louis la Brocante*, and *Joséphine, ange gardien*, among other Anglo-Saxon series like *Grey’s Anatomy* and *Peaky Blinders*. The selection goes back to the 1990s with the police series *Les Cordier, juge et flic*, which aired until 2005, the Franco-Swiss-Belgian soap opera *Mystère*, and the Belgian documentary series *Strip-Tease*. Finally, there are also series like *The Serpent*, available only on video-on-demand platforms. Rather than simple lists of films and series, these entries can be considered television program guides.

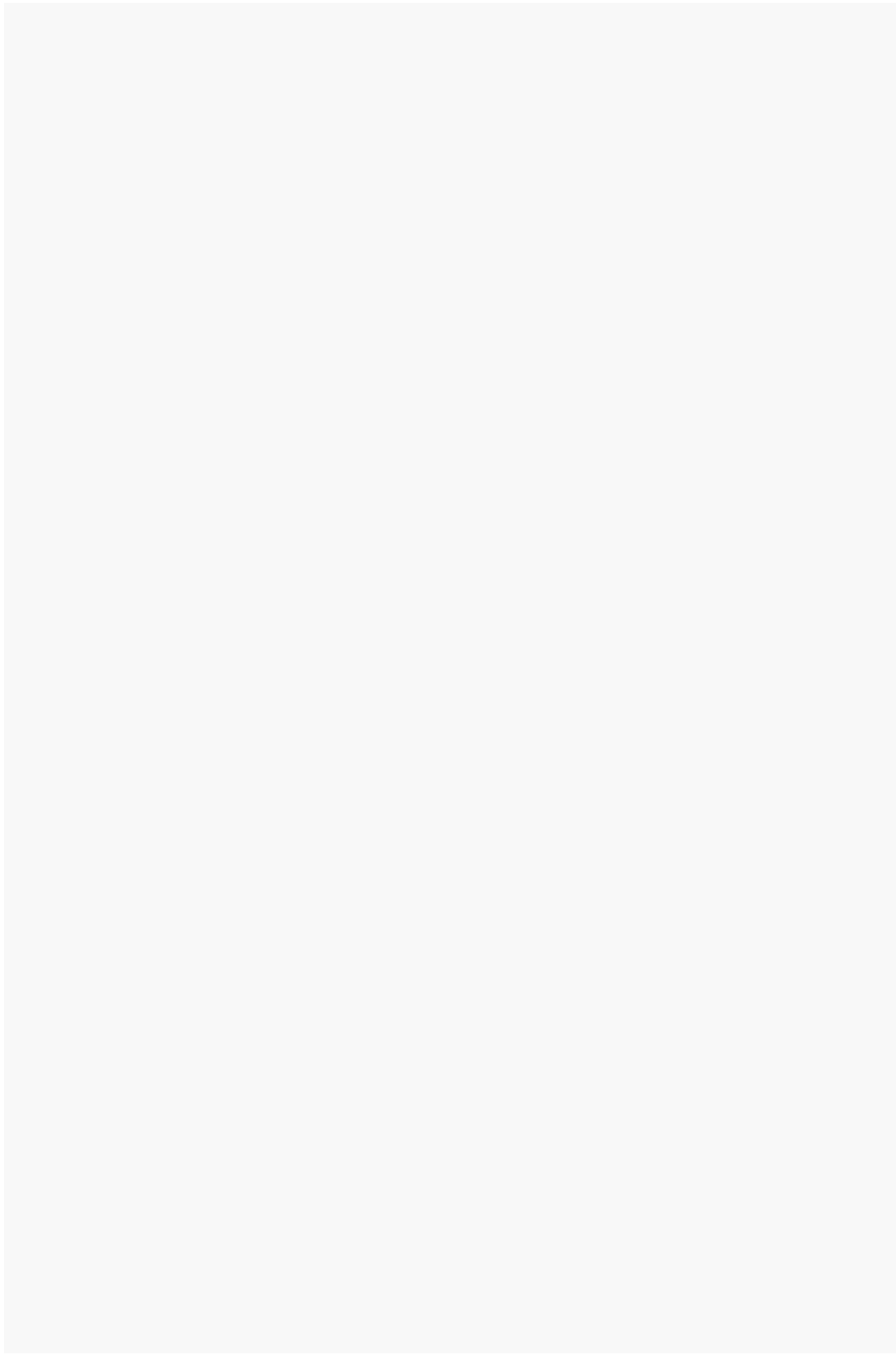


The earliest markings reveal that the film and television indexing system has become increasingly complex over time. Arrows were added first, as if the graffiti were spatially distributed throughout the city, inviting a drift from block to block, from one cinematic narrative to another. Then, numbers were added, sometimes including a decimal. By examining the inscriptions on the streetlights and their immediate surroundings, a correlation can be established between the house numbers and those associated with the film and television titles.

Wandering through the city at night, one might imagine that the graffiti writer is projecting a film program onto the windows illuminated from within by the television. The decimals would then indicate a window number on the facade—the repetition of the route night after night leading to a variety of possible configurations. However, on several occasions, the decimal number exceeds the number of windows on the houses.

Finally, while the conviction might seem to have led the graffiti writer to cease his activities, this is not the case. He now writes film and series titles with a lead pencil on an interstitial scale, graphite being an erasable marking method that probably allows him to continue his obsessive writing without being bothered.





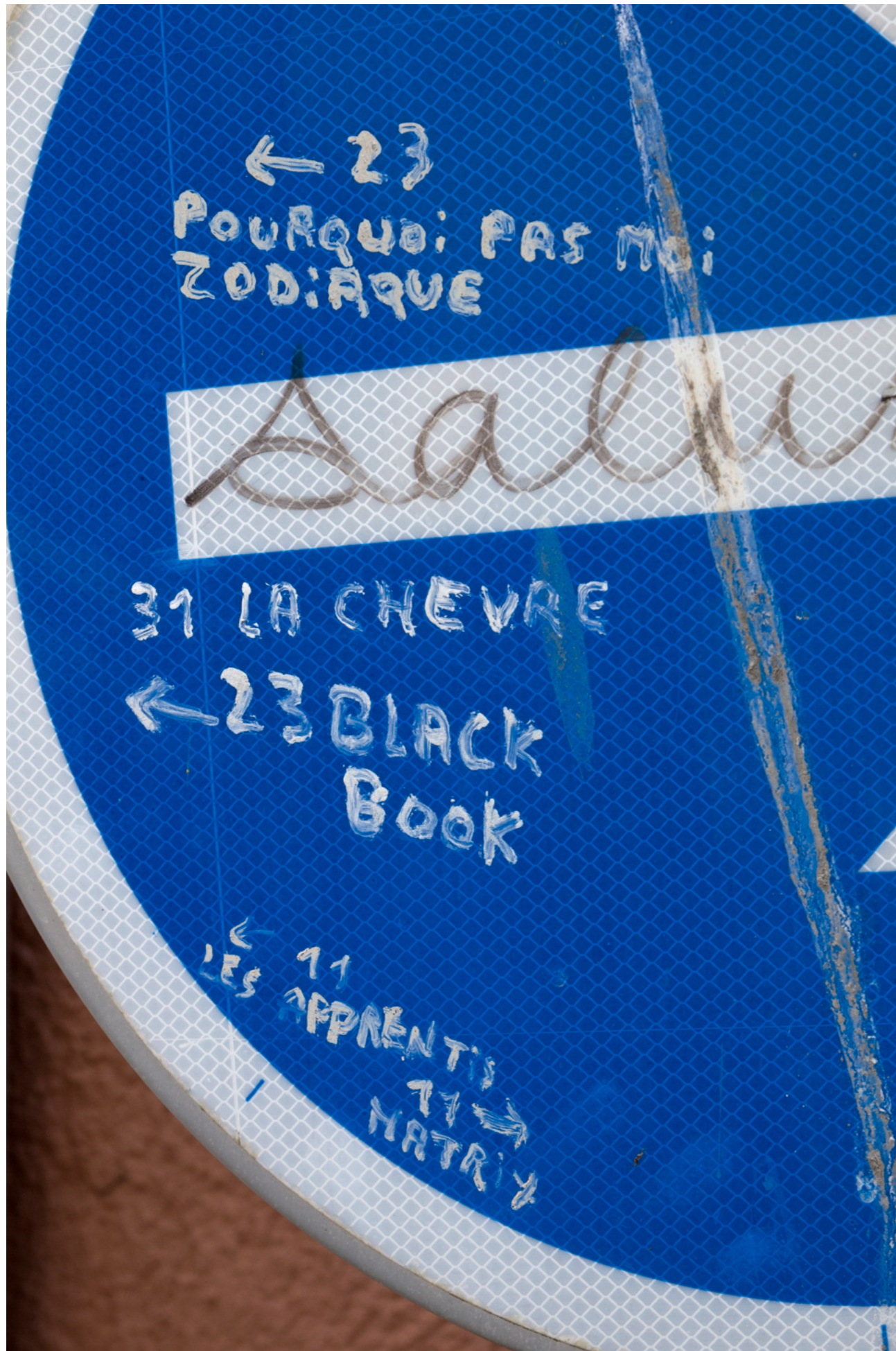
LA FLEUR DU MAL
2.3 TÉMOIN GÊNANT
HENRI IV ^{2.9} LE GRAND CHEMIN
BRIGHTON ROCK
LA GUEULE DE L'AUTRE
MA ^{1.7} TRUÉ ^{2.1} JUSTICE
2.8 LES LARMES
DU SOLEIL ^{4.4} L.M. NO. VIEUX
L'APRENTI
SORCIER ^{1.5} T
COEUR DE LILAS ^{1.4} CASE DE PARDY
ALICE DE L'AUTRE CÔTÉ DU M. ROINE
MOI CESAR
1.39 M ANS 1/2

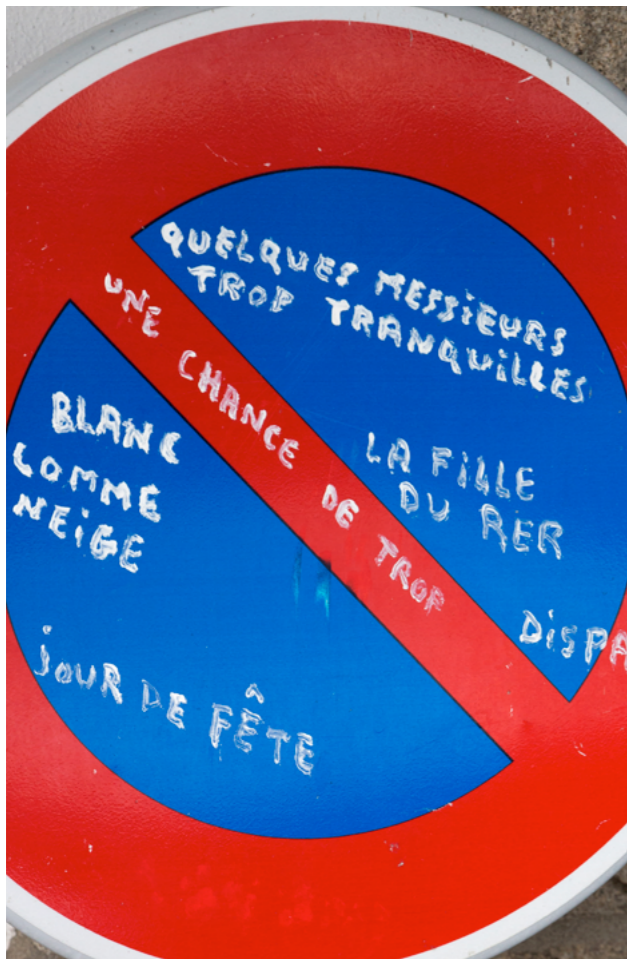
SECTION DE RECHERCHE
DOLMEN
VALENTINE
A DEMAIN
SANS FAUTE
INDIAN SUMMER
DOUBLE ENQUETE
TAXI UN CRIME AU PARADIS
300 → NAISSANCE D'UN EMPIRE

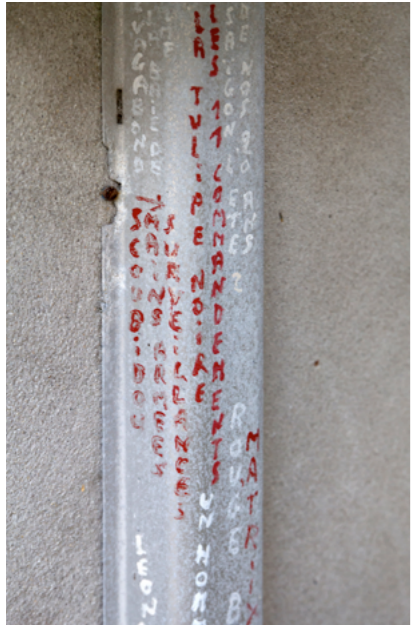
LA MEMOIRE
DANS LA
PEAU
HITMAN
SUBLIMES
CREATURES
PEARL HARBOUR
TENDRA
GONINT
FIRE WITH
FIRE



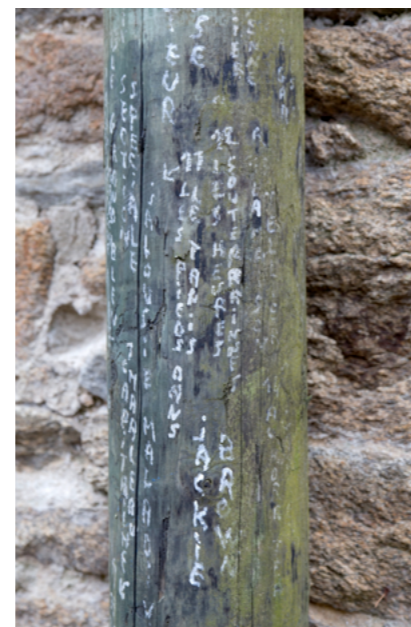
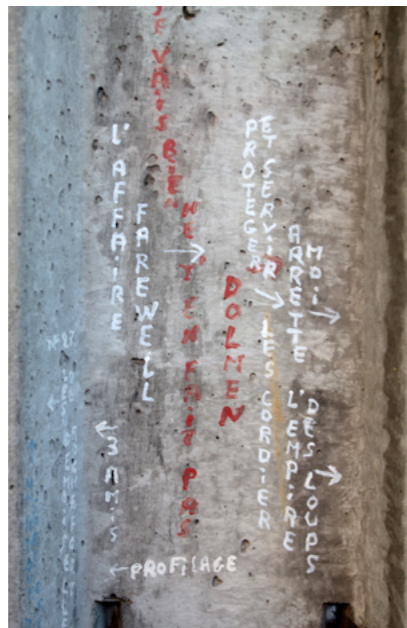
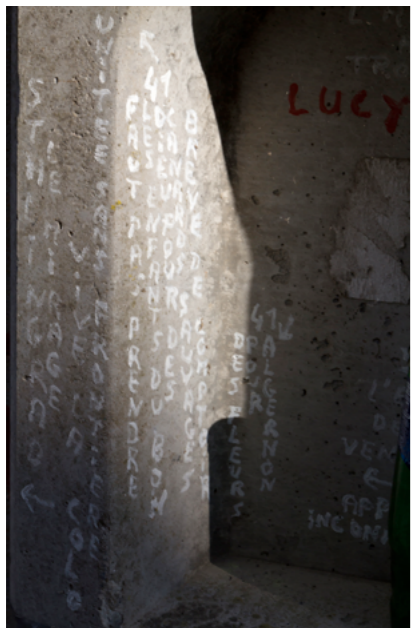








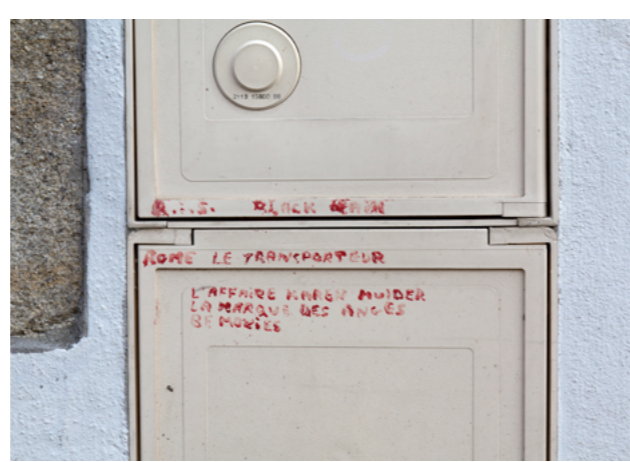
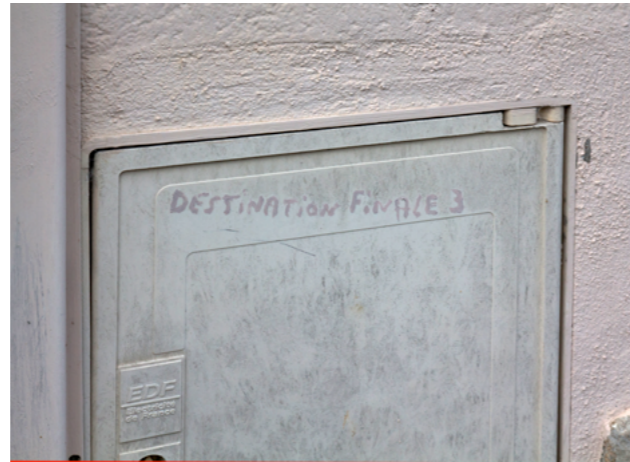
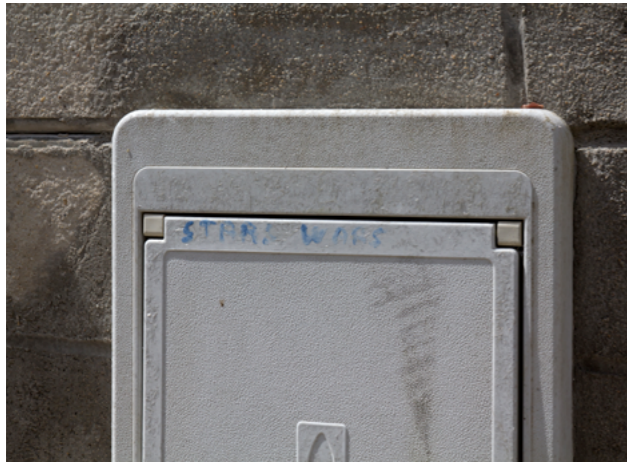
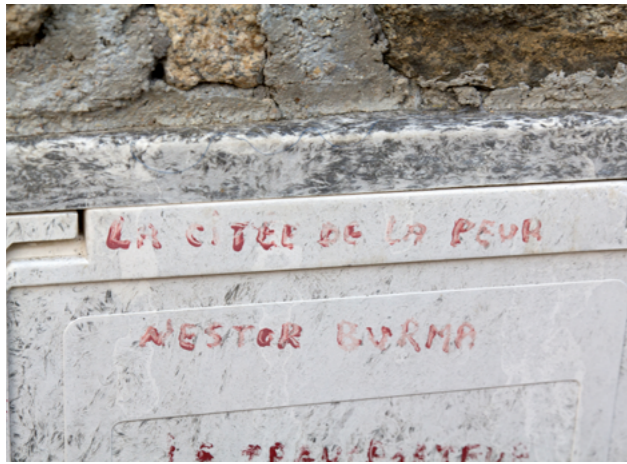
















During the summer of 2021, LES FRÈRES RIPOULAIN explored Douarnenez to map and document as comprehensively as possible the graffiti of the man, who Douarnenez residents call “MONSIEUR CINÉMA” (Mr. Cinema). This residency also provided an opportunity to compile the various urban legends shared by the town’s inhabitants and the interpretations published online in connection with a blog post by researcher Bruno MONTPIED during the summer of 2017. Based on the numerous hypotheses collected, the duo endeavoured to verify the most plausible ones, while being careful not to violate the wishes of the graffiti writer—who was arrested at the end of 2017 to remain anonymous.