

# JUXTAPOZ

Art & Culture

## Hell'O Collective: Exploring the Collaborative Process

November 21, 2017 | in Painting

[Hell'O Collective](#) is the brainchild of Jérôme Meynen and Antoine Detaille, two Belgian artists that came up writing graffiti and eventually made their way towards painting. These detailed paintings almost resemble renderings, containing a myriad of characters seemingly pasted on. They are actually the result of a collaborative painting process in which the prolific duo considers and reconsiders the work, letting their natural inclinations guide each other towards a finished product that bursts from the surface. We caught up with them after seeing their show at [First Amendment Gallery](#), to hear how the collaboration started and where it's going.

**Eben Benson: First off, give us a background on where you both come from and what your experience with art was like before joining up to do Hell'O. Were your styles naturally compatible? Or have you changed your styles to work better with each other?**

Antoine: We come from the same region of Belgium, and met during our studies in a city called Mons. We started to do graffiti together, but just for fun. We spent a lot of time on walls and started really enjoying working together. Our styles quickly and naturally connected, and started developing together. Graffiti was not enough, so we started to draw together while continuing to collaborate. More than 10 years later, we are here and we feel good!



**What's going on in a lot of these paintings? Do you each have a conversation when crafting these pieces, and then get to work from there? Do you find yourselves connecting on a central theme together?**

Jerome: Since the beginning we've never spoken a lot during the process, we know and trust each other. One of us develops a base, and we start the final piece shortly thereafter. Trying to finalize an idea is complicated, because we both work our own way. We prefer to wait for the result at the end of the painting process, even if we have a concrete base. The result is never the same, because we like to keep spontaneity. Our work is based on this duality. We confront, we add, we mix the figurative and abstract to create a new way of reading. We merge our ideas and techniques. We are lucky, because after 10 years, it's never hard or boring, we compliment each other.

**Do you primarily paint? or do you two make art in other mediums?**

Antoine: Painting is quite new for us. We drew on paper for almost 10 years, and the first 5 years were exclusively in black and white. The second period was colorful, but still on paper, and since then we've painted for less than two years. It's still a period of discovery, there's plenty of possibilities, but the feeling with painting is great. Paper is still an option, but we're always open to new techniques.

**How did your show at First Amendment Gallery come about? I see your mural every day in downtown SF. Did either of you get to come out for the show?**

Antoine: The idea was to come one month before the show, so we could develop our work in a studio and paint some walls in the city. Unfortunately, Jerome had an accident and was physically unable to come with me. I've spent five weeks in SF, where I painted the wall at the gallery and another huge one in the Fillmore district. The experience was amazing, the guys from the gallery are the friendliest, and it was all really relaxed. We're all satisfied with the result, and we're looking forward to working together in the future.



**What are some big projects in the works for you? Where do you hope to take Hell'O?**

Jerome: Next December we are going to paint the Facebook office in Brussels. We're also working on two solo shows for 2018, first one at [DELIMBO Gallery](#) in Sevilla, (Spain) and a second one at the [BAM Museum](#) in Belgium. And two collective shows, one at [Golden Hands Gallery](#) in Hamburg (Germany) and one at [Magma Gallery](#) in Bologna (Italy).

Next spring, we're going to release a book about our first 10 years of working as HELL'O. We are also going to a mural festival in Caen (France).

Our goal is to keep the same rhythm in our work, we want more murals, more exhibitions, and above all, to continue traveling and meeting great people.