

# *Body of Work*



*Calligraffiti*  
*by eL Seed*  
*(2014 - present)*

## Introduction

eL Seed is a French-Tunisian artist celebrated for his *calligraffiti*, a unique fusion of Arabic calligraphy and contemporary street art. His work transforms language into a visual experience, using flowing Arabic script to convey messages of peace and cultural pride. For eL Seed, language is both a symbol and a challenge: while his murals often feature text that many viewers cannot read, he believes art can transcend linguistic barriers, allowing emotion and aesthetics to communicate meaning beyond words.

One of his most iconic projects, *Perception* (Cairo, 2016), spans 50 buildings in Manshiyat Nasr, a district often stigmatized as 'Garbage City.' Viewed from a single vantage point, the mural reveals a quote: *"If someone wants to see the light of the sun, he must wipe his eyes."* This monumental work invites viewers to reconsider stereotypes and see dignity where prejudice once prevailed.

Other notable works include *Lost Walls* (Tunisia, 2014), a series of murals reclaiming forgotten spaces with Arabic poetry; *Mirage* (Dubai, 2016), a highway bridge mural blending tradition and modernity; and *The Bridge* (Paris, 2017), painted on the Pont des Arts to symbolize cultural dialogue. In *The Lost Poem* (New York, 2015), eL Seed introduced Arabic script into a Western urban context, challenging perceptions of language and identity. His *Shoreditch Mural* in London brings similar themes to one of the world's street art capitals, while *Mirrors of Babel* (Toronto, 2018) is the first time he uses mirrored calligraphy to add a new dimension to his work.

Across continents, eL Seed's work challenges viewers. Who has access to meaning? How does language shape identity? What is our connection to the physical spaces we inhabit? By turning words into art, he transforms public spaces into platforms for dialogue, bridging divides between cultures and challenging the idea that language should gatekeep understanding.

## How to study eL Seed's calligraffiti

A central theme in eL Seed's work is language as simultaneously a pathway and a barrier. By using Arabic script in places where some viewers can and others cannot read it, he highlights how language can act as a gatekeeper to meaning. At the same time, he insists that art communicates beyond words. His murals invite viewers to experience beauty and emotion even when the literal message is inaccessible, prompting reflection on who has access to knowledge and cultural capital. Another recurring theme is peace and coexistence. Many of his works carry messages of peace and dialogue, using calligraphy as a metaphor for connection between cultures. Projects like *Perception* in Cairo go further, questioning stereotypes and encouraging empathy toward a marginalized community. Similarly, works in global cities such as Toronto, Dubai, Paris, and London explore the tension between local heritage and globalism, asking how language forms individual and collective identity in places where people from different cultures live together.

Stylistically, eL Seed's art is defined by the fusion of traditional Arabic calligraphy with graffiti aesthetics. His letterforms are fluid and rhythmic, often painted in vibrant colours in repetitive patterns that create a sense of movement and energy. He may employ anamorphic design, which is a technique where an image appears distorted... until it's viewed from a given angle or perspective. This is seen in *Perception*, where the full message is revealed only from a specific vantage point on a certain hill, symbolizing the importance of perspective in understanding. His works are also site-specific, responding to the social, historical and physical context of their location, turning neglected walls or iconic landmarks into platforms for cultural dialogue. This is certainly the case in *Lost Walls* in which Tunisian ruins were repurposed as canvases for eL Seed's work, becoming integral to the meaning.

Finally, allusion is an important element when eL Seed incorporates Arabic poetry, proverbs, passages from the Qu'ran, and philosophy. For example, in *Perception*, the quote "*If someone wants to see the light of the sun, he must wipe his eyes*" alludes to classical Arabic literature and philosophy. Similarly, works like *Lost Walls* reference Tunisian poetry and folk wisdom, embedding local identity into global street art. In this booklet are several of eL Seed's works and you can find more images and information online. After studying this Body of Work, consider how you might answer the following three questions:

1. How does eL Seed use language as both a bridge and a barrier to understanding or belonging?
2. How does physical perspective and physical location play a role in his art?
3. How does the style of eL Seed's art contribute to its meaning?



*Lost Walls* (Tunisia, 2014)





*Lost Walls* (Tunisia, 2014)





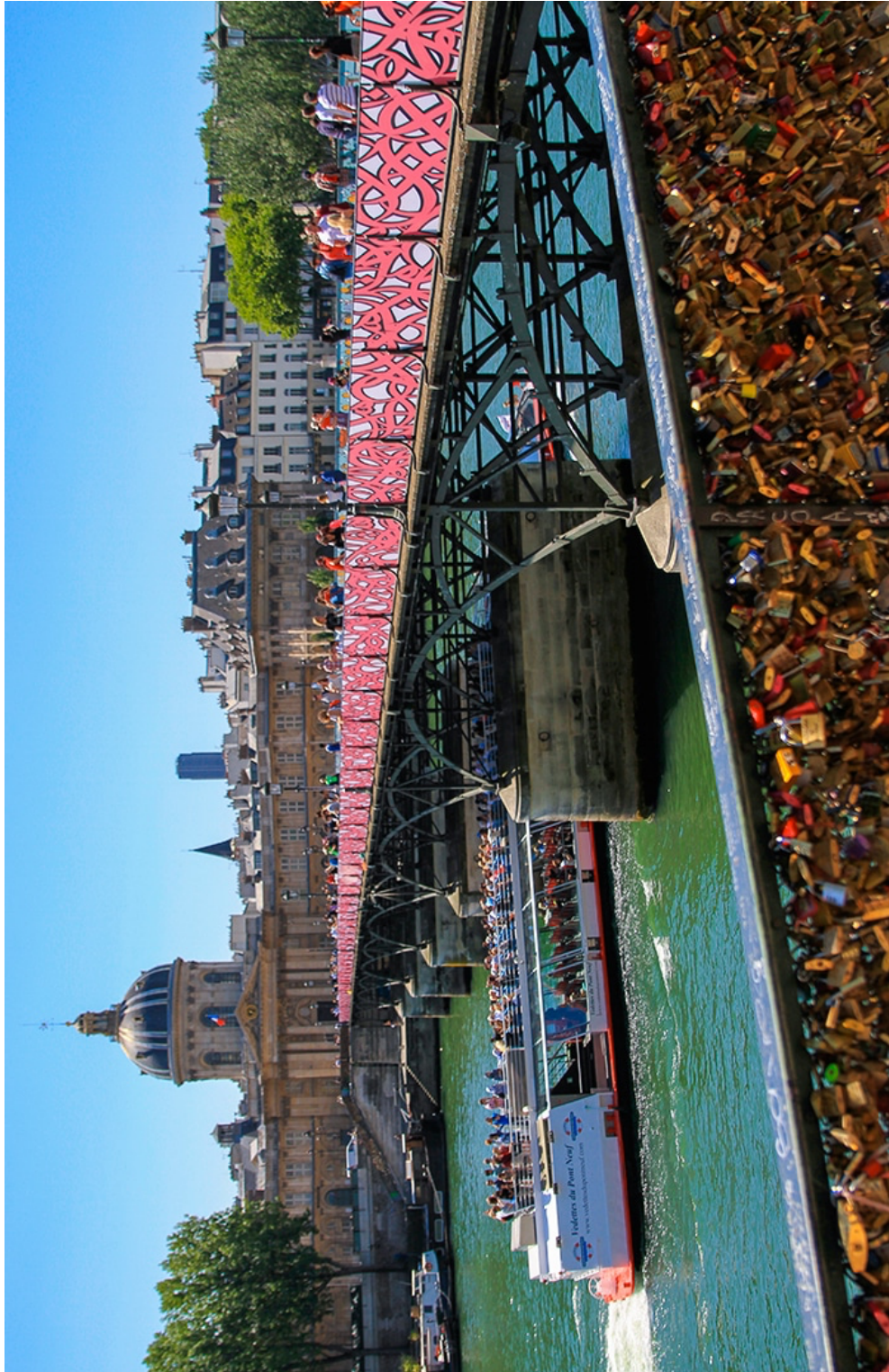
*Shoreditch Mural* (London, 2015)





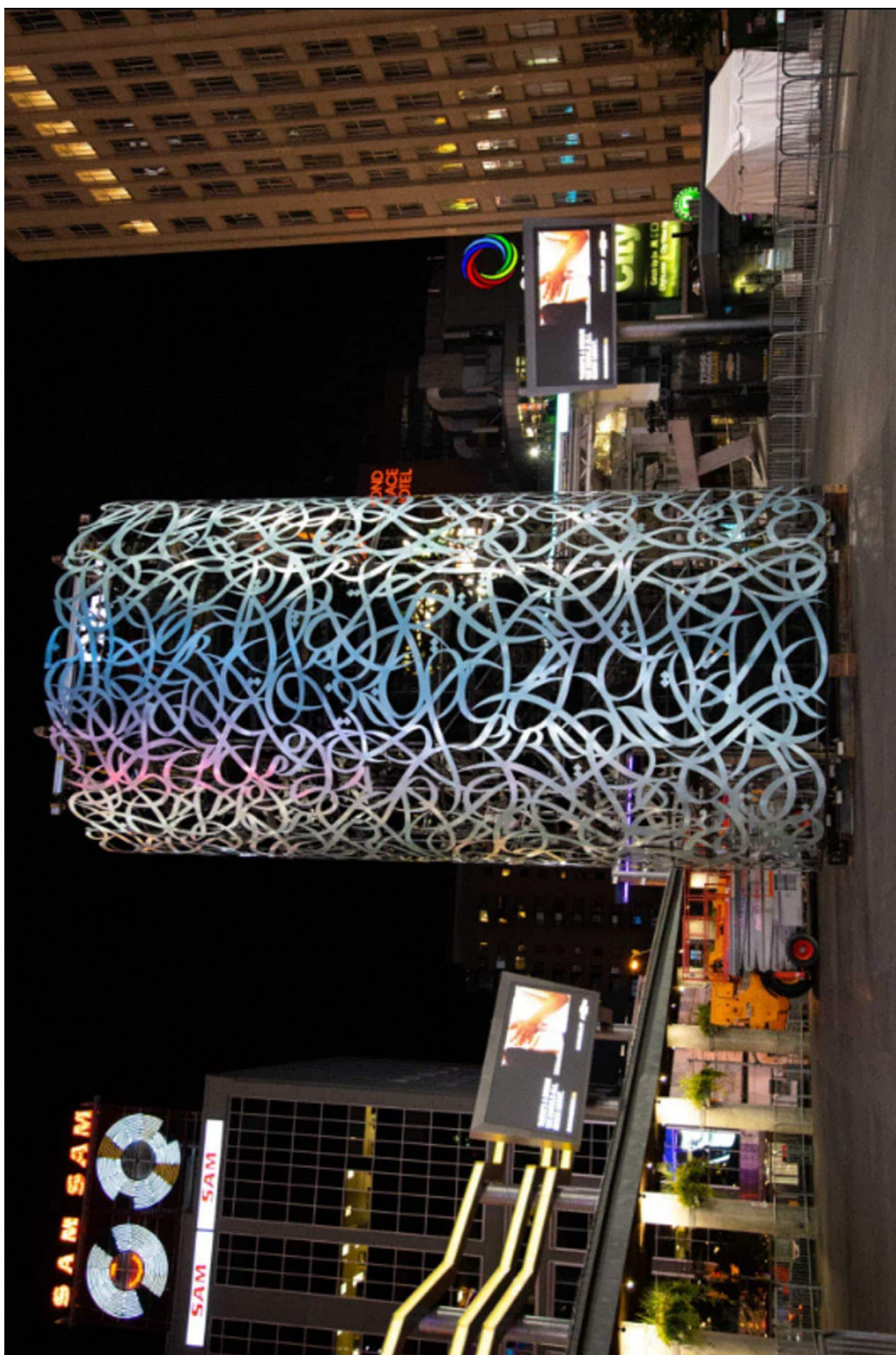
*Perception* (Cairo, 2016)





*The Bridge* (Paris, 2017)





*Mirrors of Babel* (Toronto, 2018)