

**Ariyadasa Kandege draws the Ruhr cities out of unusual perspectives. The artist even already exhibited his works in the USA. The 57-year-old even has his own Ruhr slogan.**

"East or west - Ruhr is best": So simple, completely without any " and @, is Ariyadasa Kandege's slogan. The Sinhalese calls himself "Ruhr city painter". Four years ago, when the city of Essen applied for the position of the cultural capital of Europe, the 57-year-old began his work at a number of pictures, on which the most prominent points of the Ruhr cities can be seen. Since then he has already painted Essen, Bochum, Gelsenkirchen, Dortmund, Duisburg, Oberhausen and Mülheim on canvas. The paintings stand out due to their wealth of colours and the love of details. Kandege showed his works of art in exhibitions in the Ruhr Area - and in America: Last year they could be looked at in Santa Fe in the US state New Mexico.



*"Considering the world around him with optimism, cheerfulness, Buddhist serenity and a sense of romantic idealization, Kandege has found his niche with a style that deviates from the true postmodern genre..."* The American journalist Julia Bell wrote these words in the newspaper "New Mexican" on the occasion of the vernissage in June 2007. Kandege's picture "Ruhr city Essen" was printed next to the report. Thereby the artist of Europe's cultural capital 2010 has probably advertised this area in a more effective way than the organisation "Initiativkreis Ruhrgebiet" with all slogans of this world will ever be able to.

Kandege tried different styles in his career. "From abstract or ornamental works to realistic representations, I have found my own style with my detailed city pictures." Before he begins a new Ruhr impression, he gathers information about the most important points of the city from the Internet and in conversations with people. Afterwards he goes to high viewpoints from where he takes photos. The artist always takes photos in the direction of Essen, as the skyline of Essen forms the connecting link of all his paintings. Additionally Kandege brings in aerial pictures in order to get a general view of the cities. Then he transfers these impressions from the bird's eye view into oil on canvas.

When you look at Kandege's [pictures](#) you pause in front of them for a long time. Numerous details want to be discovered: In the picture, "Essen" there are the half-timbered houses in Kettwig, the district of Werden, the Lake Baldeney, the Villa Krupp, the RWE tower, the city hall, the world heritage mine "Zollverein" and much more. The painting "Bochum" shows among other things the "Ruhr University" and the mining museum, in the foreground of the work "Dortmund" there is the BVB football stadium. The inhabitants of Gelsenkirchen will identify the arena "Auf Schalke" on "their" picture, while the "Gasometer" dominates the painting "Oberhausen". Kandege understands his exhibits as homage to the Ruhr Area, which has become his second home. "I want to show the beauties of the Ruhr Area and raise the common grey image of my chosen homeland in a colourful way." Already as a student, Kandege liked painting and expressed his feelings through art. Towards the end of the 1970s the trained restaurant expert came to Germany. "During my stay in Bavaria, where I unsuccessfully waited to join a hotel vocational school, I painted pictures of my homeland to pass the time." This brought him a lot of recognition, but he couldn't live from that. In 1979 a further stay in Germany guided him to Hamburg where he signed on a ship for six months – in order to save money to study art. Painting faded into the background when Kandege married and worked as a restaurant manager again. "After my marriage failed in 1994, I again began to paint intensively, which has helped me to overcome this difficult phase of my life."

In order to be able to devote himself to art round the clock, Kandege meanwhile gave up his job and opened an own [studio](#) in the "[Unperfekthaus](#)" in Essen. Also in the future the 57-year-old wants to devote himself artistically to the Ruhr Area. In case it brings him to America once again he can use his slogan "Osten oder Westen – Ruhrstadt ist am besten" also in an internationally suitable version: **"East or west - Ruhr is best"**.