

The Looniverse: Ownership, Content, and Credibility

Ownership and Background

The Looniverse (thelooniverse.com) is a long-running personal website created and operated by **Harrie Verstappen**, a Dutch-Caribbean photographer and filmmaker based in Curaçao. Verstappen, born in 1940, has used whimsical aliases online – notably calling himself "The Global Village Fool" – but he is the primary individual behind the site. According to the site's own history notes, it originally launched in 1996 as a Geocities page and later moved to its own domain in 1999. Indeed, WHOIS records show thelooniverse.com was first registered in October 1999, indicating over two decades of continuous presence. There is no larger organization or company associated with The Looniverse; it is essentially Verstappen's personal web project (his contact email harrie@thelooniverse.com reinforces this individual ownership). In short, **The Looniverse is run by Harrie Verstappen himself**, reflecting his personal interests and perspective.

Site Focus and Purpose

The content of The Looniverse is eclectic but centers on arts, culture, and creative work – both Verstappen's own projects and those of artists he admires. The site's tagline and metadata highlight its broad scope: "artists, books, movies, music, strips (comics) and photos". Major sections of the site are devoted to specific figures and themes. For example, Verstappen showcases **modern art** (with an emphasis on Japanese avant-garde artist Yayoi Kusama, whom he knew and worked with, featuring "many photographs of the renowned Japanese artist"), **film and design** (extensive pages on film director Akira Kurosawa and graphic designer/filmmaker Saul Bass with information on Bass's title sequences, posters, and logos), classic **animation** (e.g. Hanna-Barbera cartoons), **literature** (pages on authors like George Orwell, P. G. Wodehouse, C.S. Forester, etc.), **underground comix** and **comic strips** (the site references underground comics pioneers like Gilbert Shelton and Joost Swarte, as well as Tintin and Disney comics), and **music** (mentions of bands like The Kinks and musician Frank Zappa). Verstappen also includes his **own works** – such as 3D stereoscopic photography and personal memoirs or "My Own Books" – making the site part portfolio and part cultural archive.

The **purpose** of The Looniverse appears to be to share and celebrate these varied interests in a somewhat irreverent, "oddball" fashion (befitting the punny name "Looniverse," implying a playful "loony universe" of content). The site was initially dedicated to Yayoi Kusama's and Verstappen's work, but it "grew out of all reasonable proportions" to accommodate many other subjects and people over time (as Verstappen jokingly notes on the site's history page). The tone is informal and personal – for instance, Verstappen dubs himself the "Global Village Fool" acting as a virtual tour guide through his collections. There is **no overt political or ideological agenda** on the site; rather, the emphasis is on art, creativity, and occasionally offbeat or nostalgic content. (One section even delves into an early 1900s hoax book *The Papalagi*, reflecting Verstappen's interest in curiosities and perhaps a skeptical mindset.) Overall, **The Looniverse serves as a rich personal archive** of art images, film history tidbits, essays, and memorabilia curated by Harrie Verstappen for the enjoyment of similarly curious visitors.

Credibility and Popularity

The Looniverse is not a mainstream news or academic site, but a personal web repository – so its credibility hinges largely on the quality of content provided by its owner. Harrie Verstappen's background in photography/film and his first-hand

experiences (e.g. photographing Kusama, working in film production) lend some authenticity to the material. He writes knowledgeably about the topics he features, and the site often provides factual details, images, or filmographic data that enthusiasts find useful. In niche circles, The Looniverse has gained a modest reputation as a **niche reference source**. For example, design and film students have cited The Looniverse's Saul Bass pages as a resource on Bass's film titles and graphic designs. Notably, the site was even referenced in a Wikipedia article about author P. G. Wodehouse – the Wikipedia entry cited "The Complete Plays of P.G. Wodehouse" from thelooniverse.com as an information source. This suggests that, at least in specific content areas, The Looniverse provides unique compiled information (such as bibliographies or filmographies) that can be verifiable and thus was deemed worth citing. Furthermore, Verstappen's involvement in the skeptic community (he wrote an article for Skeptical Inquirer magazine, which identified him and linked his website) indicates he values accuracy and critical thinking, traits reflected in some analytical pieces on the site. In general, **within its domains of art and pop culture, The Looniverse is considered a quirky but sincere and informative source** – credible for casual research, though not peer-reviewed. One should keep in mind that as a one-man project, it may reflect personal biases or idiosyncratic curation (and some pages may be outdated given the site's age).

In terms of **influence and traffic**, The Looniverse remains quite obscure on the wider web. It does not register on major web traffic indices – for instance, Alexa shows no rank or traffic data for the site, indicating very low visitor numbers. The site's design is old-fashioned (dating to the 1990s) and it doesn't actively promote itself on social media or search-optimized platforms, so its audience is limited to enthusiasts who stumble upon it or those who have known it for years. There has been little to no coverage of The Looniverse in mainstream media. Its "influence," therefore, is best described as **small but enduring**: it has a handful of devoted users and has persisted as an online fixture since the early web days. The longevity and depth of content give it a sort of archival value even if it's not widely popular. By all indications, The Looniverse is a **safe and benign website** – it's rated clean by web safety tools (no malware or spam issues reported) and is run simply out of personal passion.

In summary, **The Looniverse** is the personal creation of Harrie Verstappen, reflecting his eclectic interests in art, film, literature, music, and more. The site's focus is cultural and historical content presented in a playful "loony" style. While not widely popular or influential in the general online landscape, it holds credibility in its niche; its information has been cited in places like design blogs and even Wikipedia for specialized topics. The Looniverse can be seen as a minor but respectable trove of curated knowledge – **influential to a small circle of aficionados**, if not to the mainstream internet.

Sources:

- Harrie Verstappen bio, Skeptical Inquirer (Center for Inquiry).
- Domain registration and meta description for thelooniverse.com.
- Wikipedia reference citing The Looniverse (Wodehouse plays).
- Design History blog references to Verstappen's Saul Bass pages.