

Is Graffiti An Urban Art Form?

You can travel almost anywhere in the world, and you will probably see graffiti. Although graffiti art is usually more common in big cities, the reality is that it can occur in almost any community, big or small.

The problem with graffiti art is the question of whether it's really art, or just plain vandalism. This isn't always an easy question to answer, simply because there are so many different types of graffiti. Some is simply a monochrome collection of letters, known as a tag, with little artistic merit. Because it's quick to produce and small, it is one of the most widespread and prevalent forms of graffiti.

Although tagging is the most common type of graffiti, there are bigger, more accomplished examples that appear on larger spaces, such as walls. These are often multicolored and complex in design, and so start to push the boundary of whether they should really be defined as graffiti art.

If it wasn't for the fact that most graffiti is placed on private property without the owner's permission, then it might be more recognized as a legitimate form of art. Most graffiti art, however, is only an annoyance to the property owner, who is more likely to paint over it or remove it than applaud its artistic merit.

Many solutions have been put into practice around the world, with varying degrees of success. Paints have been developed that basically cause graffiti paint to dissolve when applied, or else make it quick and easy to remove. Community groups and government departments coordinate graffiti removal teams.

In some places you can't buy spray paint unless you're over 18. Cans of spray paint are locked away in display cases. In a nearby area the local council employs someone to go around and repaint any fences defaced by graffiti. A friend of mine has had his fence repainted 7 times at least, and it took him a while to find out why it was happening! Certainly the amount of graffiti in my local area has dropped substantially in the last year or two, so it appears these methods are working to a great extent.

But is removing the graffiti doing a disservice to the artistic community? Maybe if some of the people behind the graffiti art were taken in hand and trained, they could use their artistic skills in more productive ways. It hardly makes sense to encourage these artists to deface public property, and so commit a crime. But perhaps there are other ways to cooperate with the graffiti artists rather than just opposing them. Graffiti artists can create sanctioned murals for private property owners and get paid for it.

Maybe we need to start at a very basic level, and find a way to encourage the creation of graffiti art on paper or canvas, rather than walls. After all, who would remember Monet or Picasso if they'd created their masterpieces on walls, only to have them painted over the next day? Finding a solution to such a complex situation is never going to be easy, but as more graffiti art is being recognized in galleries around the world, we do need to try.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Steve Dolan loves art in various forms and mediums. Find out more about graffiti as an art form at <http://www.graffitithis.com> and if you have art that needs framing visit <http://www.pictureframesweb.com>.