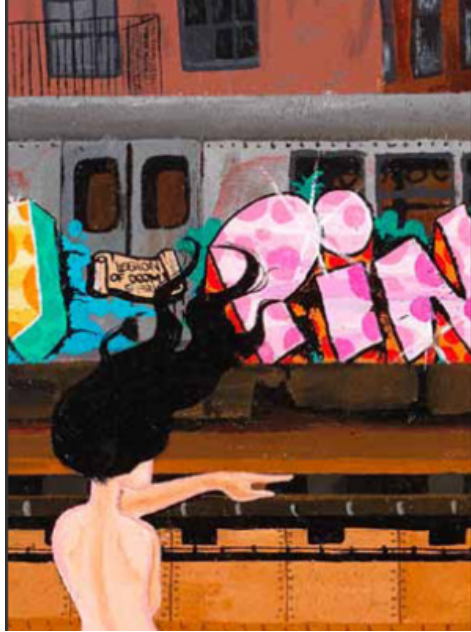


And if art
is a crime,
Let GOD
forgive all



CITY AS

GRAFFITI ART FROM THE MARTIN WONG COLLECTION

CANVAS

EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

MUSEUM
OF THE
CITY
OF NEW YORK

Frederick A.O.
Schwarz
Children's
Center



The Keith Haring Foundation Inc.

Introduction

This guide is intended to be used as a resource for teachers either preparing to visit the Museum of the City of New York's *City as Canvas: Graffiti Art from the Martin Wong Collection* or to use in the classroom following a class visit.

During the gallery tour of the *City As Canvas* exhibition, students will view highlights from the Museum's rich collection of 1970s and '80s graffiti art in New York. By analyzing the drawings, paintings, photographs and blackbooks collected by Martin Wong, students will learn about New York City artists known as "writers", like Keith Haring, Lady Pink, Lee Quiñones, and Daze, and the historical context in which their work was created. Students will be able to elaborate on the multiple perspectives surrounding street art, discuss the various styles represented, and will respond creatively to the pieces by drafting their own sketches.

The information and activities in this guide correlate to the guided tour, but may also be taught as stand-alone lessons utilizing the text, images, and suggested activities. Teachers are encouraged to adapt the information to the grade level and ability of their students. For further information or to schedule a visit to the Museum of the City of New York, please email the Frederick A.O. Schwarz Children's Center at schoolprograms@mcny.org.

Included in this guide:

- Curriculum Connections
- Key Terms
- Background Information on the Exhibition
- Artist Spotlights: Keith Haring, Wicked Gary, Daze, Futura and Lady Pink
- **Suggested Activity – Elementary School:**
 - **Gallery Review**
 - **In the Voice of the Artists**
 - **Write Your Own Exhibition Text**
- Bibliography

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Lead funding for the publication has been provided by the Haring Foundation.



SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

The following activities may be completed before, during, and/or after a visit to the *City as Canvas: Graffiti Art from the Martin Wong Collection* exhibition.

Introduction to the exhibition: Gallery Review and In the Voice of the Artists

Museum exhibitions are often reviewed in newspapers and online. Below is a link to a *New York Times* review of the exhibition excerpted for classroom review.

Distribute copies of the excerpts on the next page to your students as a preview of the exhibition. Ask students to consider the following questions:

- Why does the author describe the 70s and 80s as the “golden age of graffiti”?
- What was the author’s personal recollection of graffiti when he was growing up?
- What is the author’s opinion about the works of art on display?
- What is the author’s point of view on graffiti now? What words lead you to your conclusion?

After students visit the exhibition or look at the works contained in the packet or on the Museum’s Collections Portal, ask students to write their own review of the show or reflect on the artwork shown in the classroom. Their review should respond to the following guiding questions:

- What was your favorite part of the show and why?
- What did you learn about street art? What part of the show taught you something new?
- How did the photographs of New York either remind you of the city today or show you how it has changed?
- Would you recommend the show to your friends? Why or why not?

Many of the artists represented in the exhibition are still living and working in New York City. Watch the clip below to hear about the show in their own voices.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=F4ZKcBj0nz0

Consider these questions as you review the clip:

- Who was Martin Wong?
- Why is his name included in the title of the exhibition?
- Why were black books important?
- What do you think artist Lee Quiñones meant when he said “It’s a great feeling of arriving”?

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The New York Times

Writing Was on the Wall, and Some Still Remains

Graffiti Art at the Museum of the City of New York

By KEN JOHNSON FEB. 6, 2014

Some of my most vivid memories from occasional visits to New York in the late 1970s and early '80s are of the graffiti-covered trains roaring through the city's subway system. With their giant, pneumatic, spray-painted letters spelling names like Crash and Daze against apocalyptic backgrounds, those unauthorized moving murals amazed me. I thought they were beautiful and inspiring.

It was the golden age of New York graffiti. Never before or since has that illegal art form flourished so wonderfully.

"City as Canvas" views the movement through a relatively narrow but revealing window. Organized by Sean Corcoran, the museum's curator of prints and photographs, it relies on a collection of graffiti-related materials assembled by the artist Martin Wong from 1978 to 1994.

The closest you get to graffiti's living spirit here is in the artists' black, hardcover sketchbooks. In them you see the writers Blade, Daze, Crash, Sharp and others developing their signature styles and practicing their graphic skills. There's more freshness and joyful discovery in these books than almost any of the show's finished works.

Graffiti thrived in the 1970s and early '80s because the nearly bankrupt city government lacked the resources to stop it. With the city's return to solvency the golden age ended, and it's probably just as well that it did. It was bound to flag as the original writers aged. I'm probably not the only New Yorker thankful for today's clean, unmarked subway cars. But I still treasure my recollections of the time when graffiti roiled the town.

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/07/arts/design/graffiti-art-at-the-museum-of-the-city-of-new-york.html?_r=4

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Suggested Activity: Write Your Own Exhibition Text

Introduction:

As seen in the *City As Canvas* exhibition and in the Artist Spotlights included in this packet, graffiti often has an ephemeral quality, which is why artists like Martin Wong have worked diligently to collect and document the work. This exercise will introduce students to contemporary public art in their own neighborhoods.

Public Art in New York – Online Review:

The three websites listed below include spots to view public art. Review the websites to find legendary public art sites near your school.

- <http://www.timeout.com/newyork/art/street-art-top-ten-spots-to-see-street-art-and-graffiti-in-nyc>
- <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/graffiti-artists-turn-new-york-city-canvas-article-1.1508451>
- <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/30/arts/design/graffiti-art-of-the-city-from-the-bronx-to-brooklyn.html> (Note: 5 Pointz is currently being torn down for new development projects)

Before visiting one of these sites, do some research on the internet to learn more about the artist(s) who created the site, when they created it, and then describe the style or message conveyed in the work. Ask students to consider if the artist(s) style is similar to any of the works they recall seeing in the work displayed in the *City As Canvas* exhibition or on the Museum's Collections Portal.

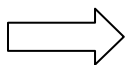
Public Art in New York – Site Visit:

Once students have researched a site close to their school, prepare students for a visit. Students should bring either sketchpads or paper on clipboard and pencils. Once at the site, discuss with students their impressions and how it feels to be in close proximity to a work of art created specifically for a public audience. How does this experience differ from viewing art in a museum? Following the discussion, students should sketch elements of the mural that impacted them.

Mural making:

Once back in the classroom, ask students to consider what they would include in a mural depicting their neighborhood or school. Begin with an individual brainstorm, where each student quietly comes up with a theme he or she would present to the class. Students can either sketch their own mural plans individually or a large sheet of paper can be used to integrate each student's idea as a whole.

The final work – the large mural or the individual pieces – can be hung in the classroom.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

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