

GOING PUBLIC: THE GUIDE TO CREATING ART IN PUBLIC SPACES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

**“WHEN I PAINT, THE SEA ROARS.
THE OTHERS SPLASH ABOUT IN
THE BATH.”**

SALVADOR DALI

IN THIS CHAPTER

Before you start painting the mural or molding the sculpture, you should embrace the motivation behind your goal. Whether it was other art that inspired you or empty and dirty streets that provoked you to think creatively, this is the first step in the right direction. Why do you want to paint a mural or build a sculpture? While you answer these questions, get familiar with this book and learn how it's organized so it efficiently serves its purpose.

Dream out and create a world where you want to live - A world where it's faster to walk than to drive; where music is louder than air conditioners; where buildings are not numbered but colored; where we learn new things every day; where chores are play, not work; where we don't just survive, but thrive; where we know neighbors by name; where walls do not divide, but unite.

This book will guide you through the wonderful and multifaceted process of working with walls, sidewalks, parks, and streets and transforming them into environments that invite all residents to step out of their houses and enjoy their neighborhoods.



This book has been developed while Joshua Mays, Chor Boogie, Pose 2, Decoy and Quest Skinner created "From Edgewood to the Edge of the World" mural in Washington, DC. Read and learn about our process from the start to the final unveiling.

"From Edgewood to the Edge of the World" was one of these journeys that resulted in a mural that invites the audience to a place that used to be just a grey parking lot. As we worked on this mural, we compiled our knowledge and experience to share with you. We hope to inspire you to look critically at your neighborhood and to envision projects that will beautify the public space that you share with your neighbors. Read on and follow the steps to create a mural on your block, in your neighborhood and in your city. The steps follow our approach of transforming public spaces through creative involvement of the local residents. These steps are not intended to be an exact recipe, but rather an outline of various elements that must be taken into consideration - Everything from physical structures to how the cultural diversity of an area may influence your art.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Each lesson focuses on an important element of public art including interactive sections, exercises, guides and games for public spaces. This book is intended to be used outside. Bring with you and study it while exploring your city.

This book is designed to teach our approach in eight lessons. Once you read this book and follow the steps as a student, you will be prepared to share your experience with others and help them facilitate their project.

The group exercises in this book teach everyone on your team. Some steps and lessons may be more important in your project than in others. In some cases you will even find that you learn or know more about certain topics than is presented here.

Share your experience with us and help us complete topics that you find insufficiently covered or missing. This book, just like the projects it describes, is an organic tool that grows and evolves through the readers' input.

CREATE PUBLIC ART

Successful works of public art are achieved when artistic boldness is mixed with sensitivity, compassion and willingness to teach and learn. The important thing to remember is to do the project for the right reasons and to be responsive to the environment and to the residents. Is your neighborhood too grey or boring? Would you like to see the



Work sessions are a good opportunity to meet the artists, learn their techniques and create a community art together assuring that everyone's vision and ideas are included in the project.

spirit and culture of its inhabitants represented in a visible way? Art is a great means to remember our cultural heritage or to represent how we feel about where we live.



Two men passing by one of the Jenkins' sculptures of Embed Series get distracted from their daily routine to interact with the artwork. Photo by Mark Jenkins



Young people bring fresh ideas to the table and creative energy for transforming grey and sterile walls into colorful and organic works of art while they work with their older neighbors forming intergenerational bridges within the community.

WHY DO I INSTALL SCULPTURES ON THE STREETS?

By Mark Jenkins

It's difficult to gauge the impact of the tape sculptures I've created and placed in the streets. I wouldn't say hijacking a traffic circle by converting it into a merry-go-round or turning parking meters into lollipops is creating a revolution. This is also the case with the "Embed" series. They can disappear pretty quickly. The reason I keep going back out there is more than a sort of Zen philosophy letting go of material possessions, although that might have something to do with it.

Despite the short lifetime of the installations, my art still does a good job of distorting the social fabric of the public space. Passersby popping out camera phones can quickly morph into makeshift paparazzi that bring in the city's government workers. On a few occasions fire trucks and ambulances have arrived on the scene. It is fascinating to watch my own installations to take city residents out of their ordinary daily life. Sometimes my work remains on the streets for a long time, sometimes the sculpture appears and disappears in hours or minutes. It reminds me of a wave that grows before it hits the shore and then quickly retrieves back into the ocean.

I can't say I've ever intended to have a message, but I'd be happy if the works I've put out there have gotten people to realize the plasticity of the city, that is, the power of the surreal to undermine the sort of solid societal structure that we are taught to follow.

CAN'T BE STOPPED**By Daniel "Pose 2" Hopkins**

One thing for sure is that public art, the type of public art that is unlicensed or not commissioned is on the rise. This beautiful rebellion of creative expansion is ever challenging the opinion of public space, its ownership, and how it can be used.

Metal and wood sculptures, stencil paintings and all types of art objects are now blossoming throughout our urban landscapes. Graffiti and its relentless "can't be stopped" energy has birthed an entire new generation of artists who thrive off of the same energy but have incorporated new tools and materials. The street artists have the ability to move more freely and therefore their work flourishes and constantly evolves.

When I started doing graffiti back in 1976 I was determined to become as famous as legendary writers Phase 2, Blade and Lee. These artists were writing their names prolifically throughout New York City with style and a sense of defiant dignity that I admired. I vowed to uphold the day I started writing through relentless bombing.

Graffiti is all about location and placement. One tag in the right place is worth more than a thousand scattered aimlessly. The beauty of public space is that it's public. Schools, playgrounds, trains, buses and bus stops are the open canvas terrain for graffiti and street artists. It's where masses of people come together and interact. Just as in retail business, the rule of success is location, location, location.

Corporations know this well, that's why subways and buses are plastered with advertisements. Graffiti writers and street artists are natural marketers without the huge financial budgets. Rooftops, overpasses, highways and street signs are the platforms for urban expression and "personal branding."

Decision-makers and authorities generally share a different point of view in regards to public space. The overall consensus is that graffiti and street art represent decay, decline and depreciation that ultimately results in increased violence. This I believe, is by and large the reason why there is a war against graffiti, street art and the use of public space.

My mission in life has always been to exemplify the power, beauty and necessity of graffiti in our society. Back in the 70's and 80's Hip Hop (comprised of Graffiti Artist, D-jay's, B-Boys and Emcee's) emerged within a hostile environment. I was then, and still am today the inventive voice of a generation seeking and defining its own identity through the creative process.



Spontaneous collaboration between Pose 2 and Chor Boogie in Dubai. This is the first aerosol mural created on a wall of a building in the United Arab Emirates.

Perhaps this is why the BBOY BBQ is such an important event. It is the one free annual event that celebrates creativity itself and that ingenious force that exists outside societies prescribed notions of what art is. Ultimately the BBOY BBQ is a vehicle for community inspiration and growth. Our goal is to uplift and ignite the people to advance creatively and cooperatively thus harvesting a sense of community responsibility worldwide.

ALMOST HOME

By Daniel "Pose 2" Hopkins

"I had a dream" one night I was flying across the universe
 but I don't really remember the ride.
 I was the copilot
 and Afrika Bambatta was my guide
 The closer we got to the planet
 the more I began to awake
 The surroundings were oh so vivid
 and our craft began to shake
 Without a word spoken it was evident and I knew
 we had arrived at Planet Rock
 the new home of Pose 2
 Our craft didn't touch down on a runway
 we wanted to enjoy the view
 The architecture was so beautiful and naturally intergraded
 with everything around
 There was this sense of connectedness between color sight and sound
 Every building was vivid with color and seemed to vibrate with a beat
 that
 harmonized your body from your head down to your feet
 This beat put you in sync to the planets purposeful grove
 Create, live and give... grow flow and build...
 Bambatta never spoke a word he just smiled at my amazement
 As I asked myself a question
 and
 the answer I realized
 I hadn't left earth at all...
 I was just viewing her
 with new eyes

WHY PUBLIC ART?

Ask a hundred people what art means to them, and you will get a hundred different answers. Art has been with humanity since day one. It is the driving force behind our progress, knowledge and spirituality. Art fulfills a wide range of roles in our society. The original art, such as cave paintings, totem poles and ornamental jewelry are all public art.

The primary role of art in our society is to:

- create a sense of identity
- build community and reciprocity
- provide physical and psychological satisfaction from the act of creation
- engage the nonverbal part of the brain
- enrich our natural and fabricated environments
- innovate, experiment, and educate
- deal with anxiety
- provide us with refreshment and pleasure
- put us in touch with important life concerns
- acknowledge and celebrate what we care about, and even
- understand higher levels of conscience.



Two children in Highland Park, NJ enjoy the section of Albus Cavus mural that was painted by RAIN and JOS-L.



BBOY BBO



Study this book and work on the activities in a group with your friends.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main motivation behind Mark's and Pose 2's art?
2. Why is it important to have art in public spaces?
3. Which places in your neighborhood would be a great place for installing art?
4. Is there a wall in your community that could be a new mural? Who do you need to talk to paint the mural?
5. What do you need to start working on a mural? Do you know friends with special skills that would like to help?

ACTIVITIES:

1. Name five of your favorite artists. How many of them are visual artists?
2. How many of them are artists that create in public space?
3. Write a three-paragraph essay titled "This is why graffiti should be illegal" and an essay titled "This is why graffiti should be legal."
4. Organize a portfolio of your artwork and write your own artist statement.
5. Survey all public art in your neighborhood. Who are the artists? What year were they created? Is there an interesting story associated with any of them?

NOTES

USE THESE PAGES FOR RESEARCH/SKETCHING

SUMMARY:

Modern urban neighborhoods come in all flavors, just like the residents who live in them. Whether located in a green park, in shiny downtown, or in an abandoned area, each neighborhood can benefit from public art. The benefits of art in our life are unquestionable. Therefore, get all your friends and neighbors together, build a team and get ready to go through this book to create your own mural or sculpture.

