

ART *mag* 011

by SYBARIS.



URBAN ART



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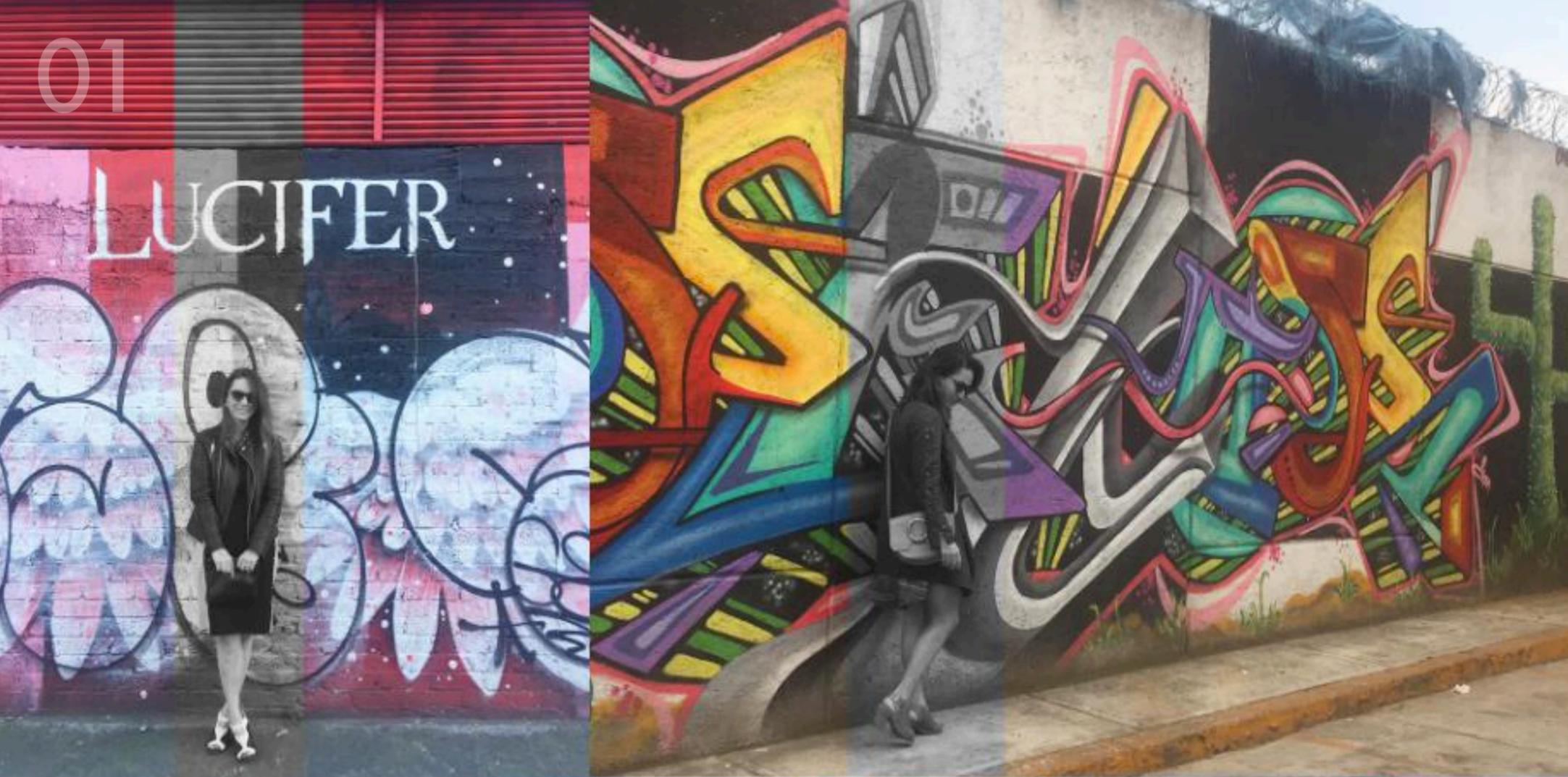
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Editor's note

My love for street art dates back to the time when I was living in Berlin. The streets were like a museum, a canvas to express, to protest, or simply to create. *I remain faithful to that love.*

It is the inherent disruptive spirit of the urban artists, the **quasi-vandal inside**, that yearns to find the *right spot and time to make things different*. I find it intriguing the way in which most of the street artists remain anonymous.



It pleases me to see how many more places today include street art in their communities: Miami, Milan, Hong Kong, and Mexico to name a few. It also makes me very happy to be a part of the development and enthusiastic engagement in the *upcoming urban art projects we are facilitating*.

Until we have the upcoming urban art projects completed and painted, here's a morsel for you to *experience this exciting creative movement*.

Regina



Walking among the streets of Berlin, pedestrians encounter a U-Bahn ticket machine with the face of a blonde woman, her mouth the ticket receptacle. Utility poles are covered by a larger-than-life-size photo of an angry (or happy, or surprised) individuals. A concrete dividing wall with an overhanging tree is painted with the face of a woman, the leaves and branches as a full head of "curly" hair. These are some of the examples of the street art found throughout Berlin, and the work of Mentalgassi.



The trio met in school, and like many young adults in the 21st century, become interested in new media techniques, experimenting with graffiti and attempting to stay ahead of the police, who made it their goal to remove Mentalgassi's artworks as soon as possible. As they completed school, they began to investigate other media for expression, including photography and printing.

What Makes Mentalgassi Unique

Photographs have been used in collage works for years, but in public locations, placed on—and utilizing the shape and purpose of—interesting objects was relatively unheard of when Mentalgassi began taking over the streets of Berlin.

They are quick to note that the quirkiness of Berlin has much to do with their success. It is uniquely unemotional, with supporters and opponents alike, neither of whom make any loud noise one way or the other about the images found throughout the city.

Notable Works by Mentalgassi

In Berlin, the trio has created *Metalheads*, *Public Intimacy*, and many other unnamed pieces. In Bilbao, the group moved their wit and works for a public exhibition, decorating balloons with faces for the Getxo Photo exhibition and setting them out in the harbor. In Serbia, they continued the human faced-balloons at the Novi Sad EXIT music festival, releasing them over the crowd.

Street Art Group

MENTALGASSI





The Rise of Urban Art

The term urban art, sometimes known as street art, is fast becoming a widely-accepted, and popular form of artistic expression. As an expression of pop art, *urban art comes in many styles and tells many stories.*

From large-scale works in public locations to smaller pieces suitable for private ownership and display, urban art is fast becoming more than just interesting works noticed by passersby. However, this ancient art is an idyllic blend of *creativity and articulation*, one which may have only recently been accepted as ART but has always been considered **EXPRESSION.**

Thousands of Years of Urban Art

Modern man began his artistic journey by *painting on walls.* From telling stories to commemorating events, art was a method to share history and express opinions. In ancient times, individuals shared poems and tales, along with images in some cases, of rumors and tales, fraught with dissatisfaction and scandal, in public places. Due to the danger of oppression and imprisonment, *much of this was done anonymously.* Public places were used to express personal thoughts, inform citizens of wrongdoing, and educate community members of happenings. *This could be considered the birth of graffiti.*



Revolution of Urban Art-The Turning Point

Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, a volatile, politically-charged world was wracked with wars, individual right struggles, and general dissatisfaction with governments. In a way to articulate their opinions, *young adults took to artistic expression while discovering their own views about the events happening in their world.* Over time, this raw, emotional, artistic style gained support, users began to organize, and the application of urban art matured in techniques.

There are multiple factors in the growth of urban art. One early step in urban art progression was *the acceptance of notoriety (like Parisian Blek Le Rat in the early 80's)* by previously anonymous artists. Some artists were willing to expand their artworks when a pen name they chose became notorious, and viewers even searched for their artworks. Additionally, the renewed focus on techniques and not just the message of the artworks attracted a larger group of urban artists. As enthusiasts began to discover the aesthetics of the work, *urban art received media attention and a growing interest by the public at large.*

Collectors, gallerists and other art professionals took notice of the beauty and skill of urban art creators. When Jean-Michel Basquiat participated in the "Times Square Show" in 1980, there was an immediate positive reaction by art enthusiasts; his work stood out, and it led to the ferocious development of a successful career, as Basquiat created artwork at a dizzying pace (doomed in those days of excess). Many urban artists today are much more skilled at balancing their creative initiative with the demands of an admiring market.

Urban art brings art to life for anyone who wishes to experience it. Maintaining a balance of art in public locations and galleries brings allows people who would not visit a gallery to observe works without stepping outside of their comfort zone and into an art gallery, a daunting place filled with mystique to the average citizen. Further, *the creation of prints allows collectors to obtain a copy of works seen in public areas for their enjoyment.*



The Power of Urban Art

Not only does urban art provide enjoyment to art enthusiasts offering stories in the expression, but it reaches even farther to revitalize areas with large-scale displays, *expand the reach of art to those who may have never considered themselves art lovers, redefining their personal feelings about what makes art*, and in some cases, invites viewers to ponder social, economic, and political situations in new formats. Community leaders are beginning to understand the power which urban art has in re-developing dying neighborhoods and communities, *and its effect on the perspective of individuals and groups on the community.*
Image truly is everything.



How Urban Art is Used

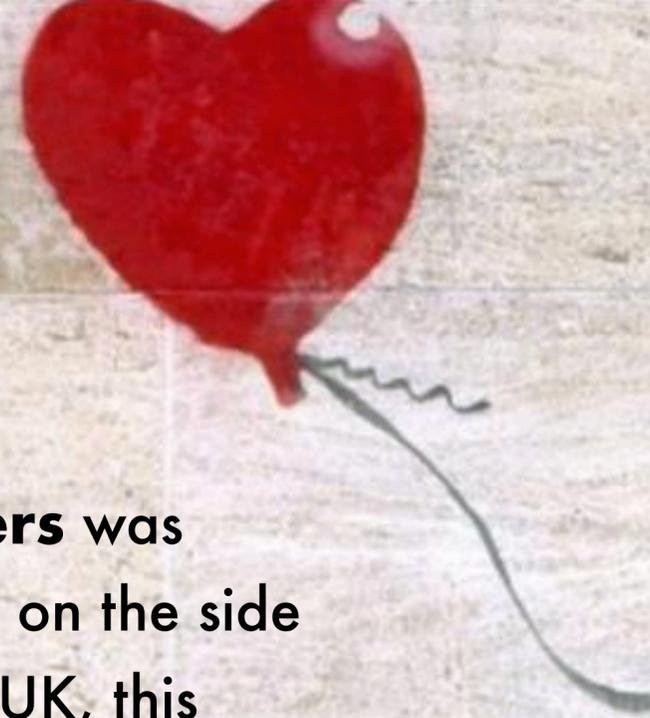
Direct statements: Whether it be to lay claim to an area, express fear or anger about an event, or to simply call attention to an empty space;

Political expression: Pivotal political events polarize communities. Urban art is often used to express support of or oppose candidates, parties, and specific rulings without fear of reproach due to anonymity.

Disenfranchisement: In a world where many youngsters feel as though they are ignored, urban art provides them with a voice.

Transform communities: They have been successful in leading the reinvention of neighborhoods which were avoided by businesses of all types.





BANKSY

*Worldwide Urban
Art Leader*

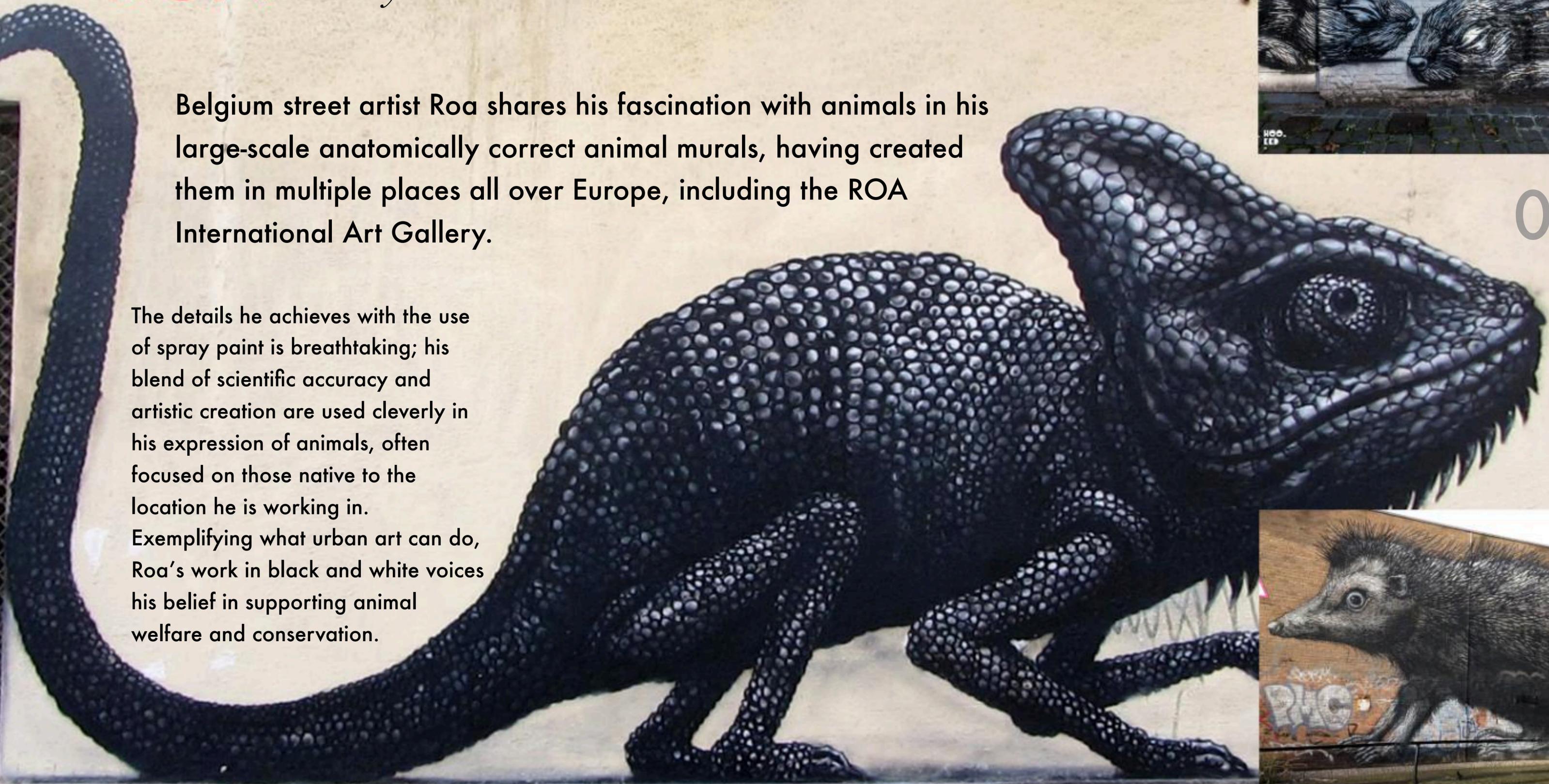
Banksy **Kissing Coppers** was originally spray painted on the side of a tavern in Brighton, UK, this 2005 controversial work features two British police officers in a passionate embrace. After several instances of vandalism threatened the artwork, it was finally removed and transferred to canvas in 2008, replaced by a duplicate. The canvas was later sold in 2014 at Fine Art Auctions Miami for a whopping \$575,000, *proof that notoriety helps sell works of art.*



ROA *Anonymus Artist*

Belgium street artist Roa shares his fascination with animals in his large-scale anatomically correct animal murals, having created them in multiple places all over Europe, including the ROA International Art Gallery.

The details he achieves with the use of spray paint is breathtaking; his blend of scientific accuracy and artistic creation are used cleverly in his expression of animals, often focused on those native to the location he is working in. Exemplifying what urban art can do, Roa's work in black and white voices his belief in supporting animal welfare and conservation.



08

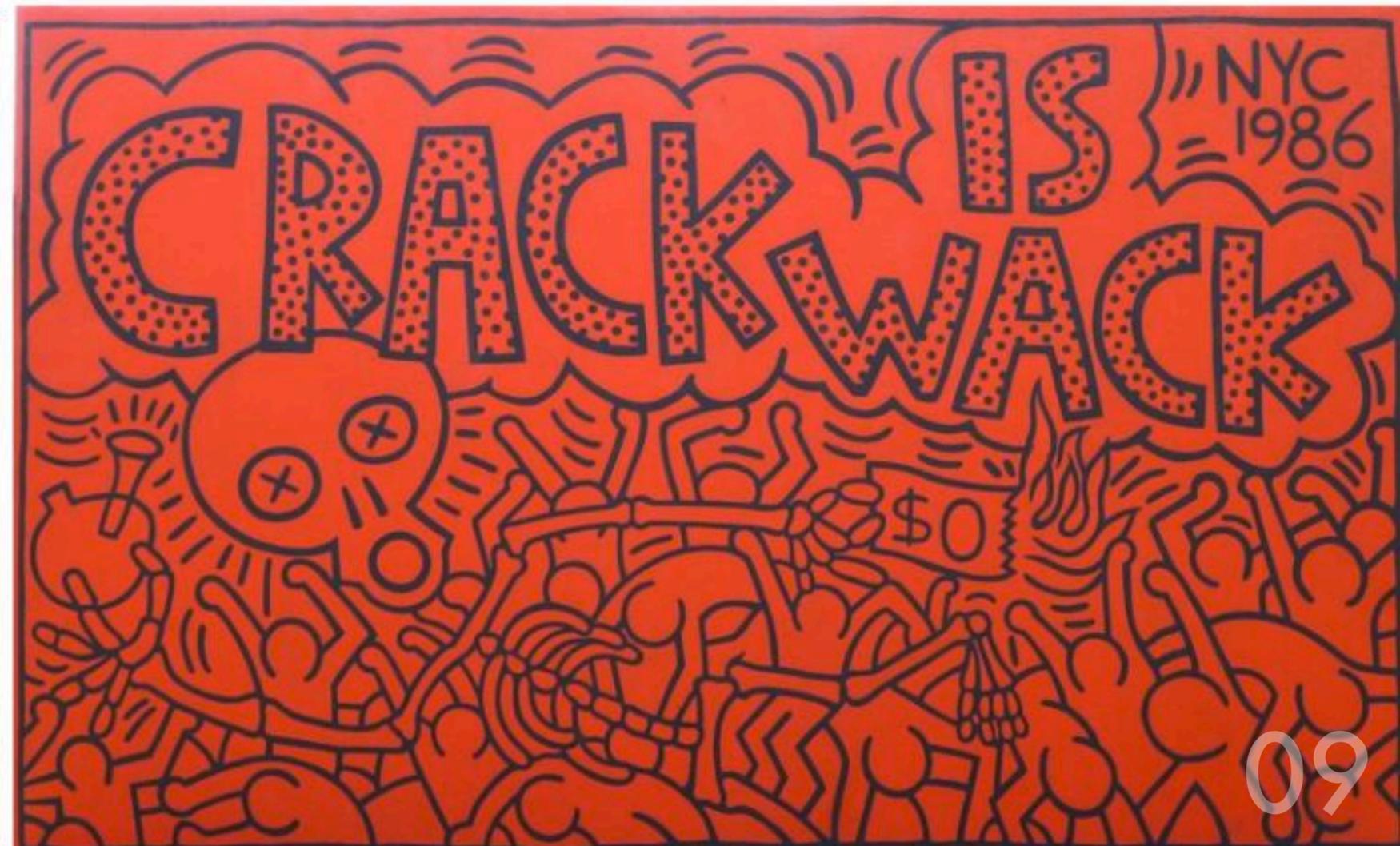
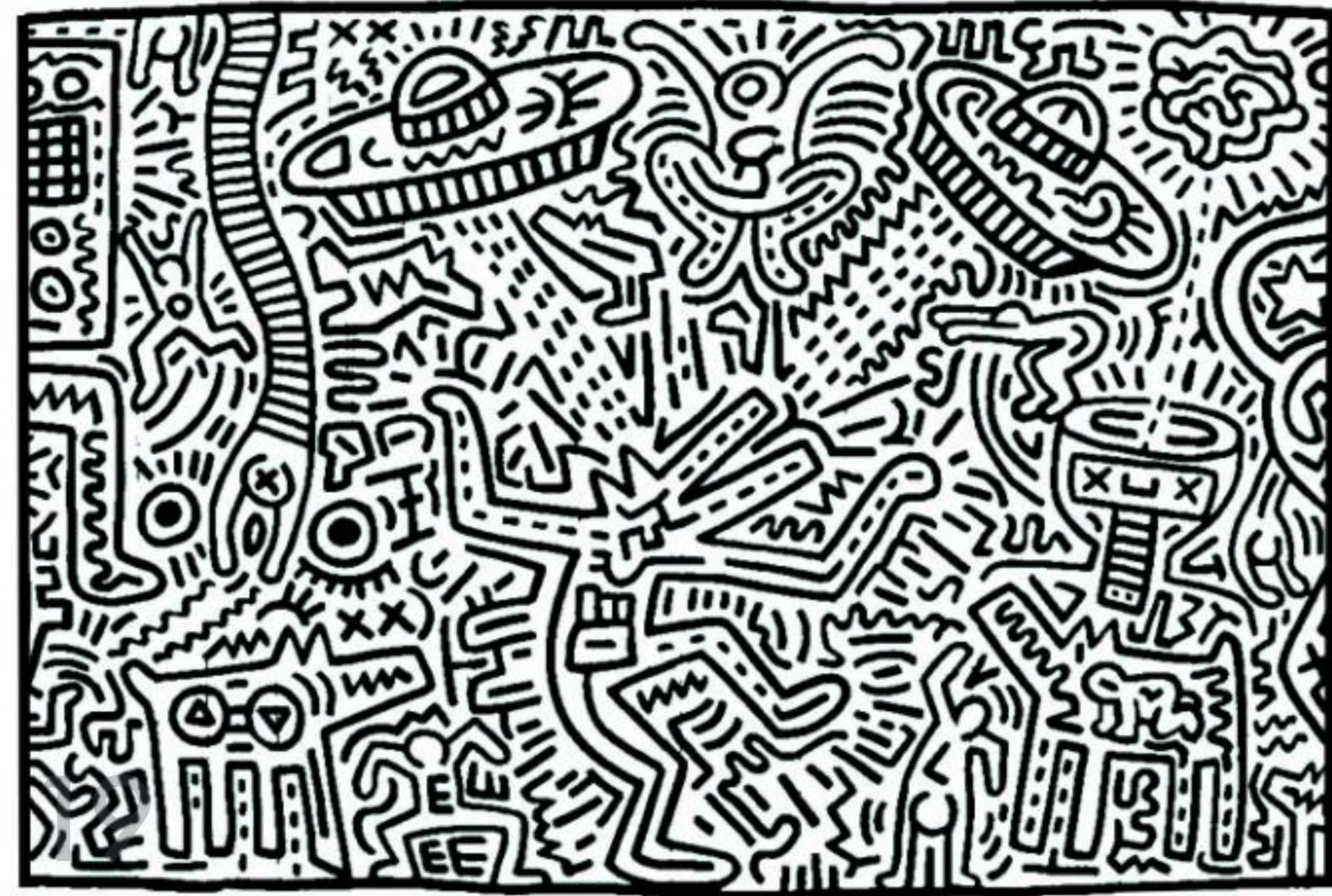


KEITH HARING

Trailblazer

American artist Keith Haring began his career in the NYC subway system. He started with a fine arts education, and after arriving in NYC embraced the local graffiti culture in the late 1970's.

He became notorious for the graffiti he created, which led to several arrests as well as a growing fan base. *His 1986 mural Crack is Wack* was successful in raising awareness of the ever-increasing addiction to the drug. Created during a time when the US government's war on drugs had reached new heights, the work both solidified Haring's *influence on urban art and the depth of drug addiction in the US.*



SMATES

Muralist

Smates (aka Bart Smeets) *Great White Shark* was painted on a concrete pillar in his native Belgium for the 2014 DayOne Festival and showcases his *skill in painting vibrant dimensional works which draw the viewer into the scene itself*. Having experienced some of the common challenges of other graffiti artists (negative attention and even arrest by the local authorities), he is focusing on paid work. It is interesting to note that *he considers himself a painter and not a street artist*.



SHEPARD FAIREY

Social Activist

Hope (2008) is perhaps the most iconic work to date by American urban artist Shepard Fairey, who created the work and later used it in support of then-candidate Barack Obama's campaign for U.S. president. Synonymous with Obama's run for leadership of the US, Fairey has gone on to create other *works which empower citizens to explore their personal beliefs and rally together to institute political change*. A notable participant in the Street Art movement of the 2000's, Fairey's works can be found in such prestigious places as the Smithsonian and Victoria & Albert Museum.



How to Include Urban Art in Your Art Collection

Urban art is a different breed of animal for many art collectors. However, it has exploded in popularity along with the increase in the display of large-scale public artworks. It is easy to understand why collectors, both young and old, would want to add these fascinating pieces to their homes and offices. *There is a big difference between a work of art on the side of a bur or abandoned manufacturing plant and artwork in one's office or living room.*

However, before you give up on the dream to add urban art to your collection, here are a few tips to help you accomplish this with ease:

SPACE, THE ULTIMATE LIMITER

Be clear about your space limitations. Since urban art can be larger-than-life, make sure you have an appropriate location for the work you have found. If you want to purchase the wall on which artwork has been painted, that's another story. This has been accomplished many times but can be a costly endeavor. Obtaining prints or photographs of urban artworks in public places (legally and ethically, of course) are a great way to get impressive art into your home and collection.

WHAT IS YOUR INTENTION?

Determine if the content of the art suits the display. Since many works of urban art offer a message, you may decide that the message may affect the atmosphere in which it is displayed. This is especially crucial in commercial uses, where an inciteful work may not generate the kind of feelings one wants in the business. Don't discount a work whose message doesn't ring true to you, or you don't subscribe to. *If you love the work for its aesthetics, that is reason enough to display it.*

COPYRIGHT MATTERS

Review copyright laws. The Visual Artist's Rights Act gives artists minimal protection for original works of art, so before you take a high-quality photo with the intention of creating a print from it, make sure you are not infringing on copyright protection. One option is to work with the artist directly to get access to the work in its original location and then recreate the work in another, more mobile, format. Work placed on private property in a public location is usually owned by the property owner, *so purchasing the real property (or improvement) gives you ownership of the artwork.*

BUY WITH CONFIDENCE

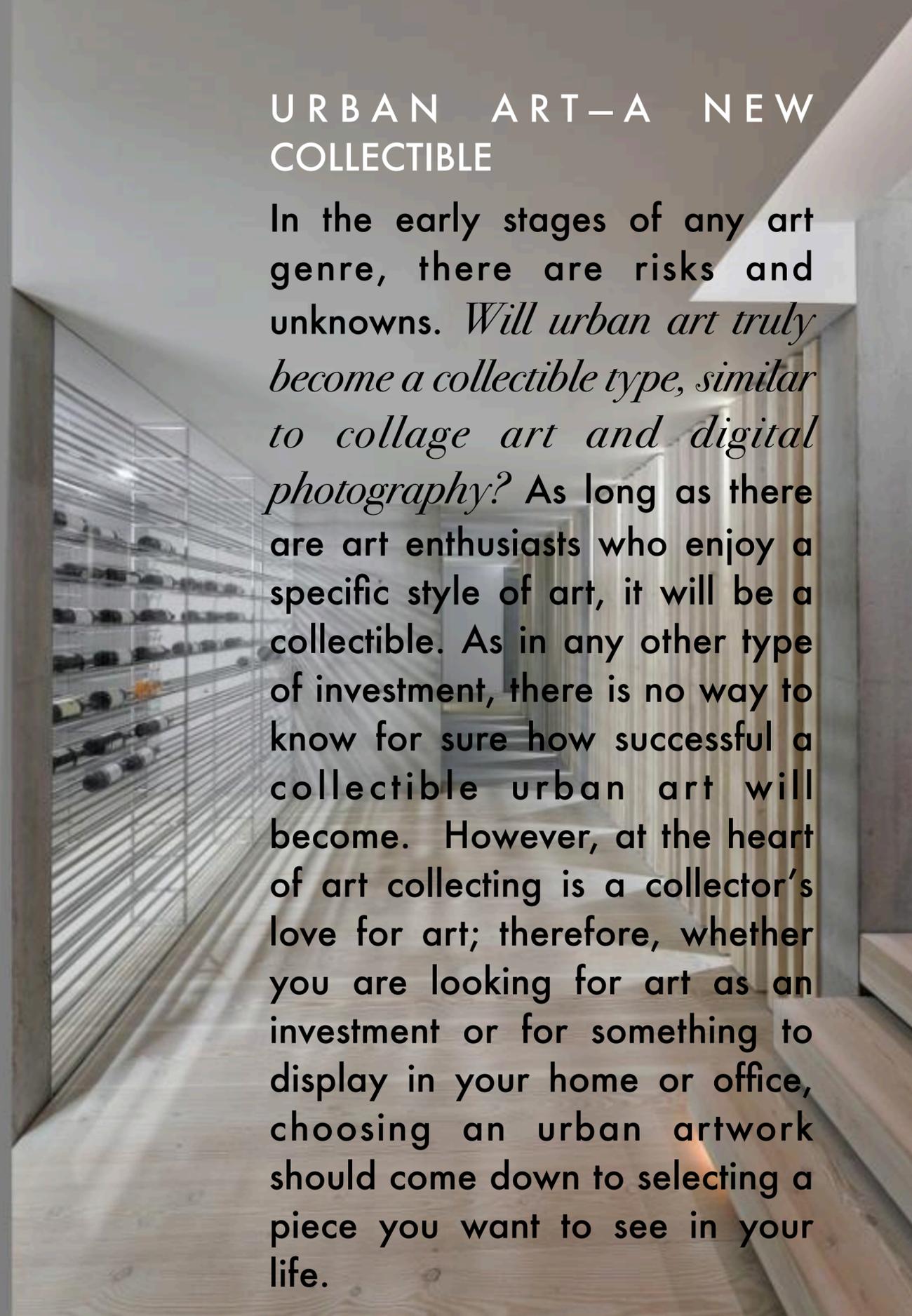
Purchase prints offered by the artist through a gallery or online platform. Galleries and professional art companies who sell works have already done some of the legwork and stand behind the pieces they sell. By working with a professional, you can be confident that the work has been obtained or reproduced legally, and its provenance and authenticity have been proven. Some urban artists sell the works through galleries and other sellers, while others only sell their artworks independently. Art can be illegally duplicated with such ease in today's technical world, so look for numbered editions to protect the value.

GET IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR

Consider purchasing pieces from emerging urban artists. When you begin buying works from them early in their career, you may establish a relationship with them where you have access to not only additional pieces, but they may be willing to create works specifically for your needs. If markets are controlled and reproduction limited, you can purchase a new piece which in a few years could skyrocket in price. *The artists themselves likely want to restrain the number of duplications to maintain (or increase) the value.*

URBAN ART—A NEW COLLECTIBLE

In the early stages of any art genre, there are risks and unknowns. *Will urban art truly become a collectible type, similar to collage art and digital photography?* As long as there are art enthusiasts who enjoy a specific style of art, it will be a collectible. As in any other type of investment, there is no way to know for sure how successful a collectible urban art will become. However, at the heart of art collecting is a collector's love for art; therefore, whether you are looking for art as an investment or for something to display in your home or office, choosing an urban artwork should come down to selecting a piece you want to see in your life.





Editor's Pick

RAFAEL
CANO GAR

An abstract painting with a complex composition. It features a bright yellow vertical stripe on the far left, followed by a wide section of blue and teal with horizontal brushstrokes. A dark, almost black vertical stripe is positioned in the center-right, and a dark red vertical stripe is on the far right. The background is white with a repeating pattern of overlapping circles.

14



In this
Featured
Collection,
**Rafael
Canogar**
is in search
of satisfying
the need to
communicate
the reality
and the
events of the
time and he
retakes the
figuration
without
forgetting
the findings
in his
abstract
adventure.



*The
handling
of color* is
fundament
al in these
works,
since it
helps to
highlight
the solid
structures
and the
imperfect
and rough
textures.



"The works do not pretend to be a wall, in any case they are fragment of a wall transformed into objects. They are invisible architecture. Canogar manages to circulate the air so that the form is not tight, but free and mobile. It is not the partial, internal forms that interest you, but the total form. That total form I see integrated by the format, structure, color, texture. The reiteration of all these elements is what constitutes the work. Rafael Canogar is an artist who is capable of contradicting himself, a loner an alchemist and Renaissance who fights with the past and the present, with his teachers and his contemporaries, an artist of his time." Miguel Angel Munoz, 2014.



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