

GRAFFITI: ART OR VANDALISM

It is a well-known fact that graffiti is most frequently considered to be synonymous with vandalism or even property destruction. Humans have been making works of art in public spaces since prehistoric times.

Modern graffiti began in New York City in the early 1960's. In that time, Graffiti artists started writing simple names or "tags". It grew rapidly as artists started to copy them and soon there were tags on walls everywhere. Later large murals appeared. For some artists graffiti is a reaction to the circumstances of their lives, while for others it is a more thought – out artistic expression. Either way, graffiti is very personal to the young person that produces it and it is an expression of his or her feelings.

The idea underlying the research was to investigate the realities of graffiti in Belarus according to the historic sources in comparison with the world's graffiti.

Actuality of this research is related to the increasing interest of teens to graffiti. Its influences come from pop culture, especially music and cartoons. Some of graffiti artists have become famous. Designer artists use the ideas of graffiti while creating clothes, footwear in advertising.

The object of this research is graffiti in Belarus and in the world.

The subject of this research is the analysis of the development of graffiti to a form of art in Belarus and the analysis of teens' opinions about graffiti as "street art".

The aim of the research is

- to analyze the development of graffiti from pictures on the walls of caves to modern paintings that are now considered valuable works of art all over the world;
- to analyze the development of graffiti in Belarus;
- to compare American and Belarusian styles of expression of emotions through graffiti;
- to analyze teenagers' attitude to graffiti;
- to create a "virtual graffiti museum".

The hypothesis of the research is the following: works of graffiti art arise mostly positive emotions in Belarusian teenagers. Graffiti can be used for cultural purposes. According to the aim of the research and suggested hypothesis, the following tasks were formulated:

- to give a general characteristic of graffiti as a specific genre of “street art”.
- to create a “Virtual Graffiti Museum”;
- to formulate the rules for graffitiists.

First of all, I analyzed how graffiti developed in America and Belarus and came to the conclusion that graffiti appeared in America much earlier in the 1960s and nowadays it is considered a form of street art. Museums and galleries present graffiti of many top artists. Unfortunately, our museums don’t exhibit works of graffiti.

In addition to this I completed a survey myself and asked 100 students of my gymnasias some questions about graffiti. At first, they were asked about their attitude to graffiti in general. 34% of students perceive graffiti as art, 64% consider that it depends on the painting, only 4% consider it vandalism. Moreover, 96 % admit that graffiti makes our city more colorful and brighter.

While working on the research, I created a “Virtual Graffiti Museum” of Minsk. The Google map shows the addresses of buildings in Minsk, the walls of which are decorated with graffiti. The map systematizes graffiti according to the festivals in which they were created. Visitors of the Museum can also read additional information about each graffiti. What is more there are “legal walls”, where you can paint graffiti without being fined for it. This work may be of great interest to the English teachers working in grade 10. Since according to the program students study the topic of “Street art”, the virtual Museum will be a great visual application. Moreover it is useful for teenagers, because they like modern art, for those who are interested in art, who wants to know more about the capital of Belarus. What is more, I propose some rules for graffiti writers or those who want to begin paint graffiti.

I know that some of my friends have already started painting graffiti, but they told me they had never thought about legality. I hope that the “Virtual Graffiti Museum” that I’ve created will help young people avoid problems with the law as all legal walls and places where you can paint graffiti are shown there:
http://google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1vQpakmoyYG1UU4cyqvNQUrt9P_RZV5vz&usp=sharing