



<https://quizlet.com/4jyp40>

Street art is nothing new. Throughout history, people have decorated the walls that surround them with words and images. But it's only recently that the art world has begun to take it seriously, with major exhibitions at leading galleries such as MASP in São Paulo, Brazil and MOCA in Los Angeles, United States. Specialised street art galleries have also begun to open up, including Lab Art in Los Angeles and the Boiler House in Cardiff, Wales. One of the best known street artists, Banksy, has recently received awards for his film *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, although his face doesn't appear on screen as he prefers to remain unseen. What is no secret is the soaring value of street art – buildings which feature Banksy's images have been known to double in value!

Not everyone is a fan, however. Police in Los Angeles are reported to have complained that the *Art in the Streets* exhibition at MOCA led to an increase in graffiti in the neighbourhood. Much graffiti is far from artistic, consisting mainly of 'tags', which are usually hurried and untidy symbols or letters that do no more than identify the person who made them. What concerns

critics is not just the ugliness of much graffiti, but the enormous sums required to clean up the mess. Cleaning graffiti off London buses, for instance, costs an estimated £10m every year. And then there is the very real risk of injury or electrocution to the taggers themselves as they trespass on dangerous areas, such as high buildings and railways lines, in search of new places to make their mark.

Stiff penalties, including prison sentences, have been introduced in order to deter taggers and there has been heavy investment in surveillance in order to catch offenders red-handed. There are, for example, 60,000 CCTV cameras on London buses alone. What this approach fails to do, however, is to distinguish between street art and graffiti. In London, even works by famous artists, such as Banksy, have been removed on the grounds that if they were left in place, this would be seen as condoning graffiti. Some cities have opted instead for a more educational approach. In the US city of Washington, DC, the Murals DC project trains local children in more creative street art in the hope that they will learn to care more both for art and for their environment.

Task 1

- 1 MASP is a major street art gallery in South America. T / F
- 2 Banksy has been successful in both the art and the film world T / F
- 3 Banksy tries to increase the value of buildings through his art. T / F
- 4 Police in Los Angeles have criticised the exhibition at the gallery there. T / F
- 5 Taggers spend large sums of money in order to practise their art. T / F
- 6 Tagging puts the lives of the general public at risk. T / F
- 7 Banksy has been removed from London in order to deter graffiti. T / F
- 8 The Murals DC project focuses on education rather than punishment. T / F

Task 2

Which paragraph of the text best matches the title below?

- 1 Official policy towards street art paragraph _____
- 2 The growing prestige of street art paragraph _____
- 3 Street art – the downside paragraph _____

Task 3

What are the best and worst examples of local street art or graffiti?

Do you agree that galleries which hold street art exhibitions are condoning graffiti?

What do you think is the best way of dealing with tagging?