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# Street Art World



## Synopsis

Street art and graffiti are a familiar sight in all our cities. Giant murals commemorate historical events or proclaim the culture of a neighborhood, while tagged walls can function simultaneously as a claim to territory and a backdrop for an urban fashion shoot. *Street Art World* examines these divergent forms and functions of street art. This strikingly illustrated book explores every aspect of street art, from those who spray it into being to those who revel in it on Instagram, from its place under highway overpasses to one on the austere walls of high art museums.

What exactly is street art? Is it the same as graffiti, or do they have different histories, meanings, and practitioners? Who makes it? Who buys it? Can it be exhibited at all, or does it always have to appear unsanctioned? Talking with artists, collectors, sellers, and buyers, author Alison Young reveals an energetic world of self-made artists who are simultaneously passionate about an authentic form of expression and ambivalent about the prospects of selling it to make a living—even a fabulously good one. Drawing on over twenty years of research, she juxtaposes the rise and fall of art markets against the vibrancy of the street and urban life, providing a rich history and new ways of contextualizing the words and images—some breathtakingly beautiful—that seem to appear overnight in cities around the world.

## Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Reaktion Books (November 15, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1780236700

ISBN-13: 978-1780236704

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 0.7 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #332,458 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #66 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Other Media > Graffiti & Street Art

## Customer Reviews


“Young’s *Street Art World* offers a welcome, extended, thoughtful, and insightful critical positioning of an amorphous universe of public, deeply conflicted creative expression. . . . the book in a distinction between street art and graffiti, Young changes the narrative arc and charts a

path for considering art routinely assigned to the margins of contemporary art. She adroitly maps and blurs the intersections between street art, graffiti, contemporary art, and advertising, framing the discussion around such concepts as streetness, performance, commodification, property, reputation, and public/civic space. Written in the first person, *Street Art World* conveys its critical arguments in a memoir-like fashion that amplifies the experience of encountering and intellectually processing the work in the street. Young's rich, smartly illustrated intervention draws on extensive interviews with artists and on the author's urban explorations around the globe. *Street Art World* is a must read for all who are drawn to vernacular visual culture. This is an exceptional book.

Essential. (Choice) "Strikingly illustrated from cover to cover, this well-arranged and intelligently researched text offers authoritative and comprehensive insight into this ubiquitous yet mysterious world. Tracing street art from its origins through to modern commodification, the text is a testament to its author's unflagging dedication to the subject. . . . This highly recommended publication strikes a pleasing balance between coffee table book and reference text and belongs on the bookshelves of casual art lovers and aficionados alike. (The Marianne de Pierres blog) "Young has been a peripatetic chronicler of free-range art for two decades. In *Street Art World* she weaves, through both exacting prose and evocative imagery, a captivating story about how this illicit and ephemeral place-making activity is undertaken, commodified and reinvented night after night in the world's most contested aesthetic battlegrounds of our city streets." (Bradley L. Garrett, University of Southampton) "Young takes us on a brilliant tour of street art, from graffiti upstart to art world darling. At once insightful, comprehensive, accessible, and copiously illustrated, *Street Art World* is must-read introduction to this significant new cultural phenomenon. (Iain Borden, Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London) "How street art evolved till today is a complex story with many paradoxes at play at all times. Young's elegant yet plainly spoken examination and treatment gives the reader clarity on the artists' motivations to put their art in the street, society's ever-changing attitudes toward it, and the rather stunning impact it is having on neighborhoods and our ideas about contemporary art around the globe. (Steven P. Harrington and Jaime Rojo, Cofounders, Brooklyn Street Art) "Young has a great depth of knowledge about street art, the artists who make it, and the cities that contain it. She's curious and passionate about her subject. But what makes this book so special is Young's analysis of how this all plays in the marketplace, and her clear-eyed take down of the commercial art world. (Sophie Cunningham, author of *Melbourne*) "How do you begin to

describe a decentralized movement which is evolving in real time, largely secretively, and constantly being erased. In *Street Art World* Young achieves something remarkable; a well written, comprehensive study of this vast movement as told through its central figures. *Street Art World* is well-researched and smart, written by someone who truly understands the nuances of this vast artist community. (Ian Strange, artist) "Young has gone to great lengths to research the totality of street art, from the internationally recognized names, to the silent practitioners of subgenre styles. The scope of her knowledge is laid bare for the reader in *Street Art World*, a wonderfully comprehensive and accessible look at the inner machinations of an often insular practice. . . . It looks at the inner workings of an international art movement finally coming into its own.

Young's deeply felt affinity for the genre and its practitioners gives her writing a sincerity and nuance that guides the reader through the many aspects of street art that the artists themselves debate on a daily basis. (Jordan Seiler, PublicAdCampaign)

Alison Young is the Francine V. McNiff Professor of Criminology at the University of Melbourne, Australia. 

Just what my daughter in law wanted for Christmas, she loved it.

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