



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANJALI MENON

GRAFFITI ON THE WALL

New York is home to some of the finest art in the world, but not all of it can be found in museums and galleries. **Anjali Menon** walks through Queens, where art has taken to the streets



Artist: Unknown



Artist: Epicuno

These days, you don't have to spend a dime to see art in the Big Apple. In the same way that a visit to the Museum of Modern Art is de rigueur for any art-loving traveller, so is a tour of the city's growing outdoor street art 'galleries'. Graffiti today no longer has the stigma it once used to have. Gone are the days when artists in New York City snuck around to find an unclaimed spot on a wall or subway tile. Today, private organisations invite artists to contribute work, and buildings participate in programmes that allow up-and-coming and prominent artists to make their mark on neighbourhoods.

The Welling Court Mural Project invites over 40 artists from all over the world to transform the neighbourhood of Astoria, Queens into a public art experience. On any given weekend, clusters of camera-toting tourists and locals can be found capturing these unique murals which, in a year, will be whitewashed in preparation for the next batch of artists. Verve takes you on a virtual tour of some of the art that is currently on display...



Artist: Kidlewnyc



Artist: Dasic Fernandez



Artist: R. Nicholas Kuszyk



Artist: Crisp



Artist: Chris Soria



Artist: Zedi



Artist: Toofly



Artist: Lady Pink

IN CONVERSATION WITH STREET ARTIST TOOFLY

One artist who has participated in the Welling Court Mural Project is a native New Yorker who goes by the name of Toofly. She became interested in graffiti culture at the age of 15, encountering a variety of styles on her commute from her home in Queens to school.

GETTING INTO GRAFFITI I was a young teen with the urge to tag walls, and draw with a marker in my neighbourhood Corona. I enjoyed the idea of painting really big, fast, and with a bigger meaning.

ON HER UNIQUE STYLE Fast, fluid, natural, organic, tough, strong, sharp...I think style comes from within, mixed with your life experiences, and the environment and time you grew up in. Many of the things that inspire

me are: feelings, music, love, friends, art, life battles, beliefs, family morals.... It all turns into this creative force inside you. A craft you master through time is to be able to express the visual vibration of your higher spirit.

ON HELPING GIRLS EXPRESS THEMSELVES THROUGH ART I focus on the ladies because I believe we have something special that can help create balance in our world, through the arts. Visual and social community work inspires minds to be self-aware of their 'dopeness' and wisdom. Their dreams are just as important as ours, and as a collective of artists and educators, we can help them to use these to transform their lives in a much more meaningful way. ♡