

The history of graffiti



Complete the text with the correct form gerund or infinitive.

The history of graffiti goes back to ancient times. The first _____ (draw) on walls appeared in caves thousands of years ago. Later the Ancient Romans and Greeks wrote their names and protest poems on buildings. Modern graffiti appeared in Philadelphia in the early 1960s. Darryl McCray ('Cornbread') is widely regarded as the father of modern day graffiti. The story tells that Cornbread fell in love with a girl named Cynthia Custuss and started _____ (write) Cornbread Loves Cynthia _____ (get) her attention. He enjoyed it so much that he continued to tag Philadelphia with his name.

By the late sixties graffiti reached New York. The new art form took off in the 1970s, when

people began _____ (write) their names, or tags, on buildings all over the city. In the mid seventies it was hard to _____ (see) out of a subway car window, because the trains were completely covered in spray paintings known as throw ups, letters, masterpieces. In the early days, the taggers were part of street gangs who were concerned with _____ (mark) their territory. They worked in groups called 'crews'. The term 'graffiti' was first used by The New York Times and the novelist Norman Mailer. Art galleries in New York began _____ (buy) graffiti in the early seventies.

But at the same time that it began to be regarded as an art form, the mayor of New York declared the first war on graffiti. By the 1980s it became much harder to write on subway trains without _____ (be) caught, many established graffiti artists began using roofs of buildings or canvases. The debate over whether graffiti is art or vandalism is still going on.

For decades graffiti has been a springboard to international fame for a few. Jean-Michel Basquiat began spraying on the street in the 1970s before _____ (become) a respected artist in the '80s. The Frenchman Blek le Rat and the British artist Banksy have achieved international fame by _____ (produce) complex works with stencils, often making political or humorous points. Works by Banksy have been sold for over £100,000.