

The City That Loves Street Art

How Rio de Janeiro transformed its streets

If you walk through the streets of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, you'll immediately notice something extraordinary about the city: the street art. All around the city, the walls are covered in colorful murals and bright paintings. In the past, this street art was illegal. But in 2009, the city passed a law allowing street art on private buildings if the owner gives permission. In 2014, Rio de Janeiro became the first city in the world to legalize graffiti in places such as skate parks and the walls that surround construction sites.

People who want to create street art in Rio de Janeiro can't just paint any wall with any picture,

though. They still have to respect some rules. Street art and graffiti are legal, but just signing a name on a wall is not. And if an artist wants to create a picture on the walls of someone's house or shop, the artist must ask the owner first. But getting permission might not be too hard. Street art is very popular throughout the city, both with the residents and with visitors. Many tourists come to Brazil just to see it. They can even take special guided street-art tours through Rio de Janeiro. The city's mayor has also set up a special online street-art project. Volunteers can join the project and travel around the city, taking photos

of the street art. They then upload their photos onto a street-art website, along with other details, such as the location and the artist. This means that when someone paints a new piece of art over an old picture, there is still a record of what was there before.

In some communities, street artists have set up art schools and organized festivals to teach young people more about their art. They have even worked together with the police to paint murals on the walls. Street art in Rio de Janeiro has not only made the streets more colorful and exciting, it has also helped to bring communities together.

An artist paints a mural during a street art festival in Rio de Janeiro.

16 Before you read, discuss in pairs.

Based on the title and the photo, what do you think the reading is about?

17 Learn new words.

Find these words in the reading. What do you think they mean? Look for clues in the text to explain each word's meaning. Then listen and repeat. **TR 90**

graffiti	illegal
permission	to respect

18 While you read, think about the main idea of the reading. **TR 81**

19 After you read, work in pairs to answer these questions.

1. What's unusual about Rio de Janeiro?
2. What became legal in 2009?
3. Give examples of places where graffiti is legal in Rio.
4. What is the purpose of the street-art website?
5. How have street artists helped certain communities?

20 Work in pairs.

What's the main idea of this reading? Underline the correct answer. Then check the other details that are mentioned.

- Some of the laws about street art in Rio
- Details of different street-art projects
- A description of the positive effects of street art in Rio
- A discussion about the pros and cons of street art
- Ways that tourists can enjoy street art in Rio
- A description of some of Rio's most famous street art

21 Discuss in groups.

1. What do you think of when you look at the street art in the photo? Do you like it? Would you like to see art like this outside of your home or school?
2. Imagine that you want to create street art. What images will you use, and how will you use them? What message will your art have?
3. What places should never be covered with street art? Why?