

LIVEWORKSHEETS









Graffiti's softer side

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?

What is public art?

What do you think of it? Does art improve the appearence of a certain area?





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Assignment



SPEAKING Work in pairs. Choose one of the photos and describe it to your partner. Use the words below to help you.

Nouns boxer branch bus cover message parking meter statue street tree trunk wool writing

Verbs attach cover knit

Adjectives brightly coloured patterned striped



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Assignment



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Assignment

The statue of Rocky outside the Philadelphia Museum of Art is very popular with tourists, who often stop to take their photo in front of it without bothering to visit the museum itself. This irritated Jessie Hemmons, so last month the 24-year-old artist knitted a bright pink jacket and put it on the statue of the boxer. She chose the colour because it attracts attention. On the front of the jacket, Jessie has knitted the words 'Go see the art'. Jessie hopes that her message will result in more people visiting the gallery.

This form of street art has become known as 'yarn bombing'. The craze is believed to have started in 2005, when Magda Sayeg was working at Raye, her shop in Houston, Texas. One day she decided, just for fun, to knit a blue-and-pink cover for the shop's door handle. She loved it, and – unexpectedly – so did her customers. Pedestrians stopped on the pavement outside the shop to photograph it, and even motorists slowed down to take a closer look. Their reaction inspired Magda to make covers for other objects in the street, such as a stop sign, a lamp post, a parking meter – and even an entire bus, which took a whole week to complete! She decided to set up a group of knitters, which she called 'Knitta Please'. Photos of their creations kept appearing on blogs and social networking sites and the craze soon spread. There are now yarn bombing groups in dozens of countries and they have covered bus stops, bicycle racks, benches, phone boxes and even fountains! Like most types of street art, the works are temporary and begin to fall apart within a few weeks, so yarn bombers photograph and film their works and upload them to the internet, where everybody can see them.

Some of the men who want to have their photos taken with Rocky are disappointed when they see the jacket, but Jessie is pleased that they react that way. She believes that most street art is done by men and that yarn bombing is a more feminine activity. But not everyone approves of the new form of street art. Some people argue that if it is done without permission, then covering public objects in wool is vandalism and littering. That may be true in the eyes of the law, but the police appear to take a relatively relaxed attitude to yarn bombers. They might interrupt them if they see them at work in the street, but yarn bombers say the police are more likely to find their activities amusing than view them as criminal.

However, yarn bombing has landed Polish artist Agata Oleksiak in serious trouble. Agata – or Olek, as she calls herself – has been an active artist since 2003, and has covered cars and diggers in wool, as well as a whole train in her native city of Łódź. Her work has been shown in museums and galleries around the world. But when Olek knitted covers and attached them to sculptures in an underwater museum near Cancún, the Mexican authorities were not very happy. Like Jessie Hemmons's jacket, Olek's covers had a political message: she wanted to draw attention to endangered species such as the whale shark. But the director of the museum claims that Olek may herself have harmed the marine life that grows on the sculptures. Olek is puzzled by the reaction. She claims that her message is a positive one and sees herself as a professional artist. She believes that her creations are as good as the paintings you see in the world's best art galleries, and if anyone calls her work 'yarn bombing', she gets quite upset.

Whether you see yarn bombing as a bit of fun that brightens up drab cities, or as a form of high culture with a serious message, it is a craze that is likely to continue.

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Assignment

Read the article and match the photos (A–D) with two of the artists.

Jessie Hemmons A C

Magda Sayeg B D

Agata Oleksiak ___ ___

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Assignment

Reading Strategy

1. Multiple-choice questions are always in the same order as the information in the text.
2. If there is a question testing the main idea of the text, or the writer's overall opinion, it will come last.
3. The correct option will match the meaning of the text but use different words. Make sure the other options are not right or are not mentioned in the text.
4. If you can't decide between the options, an intelligent guess is better than no answer.



Read the Reading Strategy. Is there a question about the main idea or the writer's overall opinion in the questions in exercise 4?

Question 6

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For questions 1–6, circle the correct answers (a–d).

1 Jessie Hemmons 'yarn bombed' the statue of Rocky because

a she wants people to take photos of it.

b she thinks too many tourists come and see it.

c she wants more people to go and see the paintings in the museum.

d tourists find it annoying.

2 Why did Magda Sayeg knit a cover for the door handle of her shop?

a For her own amusement.

b To attract customers.

c Because someone passing the shop suggested it.

d To set an example to other yarn bombers.

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Assignment

3 Jessie thinks that yarn bombing is different from other forms of street art because

a its popularity has spread via the internet.

b it's temporary and soon disappears.

c it looks much nicer.

d it's less masculine.

4 What is the police's usual attitude to yarn bombing?

a They make it clear that it is against the law.

b They think that yarn bombers are strange people.

c They hardly ever try to arrest yarn bombers.

d They tolerate professional artists, but not amateurs.

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Assignment

5 Agata Oleksiak isn't very pleased

a because she was prevented from knitting covers for objects in a museum.

b because people don't realise that she started yarn bombing before anyone else.

c if galleries don't accept her work.

d if people don't see the difference between her work and yarn bombing.

6 What is the writer's overall opinion of yarn bombing?

a It is wrong because it's against the law.

b The writer doesn't express a personal view.

c It's a more feminine version of graffiti.

d It deserves to be called 'art'.

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Assignment

VOCABULARY In paragraphs 1 and 2, underline ten things (excluding vehicles) that you might find in the street. How many more items can you add to the list?

statue, pavement, stop sign, lamp post, parking meter, bus stops, bicycle racks, benches, phone boxes, fountains
Students' own answers

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Assignment

SPEAKING Work in pairs. Discuss the questions. Use the phrases below to help you.

Arguing your point

In my opinion, ... As I see it, ...
It could be argued that ... I agree with you.
I see your point, but ... That may be true, but ...

1 Do you think that yarn bombing is art, or vandalism and littering? Why?
2 What about other forms of street art, such as graffiti and chalk drawings on the pavement? Are they art or vandalism? Give reasons for your opinion.
3 Tell your partner about some street art you've seen that you either liked or didn't like, and say why.

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Homework

Choose any kind of form of street art and present it:

- What type of art it is?
- When did it appear?
- What are the main characteristic of the art?
- Name some well know works and artists of this type of art.
- Show some examples.
- Give your own opinion about the form of art.

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