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Communication Design Theory

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Tag by Taki 183

One does not know the impact they may have or bring to the artistic culture and Taki 183 was a major influence on what we may call Graffiti today. Born and raised in Washington Heights 183rd street, Taki 183 came from a neighborhood in which did not have much, which I should know since I was also born and raised in Washington Heights, just a couple of streets away on 175th Street. In 1970 Taki 183, decided to perform his work of art by spreading it across Manhattan, he decided that he would tag his name around New York and make his artwork be seen throughout his area. "Tag" by Taki 183 brought forth an entire movement of graffiti throughout the 1970's as it inspired even the most simplistic designs such as name and neighborhood to be considered a form of graffiti and art. It is so inspiring due to its purpose filling so much more than one may think. Everywhere I go in my neighborhood I see Taki 183 inspired art as everyone from Washington Heights that is interested in Graffiti or tagging, do a similar design as the original, where they place their nickname along with their neighborhood or gang. While Taki thought that

all they were doing was representing themselves, they actively started an entire movement which ended up giving him the title of “father of graffiti”.

Taki incorporated his own version of Graffiti during the summer of 1969, which he began to do after his friend had let him know about someone from Inwood that was writing his name and street number “JULIO 204”. Demetrius also known as Taki 183rd, found this to be very interesting and was inspired the idea, he then began to do his own version of that style, and began to write Take 183 a whole year later while attending high school in Midtown Manhattan. He wrote his Tag Taki 183 on the 1 line on his way to and back from school. What others may have viewed as vandalism, became part of the culture of New York especially, in Washington heights. It doesn't matter where in Manhattan you go; you will always find Taki Inspired graffiti in every single hood that has some form of Graffiti, especially in low-income areas like project buildings, you will always see someone tag their name inside that building or area to show that they were there just like Taki 183rd himself. The reason in which Julio 204 did not receive the recognition he deserved was due to the fact he never left his own neighborhood to tag his name in different areas like Taki did. Taki doing this brought more media attention towards him and Julio 204 just became a name left in the dust, although he was the true inspiration to everything. Going back to the reading on Bruno Munari and his aspect on how design connects with the public, Takis art correlates to this topic as it was spread across Manhattan and proved to bring a cultural influence on the meaning of graffiti in New York. It became an icon to New York to the point in which everyone wanted to do the same thing and place their name and where they from on their tag.

Till this day, Taki 183 does signatures and tagging for his fans, although he does not embrace the name of “father of graffiti” he still embraces his fans and begins to tag things again for them when they ask. Demetrius is now 57 yet, until this day, he embraces the movement he did on his name and tag and signs it for others that know about it. Back in the 1970s, not only did Demetrius tag his name on walls, but he also ended up tagging his name on the side of a train station which one can say is a major influence to subway graffiti as well. If it were not for Taki’s work of art, New York would not have the look in which it has today when you enter the projects or any form of MTA station. No matter where you are in New York, you will eventually see some type of graffiti, whether it is a name tag or a crazy form of art, Taki 183 inspired the movement in New York after his inspiration from Julio, which had caught my interest as it pertains to what I see on an everyday basis in my neighborhood.

Although Taki 183rd did not know the influence he would make, he ended up doing something that became a norm in NYC. Everyone from a hood that they wanted to represent, would tag their name and neighborhood in random areas in NYC just to show that they have been there before. The crazy part about Taki’s fame is that he did not really search for it like that, it was a reporter who saw one of his

random tags and decided to make it public to everyone, and ever since that It became what it is today.



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