

ENG 092
CATW Practice Essay 3

Assignment

Begin by reading the passage below:
Graffiti Is Young, Cool, Creative – Let It Happen
By Lady Pink

Last summer, the New York Police department barged into my house in Queens, arrested my husband on vandalism charges and took away art supplies, photo archives and many of my prized possessions while I watched for hours, powerless to stop them.

For a few years in the early 1980s, I made my name as a graffiti artist, painting on the New York subways. But since then, I have been working on commission instead, making a living as an artist and muralist through a company I started with my husband.

This was not the first time I had been raided by the police – I successfully fended off charges 10 years ago – but I don't know what set it off this time. It could have been publicity around a book called "We Own the Night" that features the work of about 100 street artists in an abandoned subway station: one page of artwork was wrongly attributed to my husband, Roger, who was arrested for graffiti when he was young. To this day the police have not returned my archives, CDs, photos or artwork. They have over 800 cans of my spray-paint and they took almost a hundred books from my shelves.

This is all to say: Graffiti scares this city. They say that artists like me and my husband just inspire young people to become vandals. If graffiti is inspiring, it's because it's fun, cool and does not take formal training. Young kids who paint on the walls are screaming to be heard and, yes, we all started that way. My husband and I have to clean graffiti off of my property from time to time, but I see it as the price we all pay for urban living. A bit of rebellion is something we should champion as a society. Somebody has to question the status quo – or we'll grow stagnant.

I, for one, would also rather see the creative outpouring of our youth on the walls instead of the billboards and advertising inflicted upon us around every corner. The art world has already acknowledged the value of it. Street art has become wildly marketable and is celebrated by institutions like the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of the City of New York, which has a show up this summer. By encouraging kids to create art in this medium – and not just tag their names across walls – we could empower generations. Who knows? They might even be able to make a living doing what they love.

Printed on July 11, 2014 in *The New York Times* as part of the series, "When Does Graffiti Become Art?"

Read the passage above and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author's most important ideas. Develop your essay by indentifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced. Remember to review your essay and make any changes or corrections that will help your reader follow your thinking. You will have 90 minutes to complete your essay.