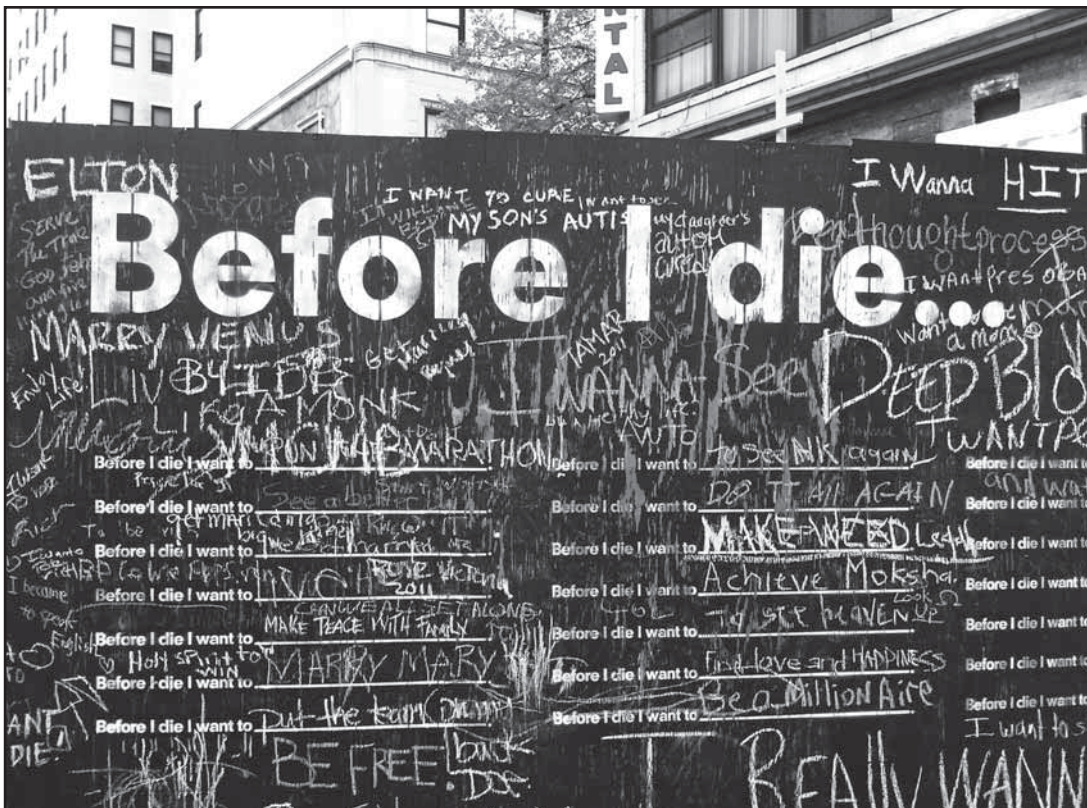


Urban Art and Design



Sean Scanlan, "Before I die," 2011.

I think artists almost always end up turning to what's around them, what's in their environment or outside their window.

Susan Rothenberg, Artist

Historically, walls have exhibited the voice of the people. My earliest paintings were made on walls at night. [. . .] As my works evolved, be it paintings, signatures, or even the documentation of these early ephemeral artworks throughout the city walls, the works took on the nature of personal journals based on empirical experiences.

José Parlá, Artist

Art and design *and* New York City, what an enormous topic! There is simply too much to cover, because, first of all, art itself covers so many types and subtypes, from painting to sculpture to performing arts and museum culture. For many decades, New York City has been at the epicenter of U.S. arts and design, especially for fashion, theatre, music, and photography. And tourists from all over the world visit New York City to marvel at the vast array of architectural styles.

In short, New York is a global artistic, creative, and design hub. In this chapter we cannot possibly cover all the arts. Instead, we have selected four subjects as a way to raise awareness and promote further discussion: graffiti, photography, architecture, and music. We encourage students to continue to research art and design, and so, with this in mind, we have additional entries in the appendix of this book.

We start with graffiti. This form of writing, or drawing, is very old and very contentious. From the early cave paintings in Lascaux, France, to etchings on religious walls in Jerusalem, to street corners in Boston in the 1950s, to the brightly colored murals put up on subway trains in New York City in the 1970s, people have been writing on surfaces to send a message. It might not be a stretch to say that people have been writing on walls since there were walls. José Parlá started his graffiti career in Miami, but he has since moved to Brooklyn. Now, his work has crossed over from tags and quick throw-ups to huge, wall-sized canvases that display his expertise in calligraphy and in a hybrid form of diary-writing that pushes the boundaries of what is considered language and what is considered art. Parlá's essay, "Research and Memory," reveals the importance of "mixing documents of memory and research," which has the effect of helping him to affirm his "everlasting devotion to art as a form of spirituality." As for Joseph Anastasio, writing in New York meant a delicate dance between risk and reward, between desire and necessity. Anastasio writes "My Life in Graffiti" from the perspective of a former writer and current professional photographer of subway graffiti.

The three photographers in this section share a fascination with New York City. First, Berenice Abbott, a powerful creative force in the photography world during the 1930s and 40s, pushed the boundary of the proper subject of photography. While Abbott did photograph people, she was primarily interested in the designs and angles of urban geometry. Lewis Hine was primarily interested in labor: who worked? where did they work? and what kind of work did New Yorkers do? These questions were important to Hine. And lastly, we present two photographic portraits by Dinanda Nooney, one of the most important photographers of domestic scenes in Brooklyn. Nooney's carefully composed domestic portraits capture essential qualities about each of her subjects. The portrait of the Basquiat family may reward the careful observer who knows something about the history of Jean-Michel Basquiat, a high-profile pop artist discovered by Andy Warhol.

New York is an ideal place for artists, designers, and architects to not only experiment, but to experiment big. And what better proof is there of big designs than these two: the 1811 grid design for Manhattan and the Empire State Building? Of course, other large designs and structures abound, but, in "Prediction," Dutch architect Rem

Koolhaas believes that the preposterous prediction of the grid layout was the biggest and boldest—as big and bold as the city itself. Donald Reynolds’ essay “The Making of an Icon” also describes a bold endeavor—a true colossus. What is so interesting about Reynolds’ story of the Empire State Building is not just the sheer size of the skyscraper, but rather that all the parts had to come together in the building process: leadership, finance, planning, marketing, engineering, and architecture.

While we could have filled an entire book on the history, development, and evolution of music in New York, we decided on Mark Naison’s essay “From Doo Wop to Hip Hop: The Bittersweet Odyssey of African-Americans in the South Bronx,” because it captures the history and culture that serves as the foundation for much of today’s hip hop music. Many readers will find that this essay is part sociology, part history, and part call-to-action. The inner city in the 1970s came to be associated with the lines of Grandmaster Flash in “The Message”: “Broken glass everywhere, people pissing on the street, you know they just don’t care.” So, it is both ironic and hopeful that out of the ashes of that era of societal neglect, a vibrant art form and cultural movement arose. Now hip hop is more than music. It is art, design, fashion, culture, and perhaps it is also a form of politics. Naison believes that art and music are central to the mission of education and to the success of New York’s neighborhoods; they are not simply frivolous extras.

Research and Memory

José Parlá

José Parlá was born in Miami, Florida in 1973 to parents who were Cuban exiles. He studied at the Savannah College of Art and recently set up his studio in Brooklyn. Parlá began writing graffiti in Miami and his current paintings exhibit aspects of graffiti, only heightened and refined. He calls his art “segmented reality” because his canvases seem to take small samples of real walls. Handwriting becomes what he calls “abstract storytelling,” in which the line contains emotions, even if you cannot read the words. His influences include Marcel Duchamp, Cy Twombly, and different Asian calligraphy styles. His art is urban and layered; it invites viewers to try to read the city as palimpsest.

Pre-Reading

What message or messages do you get from “Nevins Street Jargon”?

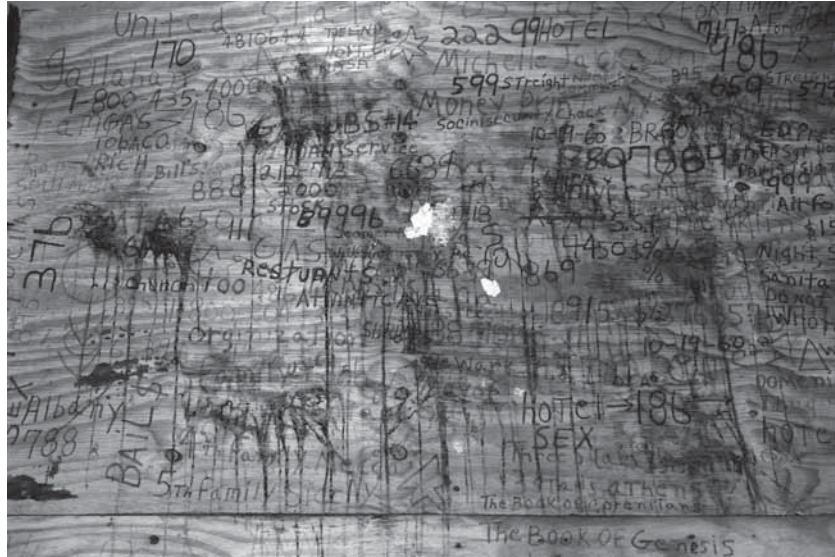
Historically, walls have exhibited the voice of the people. My earliest 1
paintings were made on walls at night. My thought and impulse behind
the gesture was as primitive as that of cavemen marking and drawing in
their dwellings to assert their existence in a place and time. As my works
evolved, be it paintings, signatures or even the documentation of these
early ephemeral art works throughout city walls, the works took on the
nature of personal journals based on empirical experiences. The organized
black books and photo albums also became my diaries. This style of art
became an influential sub-culture in many of the places I have traveled to
and inspired the aesthetic in my cityscape paintings.

During the beginning, this was an art that was not accepted by society
because it was seen as destructive, rebellious and anarchic. I felt a challenge
to present art that originally existed outdoors—inside, like art displayed in
museums, and this was an interesting problem for me that needed a solution.
I wanted to create works that retained their roots. My new paintings could
not abandon their environment. I then embarked on a journey to search out
in detail the dialogue of decaying walls, the marks on them, and what it all
meant to me. This would lead the paintings to become memory documents.

As a result, these works are time capsules, mixed documents of mem-
ory and research; part performance, as I impersonate the characters that

From *José Parlá: Walls, Diaries, and Paintings* by Jose Parla. Copyright 2011 José Parlá All Rights Reserved. Member of ARSNY & DACS U.K.

leave their marks on walls. Time is a part of these paintings as their creative process simulates the passing of time on city walls and their layers of history with layers of paint, posters, writing, and re-construction. This process, like meditation, affirms my everlasting devotion to art as a form of spirituality, which exists in the present and pays homage to those who leave their traces behind.



From José Parlá: *Walls, Diaries, and Paintings* by Jose Parla. Copyright 2011 José Parlá All Rights Reserved. Member of ARSNY & DACS U.K.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the idea of layers and segmented reality in terms of Parlá's painting titled "Your History," which is the one on the cover of this textbook.
2. Would you like to have either "Your History" or "Nevins Street Jargon" hanging in your home? Why or why not? What kinds of feelings and emotions do these pieces evoke?
3. Do you think that graffiti is art? Why or why not?
4. Does art have to be beautiful to be art?

Writing Tasks

- Photograph some examples of graffiti in New York City. Write a photo-essay in which you compare José Parlá's work to other, possibly anonymous, writing.
- Create your own tag or signature, and then write an essay discussing the importance of your name, tag, or design to your identity.

My Life in Graffiti

Joseph Anastasio

Joseph Anastasio is a writer and photographer. He has published three books related to New York City graffiti culture and the subway system: *Subway Solitude: One Man's Journey through the NYC Subway System* (2007); *Brooklyn Queens Freight: Graffiti along the Tracks* (2009); and *Yard Job NYC: Graffiti in the Freight Yards of NYC* (2009).

Pre-Reading

What is your passion? Do your career goals relate to it?

Ditmars

On the subway again. Morning. Rush hour. I get on every day at Ditmars in Queens. The clean silver train is always there waiting to go. The car cleaners have already swept off the litter, and the conductor is at the ready by the intercom. "Partner got the line up?" he blurts out, and the voice crackles back over the speakers and says, "Yes." "Next stop Astoria Blvd, stand clear of the closing doors." The dialog is always the same; the trains all look more or less the same. The passengers, well, they all look the same, too. Everything is always routine on a weekday-morning commute. Robotic, boring. Devoid of life, really.

There was a time when it wasn't quite this way . . .

I remember the 1980s, the good old days of New York, when each and every subway car bore an exterior top-to-bottom coating of layers upon layers of graffiti. Each car was a unique blend of colors. Some were painted from one end to the other with artistic "pieces," cloaked in bright letters and mystery. Even the windows were covered with paint, sometimes giving a cathedral-like quality to the interior lighting. There were ugly "toy" (beginner) tags with no stylistic merit, making the trains look a mess, and then there were tags that'd make even the best calligrapher wet herself. There were some ugly pieces, and then there were some that resembled oversized versions of something you'd see on a museum wall. Each car was unique. Each one colored with paint, sweat, and life itself.

From *New York Calling: From Blackout to Bloomberg*, edited by Marshall Berman and Brian Berger. Copyright © Reaktion Books, 2007.

I remember growing up and riding the subways a lot with my parents, and being inspired by all of this artwork. Graffiti looked and smelled a lot like being a rock star. If you did it good enough and got your name up enough, everyone in the city would know your name. When the book *Subway Art* came out back then, it put a public face on the movement. It showed the artwork and the people behind it, helping lay a path to art careers that some still enjoy today. If having your name up all over town wasn't Rock Star enough, getting your work in such a book sure did the trick. Part of me wanted to be a rock star. I'd never learn to play an instrument well enough, but I could draw damn good.



Sean Scanlan, "Graffiti Keeps Me Clean," 2010.

I remember hanging out in some of the tunnels for hours at a time. I remember chilling out down there and watching these two guys paint a train that was parked on some unused track, being inspired by their boldness. I wasn't old enough to even walk into a hardware store to get some paint without raising an eyebrow, but time would soon take care of that. 5

30th Avenue

I remember tagging up on 30th Ave station. I was still young and brash, and more importantly I was free. I could stay out late no questions asked. My teen responsibility was to be irresponsible. I could get my hands on paint any time. I could get away with being a graffiti-writer now, and I went for mine.

Back when I was hitting this station, the graffiti in, on, and around the NYC subway system was dead, or so the MTA thought. Us writers weren't having it though. Rooftops became hot. To get up on a rooftop facing the elevated subway line was prime real estate, a surefire route to fame. The stations themselves became targets, too. The MTA just couldn't paint them as fast as kids were bombing them. Back then there were at least fifty to a hundred active writers in the neighborhood, some just wannabe toys, others more serious—and everyone was trying to get their tags up on these stations weekly. Those were the days; today you'd be lucky to see maybe a dozen people hit these stops during the course of a year.

Broadway

I remember 1991, when all the neighborhood writers hung out on the corner just outside Broadway station, and the cops would come around and harass us for no other reason than because you could tell everyone there was a bad apple. The first US invasion of Iraq had started, and one night the cops rolled up and started frisking the notorious writer Crime SWC. They felt a spray can in his jacket pocket and asked, "What's this?"

"It's a SCUD missile, motherfucker!" he replied. It may as well have been. Spray cans were the weapon, and we were at war with society. We were at war with other gangs and other writers. Fighting to make a name every single day.

Years later I learned that another infamous writer, Sane, was a station agent at this stop. I probably bought tokens from him and didn't even know it. That's how it was back then. Everyone was a writer, and a lot of the really hardcore dudes you'd never know about or recognize unless you ran in the right circles. 10

36th Avenue

I remember coming up here one night while I was still young but not entirely naive. I was with three other writers. They started tagging up the station and I was just thinking, "What are they, stupid?" We knew the Vandal Squad cops were hiding out in the "lay up" trains—subway cars parked in the middle track during off-peak hours. We knew the cops were watching,

or at least I thought we all did. The cops were waiting to catch themselves some collars. Make some arrests, meet the “Performance Standard” (because there’s no such a thing as a quota). One cop came up from the only exit on the station, the other from the tracks behind us. It was a trap, and in an instant it wasn’t a game anymore. It was over. I was going to jail. My parents would disown me and I’d have to pay some big-ass fine I couldn’t possibly afford...

They were big men with badges and guns, and they had us on the ground getting their frisk on. But they were human, and luck was on my side. Let’s just say I was the only one to protest some of their search tactics, and that resulted in the cop not being very thorough. They never found the brand-new never-used can of pink Krylon up my coat sleeve. I suppose it helped too that I was a dirty-looking metal-head kid. Every writer I knew shared more or less the same fashion style: fade haircuts, phat sneakers I couldn’t afford if I tried, triple-fat goose jackets, and of course beepers. Let’s just say I didn’t look that way. With my long hair, fucked-up jeans, construction-worker boots, spiky bracelets and .50-caliber bullet shell that I used for a necklace, I looked a lot more like someone out of a death-metal video than a hip-hoppin’ graffiti-writer. When a train came, the cops told me to scram. Everyone on the train going home from work was looking out at these little kids in handcuffs on the station with these two big burly cops standing over them. Then the doors closed and suddenly everyone on the train was looking at me, white as a ghost.

I started walking through the train, got off at the next stop, and walked for miles that night. I couldn’t go home. I had to wear off the adrenaline. I didn’t want a criminal record or grief from my parents and all the other associated stigmas of getting caught. But then again I had a can in my hand, and I knew I had to empty that shit. I bombed and cleaned that can out, and then I retired from the game, or at least that’s what I tried to tell myself.

Queens Plaza

I used to always catch tags on Queens Plaza, too. One night I was with my boy and these two guys came up to us—using the universal tagger greeting, “Yo, you guys write?” It was Seus and Spook. I remember them guys... Seus was coming out all over the neighborhood and in the subway tunnels in a big way. I remember a few weeks later when Spook was electrocuted on a power line while out graffiti-bombing some tunnel. He lasted a while in a coma before dying. He was just sixteen. A few years later I heard that Seus was randomly stabbed to death one night. The streets, the tunnels, this graffiti game... it takes a heavy toll sometimes. But when you’re young, and when the economy sucks and the crack epidemic is in full swing, you just accept that death is waiting for you. Death might come on any given mission, any given night. You could get stabbed, mugged, beaten, or shot just corning

home from hanging out on the subway. There were a dozen ways to Sunday to get fucked up real bad back then, so bombing and living every night like it was your last was just what you did—and you’d do it without regret.

At Queens Plaza, the train finally ducks underground. It leaves the station packed to the gills with passengers. Standing room only, and some of them people are standing uncomfortably close to each other. You’d think maybe people would find another way to get to work besides the subway-sardine option, but they don’t. They’re persistent, doing this shit day after day after day, just like some taggers. 15

I remember persistence. The word was defined by a name, and that name was Sane Smith. Throughout the ‘80s, no matter what part of the city you went to, you’d see a Sane or Smith tag, and if you didn’t, you’d see some’ of their boys, Ghost, JA, Bruz, etc. I was impressed by this persistence and the daring tactics some of these writers employed. 60th Street tunnel was a perfect example of this.

The “60th Street tube” is a long, straight, narrow unforgiving place. Unlike most subway tunnels, there’s no place to hide down there should a train come. Smith and Bruz rocked it though, with tags under each light along the tunnel walls. With lights perhaps every 20 feet along this mile-long tunnel, you can do the math.

“It was a mission to hit every light,” Smith says. “But we weren’t going to leave any space for anyone else to get up. We wanted to claim it.” Laying such a claim rarely comes without complications, though. “A worker train came, so we had to run to the next emergency exit—it was like a slow speed chase. We hid there behind a door and they just went by, and we went back to work.” Persistence is the quality that makes mere mortals into legends of the graffiti game.

59th Street/Lexington Ave

Getting off the train at 59th Street/Lexington Ave, I look across—across the platform, past the newly assigned cop stuck in his little “Omega” guard booth in the middle of it, across the northbound track—and stare for a split second at the wall. It is dull, gray, and utterly lifeless.

I remember when Gridz hit that wall. It was a simple piece—white, blue, and green, but it shined like a pearl. That shit ran for months and always brought a smile to my face. It takes balls to get up right there on the platform—to do a quickie piece at such a busy station. 20

So much has changed since then. Post-9/11 paranoia mandated the police booth, guarding the cross-river tunnel as best they can. With this twenty-four-hour watch, you won’t be seeing any new tags under them lights in the tube anytime soon, and you’ll probably never see another piece on that dull gray wall again.

I go down the stairs and transfer to the downtown 5 train. It too consists of nothing but nice new shiny subway cars, complete with digital displays and automatic voice announcements of each stop. A more rote and predictable ride you cannot find. I board the train.

Grand Central Station

I remember the passage of time—the two years between my close call with “the man” and realizing I wasn’t done yet. I came out of retirement, if one can ever truly quit this game. By this point I had been practicing on paper religiously and had developed my “handstyle” real good. I wasn’t a toy-ass bastard anymore, and I had a new fast-acting super-sticky tag to slap all around town like your drunken mom’s face at 4:00 AM.

I wouldn’t do it alone, though. I was talking with this girl and she was all bent on adventure. I suggested taggin’ up. I showed her some styles. Having an artistic flare, she took to writing like Koch to a crowd. It wasn’t too long before we were bombing, taking the streets of Manhattan by storm. I think she even wrote “how ‘m I doin’?” in one throwy.

The tag names we used, that’s not important. What was important was the fun and adventure we had, the smell of the paint, the adrenaline rush, the aerosol-junky life. Scamming cans wherever we could by day, going out and bombing the town by night. We hit it and hit it big for a hot minute, and when word was going around that the man had their eye on trying to find out about us, we quit it. We emptied out our last cans on a wall in an abandoned lot in Hell’s Kitchen. Doing it on the down-low and never bragging about it at the time. That’s the only way to really do graf and not get bagged by the man. Keep your mouth shut and do the work. 25

14th Street

I remember finally feeling satisfied after that. Like I had done what I wanted to do with graffiti and was done with it. I also remember bringing along a camera more and more. I had always been a photographer, but I never really had the cash for a lot of film. By now I was getting older, working, and realizing I could achieve the same effect of graffiti, saying, “Hey, I was there” by taking photos of some of these crazy places we went. For me, the camera replaced the spray can. My handstyle became my shutter style.

*

By this point the crowd on the train has thinned out a bit. The Lexington Avenue line that the 5 train runs on is considered to be one of the most overcrowded in the city. This crowding is due in no small part to the fact that the city has never completed building the Second Avenue line, which

is eventually to run parallel to the Lex Ave line and hopefully absorb some of the riders from it.

I remember Second Avenue and meeting up with fellow photographer Mike Epstein and us being the first photographers to explore the abandoned northern half of the 63rd Street station. The station itself is part of the 63rd Street tunnel, though one can easily argue that the northern side of the platform was built as a provision for (and therefore a part of) the Second Avenue tunnel. Most people don't even know that there is a whole other half of a station laying abandoned behind the wall at 63rd and Lex, but sure enough it's there.

Just like everywhere else, a lot of graffiti artists had come and gone before us. According to Swatch, a graffiti artist who was the first to hit a lot of these Second Avenue spots, they went so far as to throw a New Year's party down here. The days of such parties are pretty much gone, but the tags remain. The taggers, thought they still go down there. A graffiti artist who recently went was Jedi 5. "Painting spots of this nature makes graffiti feel worthwhile," he told me. "I don't really care about street bombing, even though it's lots of fun. Coming to exclusive spots like this makes me feel I'm really putting effort into it."

Putting in the effort, finding the spots, and then rocking them in your own special way. Swatch and Tyke did it. Scope and Nuke did it a lot, and now Jedi & co are at it. Graffiti is a cycle, and it does not stop. 30



From *New York Calling: From Blackout to Bloomberg*, edited by Marshall Berman and Brian Berger. Copyright © Reaktion Books, 2007.

I also remember exploring the Chinatown segment of this Second Avenue subway line. I remember me and Clayton gearing up and going in. It was a nice feeling, being in a subway spot that so few have gotten to see. I remember the marvel of all the extra space they had built in there for utilities and ventilation.

What will happen to this spot when the Second Avenue tunnel is finally built is unknown. Several of the current plans for routing the tunnel downtown do not use this stretch of tunnel at all. It may very well become an orphan, disconnected from the system, a monument to the fiscal crisis of the '70s that brought an end to the construction of the original Second Avenue line.

*

The train keeps moving, now going past the abandoned Worth Street station.

I remember not that long ago going to Worth Street. I remember running down the tracks to photograph this station late one weekday night. We were originally going to go to 18th Street, but the track-workers were out and about. I remember how we had to hide from passing subways on the platform, and how I found an old set of block letters from Rebel.

Rebel remembers that spot well, too. "We came out of that tunnel filthy," he said. "I had soot in my *ears* from that place. We ran out at like 3:00 AM and thought the station we were coming out onto was empty, but there was a guy right there at the end, and when I stepped onto the platform I was right there in his face. He stepped back and almost had a fucking heart attack—this eyes were like dinner plates!" Every real graffiti artist who's ever rocked a can has dozens of memories like these. They are the best urban stories you'll ever hear.

*

Brooklyn Bridge

I remember exploring all the tunnels near Brooklyn Bridge just a few years ago. One night I was down there with Maria, a fellow photographer and a woman who just plain ain't afraid to get down and dirty. We were wandering around down there for a few hours and getting ready to leave. We were waiting for a train to leave the J-train platform so that there wouldn't be any MTA personnel staring at us once we climbed up and out of this hole, but the train just wouldn't leave—and when it finally was about to, we heard work bums walking down the tunnel right toward us. The gig was up and it was time to go—we started running alongside the J train as it headed northbound towards Canal Street. We kept pace with it somehow, arriving at Canal just as the train pulled out continuing northbound. We jumped on

the platform and ran out of the station just as some extremely loud buzzer went off on the tracks. Some guy was by the token booth saying, "What's that alarm sound?" We got out onto the street and we ran, finally stopping a few blocks away in a parking lot, where I proceeded to cough up some of the steel dust we kicked up for a good five minutes. You just can't pay for an adventure like that. I remember the war on graffiti. I remember when they singled out people like the brothers SaneSmith and tried to vilify them as best they could. The battle continues today, only more so. Even toy kids these days are getting their names in the paper when they get caught for catching just a few tags around town. To the powers that be, graffiti is a sign not of art but of trouble, of crime and a loss of control over the mindless herd of citizens. It is a precursor to more crime. The broken-windows school of Gestapo-style law enforcement. Graffiti is ugly and destructive, and for some writers, that's just the point.

"I came out of retirement because I lived in a nice neighborhood and soon found I couldn't pay the rent," proclaims FE One, a man that used to tag the trains back when they were hot in the '80s. "I'm just trying to bring the property values down. At this rate of gentrification, they just keep pushing us back further and further to the outsides of the city—they're pushin' us out into the ocean, and I don't want to be livin' that *Waterworld* life!"

You could say that the graffiti artist's story is every New Yorker's story. It is a struggle to survive in a city of ever-increasing rents, ever-increasing luxury for the rich, while the poor just keep getting pushed aside.

Wall Street

I remember just last weekend, being on a rooftop in Brooklyn. It's a hot spot, lots of tags in a prime location, and I was just sitting back, watching a new writer get his paint on. I was like a movie critic, thinking his tag's too long, takes too slow, his style isn't fully developed, and if he gets nabbed, how severe are the penalties? Before, you could get caught writing and get community service. Now, they're trying to stick even toy newbies with years in jail just for catching a tag. 40

On the one hand, graffiti get to be a frustrating game to watch as you get older. You see these kids coming up who don't practice enough, don't have skills, and don't know how to stay off the radar. For a cat like me, I *know* I could do it better. I could come out and rock shit pretty hard and get away with it. But I won't, and I don't, because the other part of getting is older is how much less doing stupid shit is worth the risks. You got bills to pay, a girl to keep happy, jobs you don't want to lose, a clean record, and let's be real, no matter how good you think you are, luck might turn out to be a bitch instead of a lady on any given night. It's easy to hate on the

toys coming up, but hey, at least they're getting up, and getting up under increasingly risky circumstances.

I remember being on vacation looking at time-share property with my fiancée. Out of curiosity we looked through the catalog to see where their NYC property was located. I nearly had a heart attack when I recognized the address. Their nice new multi-million-dollar building was built right on the abandoned lot where perhaps ten years ago I dropped my last tags on a wall.

Investments, bills, falling in love, getting married, having kids, cars, babies—all of these are reasons why people like me stop being so bad... but the temptation... it's always there. And while maybe I won't be picking up a spray can anytime soon, I sure as fuck won't stop running around the tunnels and abandoned parts of town taking my photos any time soon either.

The subway car I'm in only has a few riders at this point. Bowling Green is the last stop in Manhattan, and it is where I get off. In another four or five minutes I'll be in the office, at my desk, putting in another eight or nine hours of routine, rote, boring work, passing the time really, waiting for the sun to set, the weekend to begin, and the next adventure to begin, because this, this commuting, this sitting in an office all day... this isn't life. Graffiti, exploring, going on crazy missions... that's what life is, and I'm gonna live my life every damn chance I get.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you define graffiti? Should it be legal or illegal?
2. Is graffiti a legitimate art form? Does Graffiti make the city beautiful or vice versa?
3. How would you feel if your classrooms were covered in graffiti? Discuss your reaction if you found your front door covered in graffiti.
4. Discuss the reasons that graffiti arose in the 1970s and then declined in the 1980s. Are the reasons that graffiti artists write today the same as they were forty years ago?
5. Joseph Anastasio says that "persistence is the quality that makes mere mortals into legends of the graffiti game." Can you think of other activities that require or reward persistence?

Writing Tasks

- Anastasio mentions persistence several times. Write an essay in which you discuss the value of persistence in a career or activity that interests you.
- Find something that is not in an art museum (graffiti, a lamppost, an abandoned building, etc.) and write an essay in which you treat it as if it was a famous work of art.
- Research and perhaps even interview an urban or street artist who is not well-known. Write an essay in which you introduce the work and the artist to the public.

Photographing the City

Berenice Abbott

Berenice Abbott (1898–1991) was influenced by modernist art forms and spent several years in Europe practicing sculpture and poetry before becoming a darkroom assistant for the famed photographer Man Ray. In 1929, Abbott returned to the U.S. and began photographing New York in an attempt to document the city. Her successful one-woman show at the Museum of the City of New York in 1934 helped to secure her lasting fame as a photographer and artist. She disliked sentimental artistry and instead called her images of urban and architectural subjects “straight photography.” Abbott spent most of her career in New York City.

Pre-Reading

Is it possible to “read” a photograph like one reads an essay?



Photography Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Discussion Questions

1. What makes this view of Seventh Avenue artistic? Who might get to enjoy this perspective of the city?
2. What do you think Abbott means by “straight photography”? Use either of her two images to discuss her term.
3. If you were to take photographs of Seventh Avenue, how might your images be different from Abbott’s images?

Pre-Reading

Does it matter what a bridge looks like? Why or why not? What is your favorite bridge?



Photography Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Discussion Questions

1. When you first look at this photograph, can you tell that it is a bridge? Why do you think that Abbott chose this particular angle and composition?
2. Do you think these images are beautiful? Why or why not?
3. When you think of New York City photographs, what iconic images come to mind?
4. How has photography changed since Abbott's time?

Writing Tasks

- Write an essay in which you compare Abbott's two images in terms of composition, movement, and geometry.
- Go to the New York Public Library's digital archives or the photo gallery of New York City at www.nyc.gov and find two photographs that catch your attention. Compare and contrast them.
- Write an essay in which you compare and contrast Berenice Abbott's photographs to those of Lewis Wickes Hine and Dinanda H. Nooney.

New York at Work

Lewis Wickes Hine

Lewis Wickes Hine (1874–1940) was a photographer and sociologist interested in people and their relation to work. Hine was especially interested in advocating for children and their rights, and his photographs often show workers toiling in industrial settings. He took many photographs for the Red Cross and for the Works Progress Administration (WPA). His images are widely republished, and over 5000 of his photos are held at the Library of Congress in Washington DC.

Pre-Reading

Is work an interesting subject for photography?



Photography Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Discussion Questions

1. Does this look like typical construction work? Why or why not?
2. How do you think that Hine was able to take this photograph?
3. How does this photograph make you feel about the risks of work and the risks that artists take?
4. Discuss the play of interior and exterior space in this photograph.



Photography Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Discussion Questions

1. What is a sweatshop? What makes the room shown here one?
2. Discuss the space in which these men and women are working. Does it look like a factory or like a living room?
3. Some of the workers are looking directly at the camera, while others are working. Discuss the idea of posing for photographs or taking candid snapshots.
4. Why are the men at the far end of the sweatshop?

Writing Task

- Take photographs of people that you know at work or at play. Discuss your images.

Domestic Photographs of Brooklyn

Dinanda H. Nooney

Dinanda H. Nooney (1918–2004) was a documentary photographer who focused her artistic attention primarily on New York. Nooney’s first extensive photographic project documented the collapsed West Side Highway in Manhattan in the mid 1970s. Her second major project was photographing Brooklyn families. From 1978 to 1979, Nooney traveled through dozens of Brooklyn neighborhoods from Greenpoint to Sea Gate, taking photographs of many families who then recommended other families for her to photograph. These two portraits are typical of Nooney’s work; they reveal her attention to architecture, décor, and family relationships.

Pre-Reading

Does this photograph remind you of a typical dinner scene in modern-day Brooklyn?



Photography Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. Reprinted by permission of The New York Public Library and the Estate of Dinanda H. Nooney.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the décor and the details present in this portrait.
2. Describe the people in the photo.
3. The empty chair most probably belongs to Gerald Basquiat's son, the famous artist Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960–1988), who left home before this photo was taken. How does knowing this detail change your understanding of the portrait?

Writing Task

- Search through your family photo albums, pick your favorite, and then write a photo-essay about it.

Pre-Reading

Does this photograph strike you as humorous or difficult to understand?



Photography Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. Reprinted by permission of The New York Public Library and the Estate of Dinanda H. Nooney.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the composition of the photograph.
2. Nooney uses detailed titles of her photographs. Why do you think that she uses her subject's full address?
3. Compare this domestic scene with the Basquiat dinner scene.
4. How do you read the large "Continued" sign above the men?

Writing Task

- Write an essay in which you consider what the images in this section hide or obscure.

Prediction

Rem Koolhaas

Born in 1944 in Rotterdam, Netherlands, Rem Koolhaas is an architect, theorist, and urban scholar. His architecture books *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto of New York* (1978) and *S, M, L, XL* (1995) are well known by both architects and urban critics. In 2000, Koolhaas received the Pritzker Prize, the highest international award for architecture. He has designed houses, stores, libraries, and government buildings throughout Europe, North America, and Asia. He is a visiting professor of architecture at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, and he is a founding partner of the Rotterdam-based architecture firm OMA.

Pre-Reading

Are squares and rectangles the best way to organize a city or a neighborhood?

In 1807 Simeon deWitt, Gouverneur Morris and John Rutherford are commissioned to design the model that will regulate the “final and conclusive” occupancy of Manhattan. Four years later they propose—above the demarcation that separates the known from the unknowable part of the city—12 avenues running north-south and 155 streets running east-west.

With that simple action they describe a city of $13 \times 156 = 2,028$ blocks (excluding topographical accidents): a matrix that captures, at the same time, all remaining territory and all future activity on the island. The Manhattan Grid.

Advocated by its authors as facilitating the “buying, selling and improving of real estate,” this “Apotheosis of the gridiron”—“with its simple appeal to unsophisticated minds”—is, 150 years after its super-imposition on the island, still a negative symbol of the shortsightedness of commercial interests. In fact, it is the most courageous act of prediction in Western civilization: the land it divides, unoccupied; the population it describes, conjectural; the buildings it locates, phantoms; the activities it frames, nonexistent.

From *Delirious New York* by Rem Koolhaas, copyright © 1994 by Rem Koolhaas and The Monacelli Press, a division of Random House, Inc. Used by permission of Monacelli Press, a division of Random House, Inc.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the layout of your neighborhood. Is it gridded like Manhattan?
2. What are the social and emotional effects of having such a rigid design for streets and blocks?
3. Do you agree with Koolhaas that the grid design is “still a negative symbol of the shortsightedness of commercial interests”?
4. Compare the planning of the Manhattan grid to the planning of “natural” spaces such as Central Park or Prospect Park.
5. Imagine that you were in charge of redesigning your neighborhood. What would you do about transportation, parks, buildings, housing, and commercial spaces?

Writing Tasks

- Write an essay that investigates what populations came to occupy New York and what activities have occurred over time.
- Collaborate with your classmates to design a futuristic version of New York City.

The Making of an Icon

Donald Reynolds

Donald Reynolds is an art historian, author, and teacher. From 1970 to 2003, he taught at Columbia University, where he earned his doctorate in art history. A frequent lecturer to corporations and urban groups, he is also the author of numerous books and articles on art and architecture. Two of his books include *The Architecture of New York City* (1994) and *Masters of American Sculpture* (1994). In addition, he is the founder and director of The Monument Conservancy.

Pre-Reading

What is your favorite skyscraper in New York?



© Cedric Weber, 2012. Used under license from Shutterstock, Inc.

The Empire State Building was the inspiration of John Jacob Raskob, a self-made man, who had risen from economically deprived circumstances in Lockport, New York—by way of a series of successful ventures with Pierre DuPont, his mentor (who had discovered him)—to enormous wealth and positions of influence as an officer and shareholder in General Motors. Active in politics, Raskob supported Al Smith for governor of New York and was Smith’s campaign manager in his presidential race against Herbert Hoover in 1928. The friendship grew, and when Al Smith left public office, he played a major role in Raskob’s success story with the Empire State Building. 1

From his automotive experience Raskob understood the importance of producing a superior product, the complexities of merchandising it, and the necessity of having the right people to achieve these ends. He applied his formula for success to the new building at Thirty-fourth Street and Fifth Avenue at a time when the country was experiencing its worst financial crisis, and he produced not only the tallest building in the world, but the most famous and revered skyscraper yet to be built. Even now that other commercial structures have reached far greater heights, the Empire State Building remains an icon that refuses to relinquish its special meaning.

Raskob produced the perfect skyscraper with the perfect image for its time and place: it was a building that did exactly what an executive office building ought to do with maximum efficiency and economy, and it was executed with superb artistry and superlative engineering in a tastefully modern style. Although the Empire State Building did what any office building was supposed to do for its tenants, it did it better and in a bigger way. At least that was Raskob’s message, and people believed it.

Unlike the Woolworth, Chrysler, and Chanin buildings, named for men of remarkable achievement, Raskob’s building was to be identified with the very embodiment of superlative achievement—New York. It was to become a symbol of the city. Being the tallest building in the world meant more than winning a race for Raskob; height was symbolically identified with the essential concept of the building.

It is the interdependence of the building’s architectural preeminence and its symbolic content that relates the Empire State Building conceptually to such landmarks as the Eiffel Tower and that establishes it as a major image of modernity in the twentieth century. This successful confluence of form and content is also what has made the building an enduring symbol. What it looked like, what it was, and what it stood for all became identified in the minds of the public and the building’s tenants. 5

From *The Architecture of New York City*, by Donald Martin Reynolds. Copyright © 1994 Donald Martin Reynolds. Reproduced with permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Selection of the Architects

To produce this superior product, Raskob selected the architectural firm of Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon. A fairly new partnership, the group had good credentials and a practical approach to building that appealed to him. William Frederick Lamb was the designer of the building. The son of a New York builder, he had studied architecture at Columbia University in New York and the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris and had been a partner with Richmond Harold Shreve in Carrère and Hastings, Shreve, and Lamb. Shreve had studied architecture at Cornell and had taught there, before joining Carrère and Hastings. Arthur Loomis Harmon joined them in 1929 to form Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon. Harmon studied architecture at Columbia University and had been a designer with McKim, Mead, and White before practicing independently.

The Significance of the Design

Lamb's natural propensity was toward simplicity, and he preferred functional architecture, which was why the contemporary architect Raymond Hood's Daily News Building, built a year before the Empire State Building, appealed to him and influenced him. So Lamb envisioned a building shaped essentially by the practical factors of budget, time, zoning regulations, and technological necessities. Raskob wanted 36 million cubic feet of space on a lot 200 feet (Fifth Avenue) by 425 feet (Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth streets) for a construction budget of approximately \$60 million. The building was to be completed by May 1, 1931, in order to make rental space available immediately (the day for signing commercial leases). That gave the architect a year and a half to complete the plans and erect the building.

Lamb reduced these requirements to their bare essentials for his design. A central core rising up the height of the building accommodates service and utility rooms, corridors, and shafts for four elevator banks of low and high-rise elevators. Around this core is a perimeter of rentable office space twenty-eight feet deep from window to corridor—at that time, the accepted formula for sufficient natural light. As the low-rise elevators drop away, the core space is reduced, which is expressed in the facades as setbacks.

The vertical composition of the building conforms to the traditional organization of skyscraper mass into base, shaft, and capital—the design, based on the divisions of the Classical column, that has its origins in New York's earliest elevator buildings of Post (Western Union Building) and Hunt (Tribune Building) in the 1870s.

A limestone tower rises from a 5-story base to the 86th floor observatory and is capped by a monumental spire, a “mooring mast” of metal and glass for dirigibles (which proved too dangerous to be used as such), and the television antenna added much later. Atop the 5th-story base is a 60-foot-wide terrace created by setting the tower back to fulfill the zoning requirements. This terrace setback emphasizes the tower and its unprecedented height of 1,250 feet. Although it has 86 floors of offices, the Empire State Building is often described as being 102 stories high, because the mooring mast is equivalent in height to 14 stories and when the building’s two basements are also counted, the total comes to 102 stories.

The grandeur of the Empire State Building—its height, materials, and design, and the technological skills that produced it—immediately captured the minds and hearts of all Americans. To watch the building’s steel skeleton rise 102 stories into the sky in just over eight months was even startling to the construction workers who put it up, as Harold L. McClain wrote in his “Recollections of Working on the Empire State Building.”

At the opening ceremonies, May 1, 1931, former New York Governor Al Smith hailed the Empire State Building as the world’s greatest monument to man’s ingenuity, skill, mind, and muscle. Three weeks later, Earl Musselman stood on the platform of the Empire State Building’s observation tower. Looking at the tall buildings around him, he said, “I keep wanting to put out my hand to feel them—so that I can tell what they really look like.” Born blind, the twenty-two-year-old Musselman had only two months before undergone an operation that gave him sight. His uncle brought him to New York from Philadelphia to see the view from the top of the Empire State Building, a view of sea and land that only three weeks before was beyond the earth’s horizon.

The great height of the Empire State Building has been celebrated in such movie myths as *King Kong* and *Tarzan’s New York Adventure*, and it was the source of tragedy when Lt. Col. William F. Smith’s B-25 Mitchell bomber, with a crew member and a passenger aboard, crashed into the north side of the fog-shrouded building at the seventy-ninth-floor level on the morning of July 28, 1945. Fortunately, because it was a Saturday, there were few people in the building; nonetheless, at least fourteen people perished along with the pilot and his crewman.

Now, through a modern lighting system, the top of the Empire State Building is a great beacon honoring special events that was inaugurated on October 12, 1977, when blue and white lights announced that the Yankees had won the World Series. From the seventy-second floor to the top of the TV antenna, colored lights in various combinations celebrate such significant days as St. Valentine’s Day (red and white), Washington’s Birthday (red, white, and blue), St. Patrick’s Day (green), and Columbus Day (red,

white, and green). And from Christmas to New Year's Day, festive combinations of red and green illuminate the top of the building.

The New Symbol

The main entrance on Fifth Avenue echoes the building's tripartite design. Grand columns flank the entrance doors, and great black stone bases at the ground level support reeded shafts which terminate in capitals of stylized American eagles that frame the massive attic on which is engraved "EMPIRE STATE." At ground level, broad shop fronts of moulded aluminum and glass are set within black marble beneath a three-story screen of masonry piers. 15

The time and budget within which the building had to be completed dictated a system of fenestration and a method of handling the stonework that eliminated traditional, but time-consuming, practices and fortuitously resulted in enhancing the vertical emphasis of the building. By setting the windows in framed strips of stainless steel, and projecting them in front of the Indiana limestone cladding, the stone finishing usually needed at the juncture of wall and window was eliminated, saving time and money. Furthermore, by using aluminum for the spandrels, instead of masonry, cross bonding was avoided and resulted in a further economy.

The projected window units, grouped in bays of one, two, and three, were visually united to read as continuous, slender, vertical units capped by geometric crowns. The masonry cladding read as a skeleton of slender alternating piers, reflecting the building's internal structure. Lamb's solution, which unifies the building's almost 6,500 windows into a coherent design, was probably influenced by the way his friend Raymond Hood handled the Daily News Building. Hood de-emphasized the windows by an innovative recessed vertical strip and a continuous pier unbroken up to the cresting.

The hubris that informs the design and ornamentation of New York's Art Deco skyscrapers is uniquely expressed in the Empire State Building's scale and the decorative features that enhance it, which are geometric and carry almost no narrative content. The architects avoided didactic ornamentation except in the main lobby at the ground floor, where they celebrate the concept and image of the building in a program of restrained symbolism coordinated with rich materials and dramatic lighting.

The design of the lobby was dictated by the same realities that guided the general massing of the building. Here, the four banks of elevators in the central core of the building are subdivided by three east-west concourses and connecting lateral corridors to facilitate traffic flow from the main Fifth Avenue entrance and the side entrances at Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth streets.

Moreover, the elevator banks are surrounded by shops with entrances from both the lobby and the street and aluminum bridges (originally open, now enclosed) over the east-west concourses connect offices at the second story. Stairs led down (now escalators) from the ends of the concourses to the lower level. 20

A grand entrance hall in gray marble, stainless steel, and glass extends from the main entrance to a wall of polished black granite, which is the backdrop for a portrait of the building above the information desk. The aluminum image of the building, emanating rays symbolic of man's creative energy which merge with the rays of the sun—nature's energy—is superimposed over a map of New York. The building's location is marked, and at the lower left the dates of construction, March 17, 1930–March 1, 1931, are inscribed in a medallion. At the right is a clock set in a compass, symbolic of the coordinates of time and space that define the position of the Empire State Building in the mural and in the modern world. The panel, beneath the clock and over the aluminum information desk, lists those responsible for constructing the building and includes Pierre S. DuPont, Raskob's mentor and associate. South of the information desk is a scale model of the building in a display vitrine with base, made in the Empire State Cabinet Shop by Oliver J. Brown and painted by J. M. Rossi (1938).

Natural light pours into the great ceremonial space through the three glazed and traceried vertical panels over the main entrance. Beneath each panel and above the three doors is a round medallion with a stylized representation of Electricity (north), Masonry (middle), and Heating (south). These are three of the eighteen medallions placed throughout the lobby that identify the industries involved in producing the Empire State Building.

To merchandise the building properly, Raskob sought to give it a strong identity with New York and with an image of integrity associated with high purpose. Raskob hired Al Smith to be the president of the Empire State Company and to give his superior product a superior image. As the building and its function were inseparable, so Al Smith became identified with the building, and his personal popularity and reputation for integrity imparted a sense of high purpose to the building, which was totally believable. Moreover, through his lifelong connection with public affairs and the Democratic party, Smith had consistent visibility at the public level; he was always news. Thus, the Empire State Building had much greater exposure through the press and news media than any building before it.

Raskob's judgment proved sound. Even though his building opened during the Great Depression, it flourished, and by the 1940s it had 98 percent occupancy.

Discussion Questions

1. Who was the mastermind behind the Empire State Building, and what was his formula for success used to build it?
2. How long did it take to build the Empire State Building? Do you think that is fast or slow? Why might the answer be surprising given the cultural and economic situation of the nation at that time?
3. Have you ever been to the top of the Empire State Building? Have you seen it from a distance or in pictures or movies?
4. Do you get the impression that Donald Reynolds dislikes or likes the Empire State Building? Find examples of Reynolds' word choices and phrases to support your answer.

Writing Task

- Write an essay about your favorite building in New York. Include information such as who built it, why it was built, when it was built, and any challenges that the builders faced.

From Doo Wop to Hip Hop: The Bittersweet Odyssey of African- Americans in the South Bronx

Mark Naison

Mark Naison (b. 1946) is Professor of African and African-American Studies at Fordham University. He is also the Director of Fordham University's Urban Studies Program. He is the author of *Communists in Harlem during the Depression* (1983) and *White Boy: A Memoir* (2002). Professor Naison has also written articles on African-American culture and contemporary urban issues, including "Outlaw Culture in Black Culture," *Reconstruction* (Fall 1994). The following essay originally appeared in the *Bronx Country Historical Society Journal* in 2004. He is currently working on two book-length projects, and he maintains an active blog at withabrooklynaccent.blogspot.com

Pre-Reading

What is your favorite genre of music? What message do you believe it strives to get across?

Sometimes, music can be a powerful tool in interpreting historical events. 1
 Played side by side, two of the most popular songs ever to come out of The Bronx, the Chantel's "Maybe" and Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five's "The Message," dramatize an extraordinary shift in the culture, dreams and lived experience of African Americans in the South Bronx between the mid 1950s and the early 1980s. These songs, so different in tone, content and feeling, were produced by artists who lived less than six blocks away from one another in the Morrisania section of The Bronx, an important center of musical creativity in both the rhythm and blues and hip hop eras.¹

The Chantels, the most successful "doo wop" group ever to come out of The Bronx, and one of the first of the "girl groups" ever to have a hit single, grew up singing together in the choir at St. Anthony of Padua elementary school, located at East 165th Street and Prospect Avenue. Their song "Maybe" appeared in 1957, a time when many African-Americans

Reprinted by permission of Bronx Historical Society.

in The Bronx were having a modest taste of postwar prosperity and were optimistic about their futures. Throughout the South Bronx neighborhoods they inhabited, new housing developments were going up at breakneck speed, allowing thousands of black and Latino families to move into clean airy apartments, with ample heat and hot water, which were a step up from the tenements many of them lived in when they first came to New York. They lived in neighborhoods where most families were intact, where children received strong adult guidance in their home, their block, and their school, and where adolescent violence was rarely life threatening.

Grandmaster Flash, one of three pioneering Bronx DJs credited with founding hip hop, also grew up in Morrisania—at 947 Fox Street, right off East 163rd Street—but it was a very different Morrisania than the one the Chantels grew up in. When Mel Melle, the MC for the group sang “Broken glass, everywhere, people pissing on the street, you know they just don’t care” to a pounding, rhythmic backdrop, he was talking about a community buffeted by arson, building abandonment, drugs, gang violence, shattered families, the withdrawal of public services and the erosion of legal job opportunities. Surrounded by tenement districts that had been ravaged by fires, housing projects that were once centers of pride and optimism had become dangerous and forbidding. “Rats on the front porch, roaches in the back, junkies in the alley with a baseball bat.” This was the world in which hip hop was created, a world where government was distant and remote, families were under stress, adult authority was weak, and young people had to find economic opportunity and creative outlets on their own in the most forbidding of circumstances.

How did this happen? How did the harmonic, optimistic environment evoked by the Chantels, the Chords (who came out of Morris High School), or Little Anthony and the Imperials, give way to the violent, danger filled world described, in clinical detail, by the Furious Five and, several years later by another brilliant South Bronx hip hop lyricist, KRS-1? And how did people respond to these community destroying forces? Did they give in? Leave? Try to resist? If they did resist, how effective was their resistance?

These are some of the issues that I will try to address in this article. Please keep in mind that what I am sharing with you is the product of preliminary research rather than a polished product. A little more than a year ago, The Bronx County Historical Society and the Department of African and African-American Studies at Fordham University came together to launch The Bronx African American History Project, an effort to document the experience of the more than five hundred thousand people of African descent who live in The Bronx. I decided to focus on the generation of African Americans who moved to the South Bronx from Harlem, the American South and the Caribbean during and after World War II, the generation of

5

people Colin Powell has written about in the early chapters of his autobiography, *An American Journey*.²

I began interviewing members of that pioneering generation and in the process came across a remarkable group of people who grew up in the Patterson Houses, a 17 building development bounded by Morris and Third avenues and East 139th and East 144th streets. These individuals, who come together every July for a Patterson Houses Reunion, are successful professionals in education, business, and the arts. They remember the Patterson Houses as a safe, nurturing place from the time it opened in 1950 until heroin struck in the early 60s. Their story, which challenges so much of what people think about public housing, the South Bronx, and black and Latino neighborhoods, is important not only because of its intrinsic value, but because it helps us understand the events that follow. Based on interviews and long discussions with Victoria Archibald-Good, Nathan “Bubba” Dukes, Adrian Best, Arnold Melrose, Joel Turner, Michael Singletary, Marilyn Russell and Allen Jones, I am going to bring back a time when public housing was a symbol of hope, not failure, and when working class black and Latino families, supported by strong, well-funded government services, helped each other raise their children with love, discipline, respect and a determination to achieve success in school, athletics and the arts. And though this story is about Patterson, the atmosphere it evokes also existed in the Melrose, St. Mary’s and Forest Houses, the other large developments that opened in the South Bronx in the late 1940s and early 50s.

One of the first things that grabbed my attention when I began doing interviews was that African American families who moved into the Patterson Houses saw their arrival there as a “step up” from the crowded tenement neighborhoods where they had been living. Vicki Archibald-Good, whose parents moved to Patterson Houses from Harlem, recalled: “There wasn’t a lot of affordable housing. I am not sure how long my parents were on the waiting list for public housing, but I do remember my mother saying they were living in one room in my grandmother’s apartment before we moved. . . . By the time we moved from Harlem to The Bronx, I was born, my brother Tiny was born and my mother was pregnant with a third child.”³

Nathan Dukes, whose family moved from a crowded building in the Morrisania section of The Bronx, where his father was superintendent, recalled: “It was basically like a migration, where people moved from the Tinton Avenue/Prospect Avenue area over into the Patterson Houses. . . . The projects were relatively new and they were accommodating.” The new residents, Dukes claims, took tremendous pride in their surroundings. “Outsiders could not come into the Patterson Projects if we didn’t know

them," he remembers. "A lot of the older guys would question anybody who didn't look right who came into the projects late in the evenings. . . . They were basically patrolling. . . . They would walk around the neighborhood . . . making sure things were OK."⁴

When the project first opened, children who lived in Patterson experienced a level of communal supervision that is difficult to imagine today. The families who lived in the development, ninety percent of whom were black and Latino, took responsibility for raising one another's children. Not only did they help one another with babysitting and childcare, they carefully monitored the behavior of young people in hallways, from apartment windows and project benches, making public spaces of the huge development anything but anonymous. "You couldn't get away with anything," Nathan Dukes recalled, "The moms and the pops . . . they'd be out on the benches. . . . If you went in the wrong direction, by the time you came back, everybody in the neighborhood would know. And that was it. . . . You'd get a whooping."⁵ Vicki Archibald-Good, who fondly recalled the "camaraderie and supportiveness and nurturing" she got from people who in her building "who weren't blood relatives," also remembered that people were quick to correct one another's children: ". . . they did not hesitate to speak to you about dropping garbage in the hallway or talking too loud or skating in the hallway. And all a neighbor had to do was say 'Don't let me tell your mother.' That's all it took for us to come back to reality. . . ." Even childless people got in the act. Vicki remembered a "Miss Cassie" who used to "stand in that hallway, or sit by the window, or on the bench and everybody knew what was going on in 414. . ."⁶

This communal investment in child rearing was reinforced by publicly funded programs that provided children in the Patterson Houses with an extraordinary array of cultural and recreational opportunities. As Josh Freeman points out in his landmark book *Working Class New York*, residents of communities like Patterson Houses were the beneficiaries of a remarkable campaign by the city's postwar labor movement to have government invest in education, health care, recreation and youth services for working class families.⁷ Children growing up in Patterson in 1950s had round the clock supervised activities in a community center housed in the local elementary school, PS 18, had first rate music instruction from teachers at the local junior high school, went on summer field trips to zoos and museums, and got free medical exams, vaccinations, and dental care in schools and in clinics. The experience made children in the projects feel at home in all of the city's major cultural sites. "We had a vacation day camp, every summer, for children in the projects," Vicki Archibald-Good recalled. "We went to . . . every single museum you could think of, to Coney Island, to baseball games, to the planetarium. . . . I knew The Bronx Zoo like the back of my

10

hand. We went to Prospect Park, we went to the Botanical Garden. . . I don't think there was one spot in the city that we didn't cover."⁸

These programs were headed by teachers and youth workers who took a deep interest in the welfare of Patterson's children and were in regular communication with parents, reinforcing the communal investment in the neighborhood's young people. Nathan Dukes and Adrian Best both speak with reverence of the instruction and guidance they received from "Mr. Eddie Bonamere," the music teacher at Clark Junior High School, who headed the school's band. At that time, Clark, like most New York public schools, allowed students to take instruments home over the weekend, and Bonamere, a talented jazz pianist, used this opportunity to train hundreds of youngsters from the Patterson Houses to play the trumpet, trombone, flute and violin. Bonamere's extraordinary influence on his pupils—Nathan Dukes referred to him as the "love of my life"—was reinforced by his determination to expand the cultural horizons of everyone living in the neighborhood. At the end of every summer, Dukes recalled, Bonamere would sponsor a jazz concert in the schoolyard of PS 18 that included famous musicians like Willie Bobo and "everyone, I mean the entire projects, would be there."⁹

Supervised sports programs in the Patterson Houses, were, if anything, even more visible and influential. The community center at PS 18, which was directed by the former CCNY basketball star Floyd Lane and ex-Knickerbocker center Ray Felix, was kept open on weekends, holidays, and weekday afternoons and evenings. Not only did children have a chance to play knock hockey and checkers, do double dutch and play in organized basketball leagues, they had an opportunity to watch some of the greatest African-American basketball players in the nation play in the holiday basketball tournaments that Lane sponsored. Players like Wilt Chamberlain, Meadlowlark Lemon, Tom Thacker, and Happy Hairston showed up the PS 18 court. Similar programs existed in other South Bronx neighborhoods. Nat Dukes joined a community basketball program headed by Hilton White at a public park near Prospect Avenue, and played on a softball team called the Patterson Knights that was coached by a Burns security guard who lived in the Patterson Houses. Because of this array of sports programs, many young people who grew up in Patterson had successful careers in high school, college, and professional athletics, and one of them, Nate Tiny Archibald, became one of the greatest point guards ever to play in the NBA.¹⁰

This portrait of a time when black and Latino children in the Patterson Houses experienced strong adult leadership in every dimension of their lives so challenges the standard portrait of life in public housing that you might find it hard to believe. Wasn't the South Bronx in the 1950s the home

of numerous street gangs, you might ask? Weren't its neighborhoods filled with illegal activities and a strong underground economy?

The answer to both of these questions is yes. Most of the people who lived in the Patterson Houses were poor and gang fighting and the underground economy were part of their lives. But except in rare cases, neither gangs nor illegal activities led to deadly violence. Boys in the Patterson Houses were constantly fighting kids from other neighborhoods and other projects, but most of the fighting was done with fists, and adults in the projects would step in if knives or zip guns became involved. The underground economy was huge, but its primary manifestation was the numbers and the major numbers entrepreneur in Patterson, Mr. Clay, carried himself more like a community banker than a thug. A "major donor in the church" and a sponsor of the community softball team, Mr. Clay dressed formally, did his entire business in his head and never worried about being robbed by his customers, even though he always carried hundreds of dollars in his pocket. Even those who acted outside the law seemed to operate within a powerful communal consensus.¹¹

This remarkable period in the life of the Patterson Houses, which lasted less than fifteen years, rested on a number of intersecting factors which would not exist in public housing from the mid 1960s on. First, the presence of intact families. All of the families with children who moved into Patterson in the 1950s had two parents present. Second, the ready availability of jobs in the local economy that men with high school educations and less could work at. Many of the men in the Patterson Houses worked in factories and small shops located in the South Bronx—Dukes' father was a furniture assembler, other men worked in milk bottling plants, or small metal shops. Third, schools and community centers near the Patterson Houses offered an impressive array of day camps, after-school centers and sports and music and arts programs that offered round the clock supervision and activity for young people in the projects. And fourth, and most importantly, most Patterson residents had a sense, reinforced by public policy and lived experience, that life was getting better, that people heading families were living better than their parents had, and that their children were going to do even better than they had.

In the 1960s, the comfort and security of people living in the Patterson Houses was to be cruelly shattered by a number of forces, creating an environment ruled by fear and mistrust in which children were too often forced to raise themselves. What changed? When people who grew up in Patterson try to explain why the environment that nurtured them fell apart, the two things they mention are heroin and the fragmentation of families.

For both Vicki Archibald-Good and Nathan Dukes, it was heroin use, which reached epidemic proportions in the early and mid 1960s, that did the most to erode bonds of community and trust in the Patterson Houses.

All of a sudden, young men who were bright, popular and ambitious, were transformed into dangerous and disoriented individuals who wouldn't hesitate to rob their neighbors or families to get their next fix. Vicki Archibald-Good, whose best friend's brother was the first person she knew to get hooked, saw heroin strike with the force of a "major epidemic." She recalled: "It was so completely different that it felt that I was living in a dream . . . All of a sudden, everyone in the projects is talking about break-ins . . . people were saying these were inside jobs, that somebody was letting these folks in to burglarize people's apartments. Then I started hearing about folks that I grew up with getting thrown off rooftops because they were dealing. For the first time, I was starting to feel fear, not only for myself, but for the whole community."¹²

Nathan Dukes remembers heroin hitting with the force of a flood: ". . . there was just an abundance, it came out of nowhere . . . people that you thought would not become involved in narcotics became involved on a very heavy level." Dukes recalled being "devastated" during his first year in college by the news that one of his best friends had just gotten shot and killed while robbing a jewelry store.¹³ By 1965 and 1966, Archibald-Good recalled, she didn't feel safe walking back from the subway by herself at night. The Patterson dream had become a nightmare: ". . . here I was in this huge housing complex and there was a story every day about somebody who overdosed or who was thrown off a roof . . . So yes, it was a troublesome time for most of us."¹⁴

The impact of heroin on the Patterson community was so traumatic that Nathan Dukes remains convinced it was part of a government conspiracy to weaken the civil rights movement. But there were other forces eroding the community in the mid 60s that would have lasting impact on the projects and the neighborhood. The fragmentation of families also contributed to the atmosphere and disorder. During the early and mid 60s, Dukes recalled, more and more fathers began to desert their families, frustrated by their inability to support their wives and children at a time when the factory jobs they worked at were beginning to leave The Bronx.¹⁵ During those same years, housing projects began to relax their admissions standards and open their doors to families on welfare, many of them recent migrants from Puerto Rico or the South, or refugees from urban renewal projects in the rest of the city. As a result of both of these developments, the adult male presence in the projects which had helped keep gang behavior and teenage violence under control, began to diminish sharply, leaving public space in control of drug dealers, junkies and teenage gangs.

The resulting violence and chaos led to a gradual exodus of families that had managed to resist these corrosive forces, most to the West and North Bronx. As a result, sections of The Bronx which had once been

primarily Jewish, Irish and Italian, such as Morris Heights, University Heights, South Fordham, and Williamsbridge, began to experience a rapid increase in their black population, while the housing projects of the South Bronx increasingly became places for those too poor, or troubled, to escape to safer areas. The exodus increased further with the wave of arson and disinvestment that spread through Melrose, Mott Haven, and Morrisania in the early 1970s, and later spread into Highbridge, Morris Heights and Crotona, exacerbated by a city fiscal crisis that led to dramatic cuts in public services. By the late 1970s, when The Bronx had become an international symbol of social decay, it would have been impossible for most people to imagine that housing projects in the South Bronx were once safe and nurturing places where children were watched over in every aspect of their lives and exposed to the best cultural opportunities the city had to offer.

In this moment of decay and despair, an improbable cultural movement would arise among young people in the South, West and East Bronx whose creative impulses were integrally linked to the atmosphere of social breakdown that surrounded them. That movement was hip hop, and its unique styles of dancing, visual arts, and musical expression were created in The Bronx in the face of skepticism, indifference, and occasionally hostility from adults inside and outside the communities they lived in. In fact, a good argument could be made that it was the breakdown of social order and adult authority that made this form of artistic innovation possible, especially in the formative years when hip hop had no commercial viability. The music writer Nelson George offered the following ironic observations of how the music fit the times:

The New York that spawned hip hop spit me out, too. I came of age in the 70s. . . . But I'd be lying if I told you the 70s were a time of triumph. . . . It was, at times, a frightful experience to walk the streets, ride the subways, or contemplate the future. . . . But in chaos there is often opportunity, in pain a measure of pleasure and joy is just a stroke or two away from pain. The aesthetic industry now known as hip hop is a product of these blighted times, a child that walked, talked and partied amidst negativity.¹⁶

Hip hop developed at a time when the adult presence in the lives of young people in The Bronx had radically diminished. Not only had informal supervision by family members and neighbors become far less significant, but music instruction had disappeared from the public schools, parks and recreation staffing had been cut in half, afternoon and evening programs in the schools had been eliminated, and sports programs had been cut to the bone. More and more, young people had to bring up themselves, and the result was that gangs in The Bronx had become far larger and more violent than their 50s counterparts, rates of violent crime had quadrupled,

and the underground economy had come to replace the legal economy as a source of employment for youth.

Along with gang activity came radical politics. In the late 60s and early 70s, more intellectually inclined Bronx youngsters were gravitating to the Black Panther Party and the Young Lords, the Nation of Islam and the Five Percenters, as well as the community action groups seeking to wrest political control of The Bronx from its Irish, Jewish and Italian leadership. These events occurred at the same time that black and Puerto Rican studies courses were being created on the CUNY campuses and elsewhere. Along with the gangs, drugs, disinvestment and crime, race conscious political activism, reinforced by open admissions in the City University system, was part of the unique chemistry that created hip hop as a cultural movement.

The birth of hip hop as a distinctive music form can be traced to the year 1973, when a Jamaican immigrant nicknamed “Cool DJ Herc” began holding parties at the community center in his building, 1520 Sedgwick Avenue in the Morris Heights section of The Bronx. At that time, you could not hold a party in The Bronx without being concerned which of the gangs would show up and how they would respond—particularly the Savage Skulls and the Black Spades. Competition for territory and prestige by gangs dominated public space in many parts of The Bronx, with neither a fiscal crisis-decimated police force, nor local adults, able to control their activity. In addition to fighting, the competition had begun to take the form of graffiti writing and dancing, with gang members at clubs trying to outdo each other in launching acrobatic moves on the dance floors of clubs and parties they attended.

The innovation that Herc inaugurated was to take music that was no longer played on mass market radio—particularly heavily rhythmic music by James Brown, Sly and the Family Stone, and George Clinton—and use incredibly powerful speakers to accentuate the base line. In addition, two turntables were used so that the most danceable portions of the record—the break beats—could be played in consecutive order. The result was a sound that drove dancers wild and turned the competition on the floor between gang members into high theater. What soon became known as “break dancing” described the increasingly acrobatic moves that took place at Herc’s parties at the Sedgwick community center, which people all over The Bronx flocked to see.

Soon, Herc was moving his events outdoors by hooking up his sound system to streetlights, and thousands of people were starting to attend them. He eventually found a commercial venue for his shows at “Club Hevalo” on Jerome Avenue between Tremont and Burnside avenues. By 1974 and 1975, Herc’s style of dee jaying had started to spread through other neighborhoods of The Bronx, connecting with traditions of toasting

and boasting, long established in black communities. To add variety to his shows and stir up the audience, Herc began to allow one of his partner DJs, Coke La Rock, “grab the mike and start to throw out his poetry.” This innovation was so successful that Herc added other “MCs” to his shows, and they soon began to compete to see how well they could stir up the crowd. This, some people say, is where “rapping” (long a respected art in black communities) became a part of hip hop.

While Herc built a reputation in the West Bronx, even establishing a major venue near Fordham University at PAL (Police Athletic League) center on East 183rd Street and Webster Avenue, a former gang leader from the Bronx River Houses in Soundview who called himself Afrika Bambaataa began holding parties in the community center of his housing project that built on and in some respects expanded Herc’s innovations. Influenced by the Nation of Islam and the Black Panthers, Bambaataa created an organization called the Zulu Nation aimed at bringing cooperation among Bronx gangs, using hip hop culture to attract them to his shows. Eclectic in his tastes, Bambaataa added rock and latin and jazz to the funk driven beats he was playing. He encouraged break dancers from all over The Bronx to come to his center, knowing they would be protected from violence by Bambaataa’s bodyguards. He also encouraged poets and MCs to work alongside him, creating a more artistically varied product than Herc usually did. Bambaataa was explicitly political in his objectives. As he told Jim Fricke and Charlie Ahearn:

I grew up in the southeast Bronx. It was an area where back in the late 60s, early 70s, there was “broken glass everywhere,” like Mel Melle said in “The Message.” But it was also an area where there was a lot of unity and social awareness going on, at a time when people of color was coming into their own, knowin’ that they were black people, hearing records like James Brown’s “Say It Loud—I’m Black and Proud,” giving us awareness. . . . Seeing all the violence that was going on with the Vietnam War and all the people in Attica and Kent State, and being aware of what was going on in the late 60s, with Woodstock and the Flower Power. . . just being a young person and seeing all this happening around me put a lot of consciousness in my mind to get up and do something; it played a strong role in trying to say, “We’ve got to stop this violence with the street gangs.”¹⁷

The final hip hop innovator was Grandmaster Flash, an electronic wizard who figured out ways of having turntables mingle break beats automatically. Flash, a graduate of Samuel Gompers Vocational High School, began performing in schoolyards (his biggest events took place outside PS 163 at East 169th Street and Boston Road), clubs and community centers in Morrisania—a neighborhood which had been devastated by fires, but was anchored by several large public housing projects. Flash became the dominant figure in the South Bronx neighborhoods of Melrose, Mott Haven and

Hunts Point, attracting a brilliant group of poets and rappers led by Mel Melle, the voice which is heard on Flash's signature song, "The Message."

What makes this entire movement remarkable is that it was created entirely by people under the age of thirty, with little support from parents, teachers, or the music industry. The music teachers who had once played a vital role in exposing an earlier generation to instrumental music, and sponsoring talent shows for vocal groups in after school centers, had been removed or reassigned during the fiscal crisis. Community center directors like Arthur Crier in the Tremont section, who sponsored parties and talent shows at which hip hop pioneers performed, were the only adults present at hip hop's genesis, but they had little influence on its musical content.¹⁸

Because hip hop was about rhythm, rather than harmony, and because turntables and records had replaced musical instruments and voice, many people brought up on gospel, blues, jazz and soul had difficulty regarding it as music, just as many people had difficulty regarding graffiti as art. But because so many young people had grown up in the fractured world that hip hop became the major form of community entertainment among young people in The Bronx and soon spread far beyond its borders.

The story of hip hop's rise is a testimony to the vitality of the human spirit, but it does not give my story a happy ending. Although hip hop has given young people in the South Bronx (and communities like it throughout the world) a vehicle and a moral compass that helps them describe the conditions in which they live, and has prevented the media and government from rendering them invisible, it has not been able to turn fractured neighborhoods into safe supportive communities like the one that Vicki Archibald-Good and Nathan Dukes grew up in.

The opportunities provided by growing up in The Bronx after World War II, however, provide us with insights as to how to improve the current situation for its people. We cannot replace the nuclear family and bring back the industrial jobs that left The Bronx in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, but we can restore music instruction to the public schools, rehire recreation supervisors in parks and playgrounds, and revive the after school programs and evening centers that were once a fixture of every elementary school in the city. Public housing was once a place where dreams of success and achievement were nurtured. There is no reason why public housing cannot play that role again, if we restore the round-the-clock youth programs Patterson children once benefitted from and make a generous investment in child care, education and medical care for working class children and families.

Notes

¹On rhythm and blues in Morrisania, see Philip Groia, *They All Sang On the Corner: A Second Look at New York City's Rhythm and Blues Vocal Groups* (Port Jefferson, NY: Phillie Dee

Enterprises, 1983, 130–132.) PS 99, which sponsored evening talent shows as part of a night center directed by a legendary teacher named Vincent Tibbs, and Morris High School, were centers of musical creativity in the “doo wop” years. Groia writes: “After three o’clock, P.S. 99 and Morris High School became rehearsal halls for the simplest of musical instruments, the human voice. Both schools were major forces in keeping young people off the streets...”

²Colin Powell, with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine, 1995). Chapter One discusses Powell’s experiences growing up in the South Bronx.

³Mark Naison, “ ‘It Take a Village to Raise a Child’: Growing Up in the Patterson Houses in the 1950s and Early 1960s, An Interview with Victoria Archibald-Good,” *The Bronx County Historical Society Journal*, 40, No. 1 (Spring 2003): 7

⁴Oral history interview with Nathan Dukes by Mark Naison, April 25, 2003. Transcript and videotape at The Bronx County Historical Society and at the Walsh Library of Fordham University.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Naison, “Interview with Victoria Archibald-Good,” 8–9.

⁷Joshua B. Freeman *Working Class New York: Life and Labor Since World War II* (New York: New Press, 2000).

⁸Naison, “Interview with Victoria Archibald-Good,” 8.

⁹Dukes oral history interview and oral history interview with Adrian Best by Mark Naison, July 1, 2003. Transcripts and videotapes at The Bronx County Historical Society and at the Walsh Library of Fordham University.

¹⁰Dukes oral history interview.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Naison, “Interview with Victoria Archibald-Good,” 17–18.

¹³Dukes oral history interview.

¹⁴Naison, “Interview with Victoria Archibald-Good,” 18.

¹⁵Dukes oral history interview.

¹⁶Jim Fricke and Charlie Ahearn *“Yes Yes Y’All: The Experience Music Project Oral History of Hip Hop’s First Decade* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2002), vii. Nelson George wrote the introduction to this remarkable book, which provides the best portrait of the rise of hip hop in The Bronx in the 1970s. The discussion of hip hop’s origins draws on this book and other works documenting hip hop’s Bronx years: Raquel Rivera, *New York Ricans In the Hip Hop Zone* (New York: Palgrave, 2003); Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994); Alan Light, ed. *The Vibe History of Hip Hop* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999); James D. Eure and James Spady, *Nation Conscious Rap* (New York: PC International Press, 1991); James G. Spady, Charles G. Lee, and H. Samy Alin, *Street Conscious Rap* (Philadelphia: Black History Museum, Umum/Loh Publishers, 1999).

¹⁷Frick and Ahearn *“Yes Yes Y’All,”* 44.

¹⁸In an interview with The Bronx African American History Project on January 30, 2004, Crier, a singer, arranger, producer and songwriter who was one of the major figures in the Morristania rhythm and blues scene in the 1950s and 60s, said that the talent shows at PS 99 in the 1950s were his inspiration when he began organizing talent shows at his community center in the middle and late 1970s.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss how Naison uses the music of the Chantels and the rap lyrics of Grandmaster Flash to structure his overall argument.
2. What is the effect of interviewing actual people as evidence to support his argument?
3. How did the tenants of the Patterson houses in the 1950s view their new residences?
4. How were children treated at this time? What was available to them? What role did adults play in their lives?
5. What was the economy like for working-class families in the 1950s?
6. What was the effect of heroin use in the mid-1960s?
7. What role did the loss of jobs have? Do you think this is a larger social issue?
8. What was early hip hop like? What social and political agenda did it serve?
9. Why does Naison argue that the story of hip hop's rise "does not have a happy ending"? How did hip hop, according to Naison, change? Do you agree with his assessment?
10. What solutions does Naison offer to revitalize troubled neighborhoods? Can you suggest any other ones?

Writing Tasks

- Write an essay that discusses the history of your neighborhood and your own feelings about the current situation. If possible, interview someone who has lived in your neighborhood for quite some time about these changes.
- Choose a hip hop song and discuss the message it conveys.
- Research articles that defend and/or attack the value of hip hop as a musical genre or social influence. Write an essay that takes a stand in this debate and considers the merit of two contrasting perspectives.

Making Connections

1. What is your favorite type of art? How does your own interest in art connect to the subjects in this chapter? If you were deeply interested in some type of art or design, how would you go about becoming an expert?
2. Drawing from the ideas in your readings, discuss how both art and design are changing. Visit a local museum or gallery to answer this question.
3. Research the artists whose quotations begin this chapter. Write an essay that examines their different perceptions of New York City.
4. Suppose that your school must decide whether to devote a large sum of money to one of two projects that cost the same amount of money: commissioning an artist to paint a large mural or installing money-saving, energy-efficient

windows. Write an argumentative essay in which you consider both sides, but that makes a case for one project over the other.

5. Write an essay which offers suggestions to improve your school through art and design.
6. On your course website, create a montage or collage of the public art on or near your campus; this may involve taking pictures and putting them up for comment and discussion. This project can be expanded to include photographing local graffiti, urban spaces, and architecture.

