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PAGES: 37-48

ORIGINAL PDF URL: <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/3694868>

GRAFFITI ART AND TUNÇ DİNDAS IN THE LIGHT OF TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

Writing and language in the past are at the forefront of people's self-expression and communication methods. It can be considered as an important communication tool, one of the four main elements of hip-hop culture. Graffiti is a wall art that is written, drawn or sprayed. Art is transforming and expanding under the influence of technology. Today, the boundaries of art have expanded with the use of digital technologies and new tools such as virtual reality. Artists are using technology to take their works beyond traditional materials. Technology is frequently used in production processes; Sometimes works are visible on digital platforms and virtual universes. This offers the opportunity to express contemporary art in new and exciting ways. Graffiti, which is an artistic production area, has also turned into a new art platform. In the traditional graffiti understanding; Instead of using marker pens or spray paint on the walls, it has become possible to make drawings digitally without risk. However, the technological possibilities provided in the art of digital graffiti can also bring about deficiencies such as reducing the amount of physical and emotional experiences and depriving the experience of living. In this context, an interview was held with Tunç Dindaş, one of the graffiti artists, in order to determine the graffiti artists' approaches to technology and their usage purposes. Tunç Dindaş, nicknamed "Turbo", one of the artists who made a name for himself in the graffiti world, shapes his worksis shaped around Turkish culture and Istanbul. The artist, who prefers technological tools in the production process of his works, continues to expand his traditional work area in the name of real graffiti production. This research aimed to determine Tunç Dindaş's general art understanding by focusing on the interaction between graffiti art and technology, particularly through his approach to technology.

Keywords: Graffiti, Technology, Tunç Dindaş

TEKNOLOJİNİN IŞIĞINDA GRAFİTİ SANATI VE TUNÇ DİNDAS

Özet

Geçmişten bugüne yazı ve dil, insanın kendini ifade etme ve iletişim kurma yöntemlerinin başında gelmektedir. Grafiti de hip-hop kültürünün dört ana elementinden birini oluşturan önemli bir iletişim aracı olarak kabul edilebilir. Grafiti duvara yazılan, çizilen veya püskürtülerek yapılan bir duvar sanatıdır. Sanat, teknolojinin etkisiyle dönüşmekte ve genişlemektedir. Günümüzde, sanatın sınırları, dijital teknolojilerin ve sanal gerçeklik gibi yeni araçların kullanımıyla genişlemiştir. Sanatçılar, eserlerini geleneksel malzemelerin ötesine taşımak için teknolojiden yararlanmaktadır. Üretim süreçlerinde teknoloji sıkça kullanılmakta; bazen eserler dijital platformlarda, sanal evrenlerde görünür olmaktadır. Bu durum, çağdaş sanatı yeni ve heyecan verici yollarla ifade etme imkanı sunmaktadır. Sanatsal üretim alanlarından olan grafiti de yeni bir sanat platformuna dönüşmüştür. Geleneksel grafiti anlayışındaki; duvarlarda marker kalem ya da spreya boya kullanmak yerine, dijital ortamlarda risk almadan çizimler yapmak mümkün hale gelmiştir. Ancak dijital grafiti sanatında sağlanan teknolojik olanaklar fiziksel ve duygusal deneyimlerin önemini azaltabilmesi, olayın ruhunu yaşama tecrübesinden yoksun bırakması gibi eksiklikleri de beraberinde getirebilmektedir. Bu bağlamda grafiti sanatçılarının teknolojiye yaklaşımlarını ve kullanım amaçlarını belirleyebilmeye yönelik olarak grafiti sanatçılarından olan Tunç Dindaş ile görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Grafiti dünyasında isminden çokça söz ettirmiş sanatçılardan biri olan "Turbo" lakabıyla Tunç Dindaş, eserlerini Türk kültürü ve İstanbul etrafında şekillendirmektedir. Eserlerinin üretim sürecinde teknolojik araçları da tercih eden sanatçı, gerçek grafiti ruhunu vermesi adına geleneksel çalışma yöntemini benimsemektedir. Tunç Dindaş'ın sanat anlayışını genel olarak belirlemeyi amaçlayan bu araştırma, grafiti sanatı ile teknoloji arasındaki etkileşime odaklanmıştır. Özellikle, Dindaş'ın teknolojiyi nasıl ele aldığı üzerinden genel sanat anlayışı çözümlenmeye çalışılmıştır.

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Grafiti, Teknoloji, Tunç Dındaş

1.GİRİŞ

1.1.Graffiti and Technology

Graffiti is defined as writing and drawings made by drawing, scraping or spraying on a wall or surface in any public space. Every definition is insufficient to explain most of the features in it, and the definition of graffiti is insufficient in this regard. The reason for this is that graphite is rich in content and has many methods. In this sense, it is possible to talk about different application types of graffiti.

One of these is tags; It is a genre in which the nickname of the writer is written with markers or felt-tip pens. Piece; It is a style with names or letters in images. Stencil; It is a technique that allows graffiti to be made quickly in the form of preliminary preparation by creating a template of the drawing, letter or general name images to be applied. Ticket; It is an application made with paper ready to be pasted, on which the writer's initials or designs are found. Poster; While the mosaic is created by sticking paper-like materials larger than the label to the surfaces with adhesive materials such as glue; It is the technique of attaching ceramic materials to the surface. Light graffiti; It is a type of non-permanent graffiti made with light. 3D chalk art, on the other hand, is a kind of three-dimensional drawn on the ground and contains optical illusions. Such many works contain a clearly articulated social or political message, as well as an artistic expression (<https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grafiti>).

If graffiti is considered as writing on the wall, it is possible that its foundation dates back to the Vikings, Ancient Rome, and Ancient Egypt (Güneş, 2008). Travelers in Ancient Egypt left their mark by drawing their names or pictures on the walls of the places they passed through; These ancient period graffiti and paintings are also called 'graffito' (Erdoğan, 2009: 60).

It can be concluded that graffiti, which can be seen in every society, can find a way to transfer the experience or knowledge of humanity to the next generations, and convey the message that it wants to convey to the present day by getting out of time and space. The graffiti works from cave paintings to the present reflect people's desire to maintain their artistic expression.

It is known that the Berlin Wall has become an iconic symbol in terms of graffiti. After Germany's defeat in the Second World War, it was decided to build the wall, which is known as the "wall of shame" in history, in order to alleviate the pressure of the western alliance on the Soviets, which divides Berlin into two, 46 km long. The eastern face of the wall is painted white so that the fleeing people can be noticed. The western side, on the other hand, was loudly expressing their thoughts, ideas and demands for the system (Türkoğlu, 2019). The western face of the wall is completely covered with graffiti. As the art of graffiti enters the consciousness of society as the sacred building block of popular culture, the history, techniques and styles of art attract an increasing attention worldwide (Gottlieb, 2008).



Image 1. Walter Ulbricht, Berlin Wall, 1986: URL 1

The origins of modern graffiti can be traced back to the America of the 1960s. During this period, graffiti became an important form of expression associated with the struggle for political freedom and youth culture (Gastman & Neelon, 2011). Although graffiti has become popular in urban areas, the aim of this movement is to involve people on the streets in their daily lives, by opposing the display of art only in galleries or museums. Street art emerged as an extension of the graffiti movement. Street art is installations that often carry political messages. Such works of art serve as a call and expression to the community in urban areas. The difference of graffiti from other street arts can be interpreted as being more individual. Technically, spray paint and various fonts are seen on the wall surface in graffiti, while the use of different materials is common in street art as well as paints. Both are recognized as an important art form in urban areas and are a source of inspiration to many.

According to Ryan (2016), painting over works on the street is an entirely natural part and temporary nature of the street art cycle. Although all street artists know this, they accept that they are part of the deal. That's the fashion of street art, and as a result, the walls belong to everyone.

Graffiti is an art form that differs between countries. These differences may be due to cultural, historical, social and political differences. For this reason, it is necessary to look at the graffiti cultures of countries from different perspectives. Graffiti emerged in the 1980s as a component of hip-hop culture (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984).

Recognized as a subculture by UNESCO, hip hop is based on four main elements identified by Afrika Bambaataa as MCing, DJing, Breaking and Graffiti art. Later, Street Knowledge was added as the fifth element. Hip hop also has basic principles such as peace, love, unity and fun. (İTU, 2021)

Graffiti, rap and break dance are products of the youth and youth reality that emerged during the difficult years of New York. There is a connection between these cultures and they share common aspects such as internal rivalry, fantastic identities and public expression. Media products promoted this connection internationally and helped young people establish the relationship between graffiti and hip hop. According to some views, graffiti culture and hip hop culture existed independently at first and were later associated with each other. Graffiti was born as its own unique art form and found its place on the streets. Hip hop, on the other hand, is a culture that combines music, dance, and lyrics. Although both cultures emerged at similar times, they developed independently and were subsequently associated with each other. Therefore, while there is a connection between graffiti, rap, and breakdance, graffiti is not a part of hip hop culture and each has created its own unique culture (Urbanario, 2010).

Banksy, one of the first names that come to mind when it comes to graffiti, describes graffiti as "the most honest and sincere art, even if it forces you to crawl at night and lie to your mothers". He claims that walls are always the best place to publish work (Banksy, 2005). Banksy is a UK-based street artist, political activist and film director whose real name and identity have not been verified. Being Active since the 1990s, Banksy creates graffiti works by combining satirical street art and subversive epigrams, black humor with the stencil technique. He exhibits his political and social commentary on streets, walls and bridges around the world. Banksy's work originated from the Bristol underground scene and includes collaborations with artists and musicians. Banksy's works contain messages that are anti-war, environmentalist, supporting animal rights and criticizing consumerism. (Vikipedi Özgür Ansiklopedi, 2022). Bernard, (2019) was arrested with his real identity while graffitiing for him many times while talking about Banksy. However, it was stated that these arrests took place not as Banksy, but as his real identity. This situation leads to the conclusion that the purpose of a graffiti writer is not to seek fame, but rather to serve society anonymously by focusing only on work.



Image 2. Banksy, Because I'm Worthless, 2006: URL 2



Image 3. Banksy, Gangster Mouse, 2006: URL 3

In Banksy's graffiti works, which focus on political and social problems, the mouse figure can be counted among the most frequently used drawings. According to Hunter, the mouse figures have European origins. Although the mouse is an iconic urban creature, their underground life is identified with our occupation of the cities on earth (Hunter, 2012). As small animals, considered harmful, invade cities, they also symbolize the action of graffiti artists. At night, they are hated, hunted, and nevertheless ubiquitous creatures. They play with prohibitions and see the city as both a destination and a playground to challenge passersby. They make the walls an excuse or substance for diversion and provocation (Young, 2016).



Image 4. Banksy, Flower Thrower, 2003: URL 4



Image 5. Banksy, Girl With The Red Balloon, 2002: URL 5

The artist, nicknamed 'Pboy', who paints murals and makes graffiti, incorporates technology into his works, unlike other street artists. The artist, who adds bitcoin QR codes to the murals he draws, aims to collect donations from the public and see if people support street artists thanks to the QR codes he added (Şişman, 2023).



Image 6. Pascal Boyart, Freedom Leaving the People, 2019: URL 6



Image 7. Pascal Boyart, Papa C'est Quoi L'argent?, 2017: URL 7

With the development of technology, new graffiti concepts have emerged. One of the most recent of these is digital graffiti. In this way, in the traditional graffiti understanding; Instead of using markers or spray paint on the walls, it has become possible to make drawings without risk in digital environments, and works have the opportunity to reach wider audiences by using digital tools. This virtual face of art creates an opportunity for graffiti artists to interfere with any surface or wall. Thanks to the technology that allows drawing on computer screens with tablets or digital pens, these designs can be shared with the world.

One of them, the digital graffiti wall, is an interactive product and aims to bring together street art and digital technologies to offer a creative experience to the participants. This product offers the possibility to graffiti on a digital screen using a digital paint tool. The participants create their own designs with different color, brush and style options that they can choose by taking the digital spray in their hands. In this way, they graffiti on the digital Graffiti Wall, creating any design they want. Graffiti designs can be instantly printed or shared digitally (Harikalar, 2023).

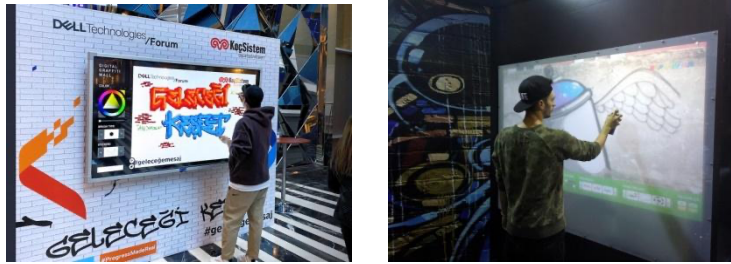


Image 8-9. Digital Graffiti Wall: URL
8-9

Its emergence dates back to the past, light graffiti (light painting / light graffiti), which became popular in 2007, it is a performance art performed by delaying the exposure time of the camera. Although fireworks and torches are used as light sources, LED light sources are often preferred. It is possible to draw on any environment and object. It is also defined as a photography technique that adds the photographer's imagination to the frame. It is non-permanent graffiti and is considered legal due to this feature (Yılmaz, 2019: 250). Jan Wöllert Jörg Miedza and Michael Bosanko light graffiti are important names in this field.

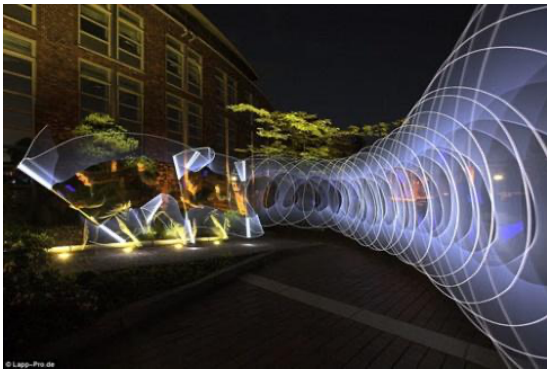


Image 10. Jan Wöllert ve Jörg Miedza, 2016:
URL 10



Image 11. Gjon Mili, Pablo Picasso,
1948: URL 11

Under these conditions, not having to get permission or follow legal processes to paint in public places plays an important role in making graffiti more comfortable and easily accessible. However, these opportunities bring with them deficiencies such as reducing the importance of physical and emotional experiences and depriving the real spirit and excitement of graffiti from the experience.

Tunç Dindaş, despite benefiting from technology in his works, prefers to limit this usage and instead opts for more traditional methods. While he may use computers and other digital tools to create his pieces, he sees these tools as supportive elements in his work. What he truly values is establishing a real connection with the streets and walls by physically working in accordance with the nature of graffiti art. With this approach, Dindaş aims to preserve the essence and nature of graffiti, making his art authentic. Therefore, even when utilizing technological innovations, his works do not stray from the essence of traditional graffiti art, and he develops a unique style in this field.

In the research, the art of graffiti was examined through Tunç Dindaş's views and works, and a general evaluation was made by trying to reveal the artist's approach to technology and the intellectual background of his works.

2.METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using the Case Study method, which is one of the qualitative research methods. Data was collected through semi-structured open-ended interview questions and examination of the artworks. In this technique, the researcher prepared interview questions containing the questions planned to be asked beforehand, and allowed the artist to elaborate on their answers with different side or sub-questions depending on the flow of the interview.

According to Ekiz (2020), the interview technique starts with pre-prepared questions, is flexible and questions can be shaped later. Interpretations were made based on the data obtained from the interview questions.

Descriptive analysis technique was used in data analysis. Descriptive analysis is one of the qualitative data analysis methods. In this method, the data obtained using various data collection techniques are summarized and interpreted in line with certain themes. The researcher can often include quotations to emphasize the views of individuals. Its purpose is to summarize and interpret the findings and present them to the reader (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003).

In order to collect data, an interview was conducted with the artist Tunç Dindaş on 19.05.2023 via the Zoom application. The questions posed to the artist, in accordance with the purpose of the research; graffiti art has been determined in order to reveal the artist's general understanding of art and his approach to technology and to reach a general evaluation.

3.FINDINGS

Famous graffiti artist Tunç Dindaş, who has made a name for himself in the art of graffiti today, begins his understanding of art with "I am an artist from Istanbul". It is seen that the main theme in Tunç Dindaş's works revolves around Istanbul, and that the characters he has created stand out from other characters with stereotypical defining features such as fez, rosary or mustache that will remind Istanbul, Turkey or the Ottoman Empire. The questions posed to Tunç Dindaş and the answers received are listed below, with direct quotations. A general evaluation was made by interpreting the answers received.

"What is graffiti for you?"

"Graffiti is street art that includes writing with calligraphic value. They are graffiti derived from the signature of the person who made it and fed by other visual arts".

Graffiti is aesthetically written capital letters or writing on walls with more complex writing styles. Artists personalize their graffiti using their own signature tags, and at the same time create creative and expressive graffiti using elements such as forms, colors and perspective, inspired by other fields of visual art.

If there is a universal truth, it is the concern for the message within. Because a colorful wall will draw attention between the empty, gray walls, it should be more meticulous and comprehensive considering that thousands of people will see it every day. It can be said that a work that is done haphazardly just for color is far from art. Because in contemporary art after 1960, art began to be conceptual rather than aesthetic. This supports that the main part of art is thinking.



Image 12. Tunç Dindaş, Adidas Galataport, 2022: URL 12



Image 13. Tunç Dindaş, Redbull Bc One Turkey Poster, 2016: URL 13

“What is the purpose of graffiti?”

“The person who makes graffiti is called a “writer”. The goal of writers is to write their pseudonyms in as many places as possible and become famous. The harder you write your name, the more famous you will be.”.

The purpose of graffiti is the writers' desire to become famous by writing their tags in as many places as possible. Since the works done legally are under the control of the state or municipalities, it is less likely to disappear, but illegal street art is exposed to bombings by other graffiti artists, as well as being covered up by municipalities.

This superiority of space (Dökmen, 2005: 33) explains the way the spaces are used, an indicator of friendship as well as status. In general, it can be thought that graffiti artists should share in spatial superiority, saying that being in the front, sitting high, sitting on the right means high status.



Image 14. Tunç Dindaş, Salvador Cafe / Be Mad, 2017: URL 14



Image 15. Tunç Dindaş, Fox Tv Please Let's Break Up, 2017: URL 15



Image 16. Tunç Dindaş, Bodrum / Muğla, 2017: URL 16

“When and why did you become interested in graffiti?”

“I can say that I started with the Break Dance movement, which was popular in 1983. At that time, I saw it on the covers of break dance records. It must have been 1984, I watched a movie called “Beat Street”. There I understood exactly what graffiti is. I have been doing graffiti since 1985”

The adventures of starting graffiti may vary from person to person, but in general; It can be said that it can be based on lived stories, personal experiences and experiences.

“What materials do you use when making graffiti?”

“I just use spray paint and spray heads (tips) that we call caps. These allow you to squeeze in different thicknesses. And a ladder”.

The name given to the heads of spray paints for squeezing the paint is cap. There are caps that will give different thicknesses when painting, as well as different colors. These caps are very effective to give the desired thickness on the wall. For example, if something is going to be filled, a cap that will spray thick is preferred, otherwise you may have to try to fill it for hours with a cap that will spray fine. For this reason, the necessity of tools and equipment that will facilitate the work and save time is important. It can be described as reaching an unreachable height by means of a ladder.

“What innovations do you think are coming in the art of graffiti?”

“Compared to the past, spray paints are of higher quality. We have been able to reach caps more easily. In the 80s, we used to take out the deodorant caps and use them. Now there are shops that sell caps. In the past, spray paints were bought at the hardware store, now there are graffiti shops that only sell graffiti materials. A variety of spray paints can be found in large stationery stores. The color chart, which was limited to a maximum of 15-20 colors, can now increase to 200-300 colors in just one brand”.

As can be understood from the statements of the artist, it can be mentioned that a supply-demand relationship has been established in terms of accessing graffiti materials. As the art of graffiti increases its popularity over time, it is inevitable to see developments in the field of materials.



Image 17. Tunç Dindaş, Lokumz, 2017:
URL 17



Image 18. Tunç Dindaş, Monster vs
Robot, 2017: URL 18

“Do you use technology while doing your work?”

“I don't use technology while doing street work. But when doing corporate graffiti works, if necessary, I use projection to place corporate images such as logos, etc. quickly, comfortably and proportionally. I'm in favor of giving my street work the spirit of oldschool and real graffiti. It shouldn't be artificial. That's why I don't use a projector”.

The projector, which is preferred for corporate graffiti works, is not preferred for street works. However, he argues that it is necessary to work with the oldschool method in order to capture the real graffiti spirit and to have more pleasure while doing it. Oldschool means old-school, old-fashioned and old-fashioned. According to Ross (2021), it can be said that Graffiti has existed throughout history. Modern graffiti developed after the 1960s. The writers in New York are considered the leading figures in today's graffiti. Old-fashioned graffiti writers emerged in the Bronx area, and then work spread to metro areas. <https://jeffreyianross.com/running-out-of-time-documenting-the-life-histories-of-old-school-graffiti-writers/>. Oldschool includes styles from the past. It is used to revive the style of a particular period. Oldschool graffiti was born as a part of street culture and is closely related to hip-hop culture.

“What would you like to say about the intellectual background of your work?”

“I need to separate my street works and gallery works. In my street works, I try to write my nickname “Turbo” in the best way possible. All I want is to color the gray walls in the city I live in. In my gallery works, there is usually a subtext that changes according to the exhibition. But in general, the main theme revolves around Istanbul, where I live. I am an artist from Istanbul”.

It can be said that the artist separates their gallery and street works, with gallery works being shaped around a theme, while street works are more spontaneous, done to color the walls and write their nicknames in more places.



Image 19. Tunç Dindaş, Bosphorus
Mc Sultan Sketch, 2017: URL 19



Image 20. Tunç Dindaş, Galata
Warriors Sketch, 2017: URL 20

“How do you evaluate the relationship between technology and art?”

“We don't make art in the Middle Ages. The artist must adapt himself according to the period in which he lives. But I think there's a dose for that too. Don't be a slave to technology. Technology alone cannot make art. If he reaches a stage where he can make art, people will teach him that”.

Although not being a slave to technology in art, it is important for the artist to adapt to his age, to follow technological developments and to know what he wants.

“What are your views on the contributions of technology to graffiti art?”

“The basis of graffiti is spray paint. No graffiti without spray paint. Then it becomes a mural. That's why I can't say anything about graffiti without technology. If we're talking about graffiti that is embedded in hip-hop culture”.

According to these statements; since the basis of graffiti is spray paint, it cannot go beyond wall painting without spray paint. It can be said that technology is not a determining factor here for the emergence or presence of graffiti. However, it is possible to talk about light graffiti and digital walls in order to offer diversity in the application method.

Based on this assumption, the camera etc. While it is thought that artists will multiply without fear of legal action since there will be no devices, the number of people who will be exposed to graffiti will be more limited since it will not be on virtual platforms. In addition, there will not be digital graffiti, nor will there be an approach that will offer the opportunity to contribute. In this case, graffiti will be performed in more traditional and limited ways. This will provide an environment for artists to use their hand skills and creativity intensively.

4.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Graffiti art, with its diverse approaches and styles, is widely regarded as a form of free expression. While some view it as an integral part of hip-hop culture, there are differing opinions on its classification. Functioning as a means of communication, graffiti art embodies a quest for unique style and expression through various techniques and materials. It possesses the ability to convey messages and narratives to society. The sources of inspiration are varied, and the choice of location by the artist can significantly impact the effectiveness of the work. Continuous learning, experimentation, and bold innovation are crucial in the world of graffiti art.

The advent of technology has propelled graffiti art into new realms, making it more accessible. The digital landscape has provided artists with a platform to create and share their designs worldwide. Despite these advancements, many graffiti artists maintain a connection to traditional methods, using technology as a tool to enhance rather than replace their work. One such artist is Tunç Dindaş, known as Turbo.

Turbo aims to preserve the essence of graffiti art by blending traditional techniques with modern technology. His art is a testament to the spirit of graffiti, characterized by its originality and spontaneity. By transforming walls into living canvases, Turbo seeks to evoke the true essence of graffiti in his audience.

Graffiti art fosters a dialogue between the artist and the audience through its profound messages. The evolution of graffiti art alongside technological advancements offers new possibilities for artists. Those who integrate technology into their work while honoring traditional methods will continue to uphold the authentic spirit of graffiti art.

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