

To whom it may concern:

The Graffiti Gallery projects add an exciting dimension to the visual arts. They offer relief from constraints of urban settings at all levels.

People who live in large cities are increasingly warehoused in small apartments, stuffed into office cubicles and confined in crowded classrooms. Cars are smaller and grid locked in traffic jams. Subway riders and airline passengers are sardined into cramped spaces and seats, rubbing elbows with strangers. Is it any wonder, given the opportunity, small children will instinctively race around any spacious area they find?

When asked about their work, or as some would say, vandalism, the graffiti painters frequently express the need for a large expanses and feel ordinary canvases are too restricting for their ideas.

This idea of breaking free of confinement is not new. What immediately comes to mind are works by Claes Oldenburg, such as his 45 foot sculptured "Clothespin" in Centre Square in Philadelphia. The massive "Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Wrapped" by Cristo and Jeanne-Claude transformed what had been a drab exterior of an old, windowless building into an expression of contemporary imagination.

On closer examination it becomes apparent that much graffiti has elements of true artistic talent even though frequently applied to inappropriate places. Millions of taxpayer dollars are spent each year in painting over and restoring such areas. Defacing public and private property in many communities is a felony.

We can't help wondering if prevention might be at least a partial cure. A public place built with a small part of those remedial funds would provide a legal site where anyone could become a graffiti artist without the fear of arrest for malicious mischief or a felony. Recognition, respect and sometimes a little more training, might lead to a sizeable contribution to the Arts in our society.

Beverley Tisdell is an active Feng Shui consultant and workshop leader in Lake County Florida. She began as an RN serving as a Public Health nurse in the Peace Corps. She has a BA degree in Art and post graduate studies in Humanities and Art Education at CUNY (Hunter College) in NY. Convinced that everyone has an aptitude for the arts, in her classes for adults and teens, students are not only introduced to drawing and painting, but other art forms and cultures as well.

She combines her health interests as a RN, and her skills as a teacher of the Visual Arts with her knowledge and intuition as a Feng Shui practitioner. She identifies where there is a need to balance the Chi or life energy in your home, life style and environs.