

You Weren't There

1990s NYC Graffiti. Aesthetics, Plasticity, & Form.

Graffiti's avant-garde nature and transgressive relationship with private property challenge art norms. Born in the 1960s, it reached a fever pitch in 1990s New York after the end of the train era in 1989. Artists adapted, using the streets and architecture to combat alienation. It became a high-stakes game, blending aesthetics and lifestyle into a global blueprint that reconnected art with the pulse of human existence. These artists are modern-day tricksters with a deliberate counterpoint to an ordered art world. Focusing on the 1990s—a decade of unpredictability and innovation—this book traces graffiti's evolution and its sensibilities within broader social currents. Through striking visuals and incisive text, we follow their vanguard's vision of creativity: combinational, exploratory, and transformational. Accompanied by the vanguard's stories, commentary and their artworks from private collections, this is the groundbreaking chronicle of an era that redefined the rules of art. Hugo Martinez (1951, New York) is the director of the Martinez Gallery in New York, the premiere showcase for the vanguard of the graffiti movement since 1972. Martinez has documented the graffiti movement since its inception and is the foremost authority on its evolution. Over the years, he maintained galleries, nomadic venues and art-based clinics throughout New York City.

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