Graffiti Laws and Artist Rights

When you have permission to make art, you retain all of your rights as the artist.

If you don’t have permission to paint on a wall, it’s vandalism and there can be serious punishments.

Rights of artists

Copyright – You own the copyright to your artwork. No one can put your art on a t-shirt or in their movie without your permission. They should pay you if they are going to make money from your art!

“Moral Rights” – No one can change or destroy the art without your permission (see C.A.P.A. and V.A.P.A. laws).

Punishments for vandalism

If you don’t have permission from the property owner, anything you paint on the wall is considered vandalism. Jail and fines – Even just a little graffiti vandalism can be punished with jail time and large fines, even for minors. If the vandal is under 18 years old, the parents can be punished.

Responsibility of property owners

If you own a building, you get to decide how to decorate it. But if it’s in a public space where everyone can see it, there are rules and responsibilities. Building owners are responsible for cleaning up graffiti that occurs on their property. Property owners must clean up graffiti vandalism on their buildings within 30 days, or they get fined at least $500.

Rules on advertising

In 2002, San Francisco voters passed Proposition G to prohibit any new billboards in the city.

Are these rules fair?

When you and your classmates are in charge, what rules will you make for your neighborhood?

WhereArtLives.org

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