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Upper Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

Urban art

**00.01–00.40** Urban art is all about innovation. From using buckets on a busy street, to filling an art gallery with local graffiti, to mixing jazz with the spoken word – it invites us to listen with new ears, and to look with new eyes.

If you walk down this train tunnel in Washington D.C., you’ll discover the bright colours of urban graffiti artists. It is Washington’s Wall of Fame, and Nick Posada’s work is here. But unfortunately other people have covered the art he’s created with their own graffiti.

**00.42–00.54 Nick Posada** This is what happens when nobody respects any type of work that someone spent their paint and their time on. This is what the Wall of Fame in D.C. has come to.

**00.55–01.12** Although the Wall of Fame is open to everyone, Posada says there are rules to be followed in the world of graffiti – rules that not everyone understands. He says that real graffiti artists understand how to use colour, and how to make their work distinctive.

**01.13–01.20 Nick Posada** So you would use colours that contrast one another. Ah, my piece is still there. I did this in, like, ’99.

**01.21–01.25** There is also an exhibition of Nick’s work here at the Govinda Gallery in Georgetown.

**01.26–01.34** **Chris Murray** Graffiti art has certainly brought to public art a whole new dimension.

**01.35–02.05** According to Chris Murray, graffiti art is special because it’s fast, uninhibited and always inventive. Murray believes that graffiti is just one more step in the development of pop art. The works have sold well – to young people, and to collectors of pop art. In the gallery, people can enjoy the art in a traditional setting – and they like it. It’s good for the artists, too.

**02.06–02.11 Chris Murray** It was a real reversal for them because they’re used to being vilified and now they’re being enjoyed and that’s a good thing.

**02.14–02.39** People are beginning to appreciate the talents of Jafar Barron, too. The 28-year-old trumpeter grew up in this neighbourhood north of Philadelphia. Both his parents are jazz musicians. But Jafar wanted to mix more traditional, classical forms of jazz with the rap and hip-hop music of his own generation.

His first CD is an innovative mix of both worlds.

**02.40–02.59** **Jafar Barron** I like to think the whole creation is all about music, to me, you know what I’m saying? And like, I think, I believe that the Most High is a musician.

I guess it came from my exposure to hip-hop, and the poetry that comes from that, and, you know, some friends of mine.

**03.00–03.19** Jafar now plays in clubs in the city where he grew up. He also now has a deal with a major recording company.

The stories of how these two artists developed, one musical, one visual, do not surprise art history professor Don Kimes.

**03.20–03.36 Don Kimes** It’s about sort of taking what it is that you come from, what you emerge from, what’s authentic for you, and pushing it to the edge of its envelope, to the edge of its boundaries, its limits and taking one more step.

**03.37–03.58** Kimes says artists need to build on their own cultural background, because anything else would be false. It is said that exploration and discovery are what art is truly about. Urban artists – both musicians and painters – can take us to places where we’ve never been before ... even if it’s as close as a nearby city street.

Life