



Street art: Free art
that is for everyone

Description

A review of Archie Fineberg's presentation on Montreal's street art hosted by the WCCM

By **Jacqueline van de Geer**

Oh, miraculous street artists! They're like a secret society.

Living around the corner of *Mur Legal Rouen*, I witness street art changing every day, except for the spray-painted portrait of Robin Williams that is still untouched. Often, I take out my phone and take a picture before the piece has vanished.

I share the passion for this ephemeral art with engaging guest speaker Archie Fineberg, who started the webinar showing examples of ancient wall art. Apparently, we humans have always had a zest for leaving a 'tag'.

Being a fan of street art, I was excited to attend the conference on March 16 entitled ***Everything You Wanted to Know About Montreal's Street Art*** organized by the **Women's Canadian Club Montreal**, introduced by **Lynn Doyle** and moderated by **Helena Richards**.

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Then we made a time-hop. The presentation developed into an exciting speed-history class on graffiti and murals, showing works by several early street artists like **CornBread**.



CornBread, the Godfather of street art as we know it now, started tagging in 1965, writing his name everywhere in Philadelphia. And many copied him all over the city. Thus, Philadelphia became the graffiti capital of the world and is now, according to Fineberg, the mural capital of the world.



Le 8ème ART – 1940 Champlain Street, Ville-Marie borough – Artists: Stare and Ware – Image: Archie Fineberg

Street artists in Montreal followed the same pattern, with street art evolving from tags to commissioned murals through the decades.

Fineberg started photographing street art in the West-end of Montreal. There he got addicted to discovering more street art and crossed the island. In ten years, he accumulated a vast collection. The webinar showcased this enormous collection of all manifestations of street art, from tags to murals, from graffiti to knitted street sculptures.

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As well, Archie Fineberg explained the different techniques used by street artists, styles like removal and tiles.

He highlighted the annual **Montreal Street Art Festival**, which has existed for six years already and mentioned the disappearance of many murals because of buildings torn down and renovations of street blocks.



He is an enormous advocate of street art, stating it is free art and it is for everyone. The love and admiration for this form of art shone through his Zoom presentation. After, I felt like getting out of the house and going on the hunt for murals, tags and tiled portraits!

In case you missed this webinar there is the book in which you can plunge into the universe of Montreal's street art – [Montreal's Street Art Gallery: The Best of the City's Graffiti and Wall-Art](#) by Archie Fineberg. It showcases the work of many talented artists, both amateur and formally trained. All the pictures are accompanied by captions that provide the title of the work, its location and the artist(s) who created it.

Archie Fineberg is currently developing an app and a map so we can follow in his footsteps and see street art in real life.

Feature image: Leonard Cohen – St-Dominique Street corner Napoléon, Plateau Mont-Royal borough – Artist: Kevin Ledo – Image: Archie Fineberg

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Originally from the Netherlands, **Jacqueline van de Geer** crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 2005 to live and work in Montréal. She has a bachelor's degree in visual arts and performance arts.

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