Where’d You Go?
5 Pointz: “The Institute of Higher Burnin’”

5 Pointz: The Institute of Higher Burnin’, or the 5 Pointz Aerosol Art Center, Inc. is an outdoor space in Long Island City, New York, considered to be the world’s premiere “grafitti Mecca” where artists from around the world paint on the walls of a factory building owned by Long Island Developer Jerry Wolkoff.

Previously, the complex was established as the Phun Phactory in 1993 by Pat DiLillo under a program called Graffiti Terminators to discourage graffiti vandalism by encouraging artists to display their work in a formal showcase. In 2002, Jonathan Cohen, a graffiti artist operating under the name “Meres One” began curating the work that was displayed on the walls of the building. Although its name signifies the coming together of five boroughs, it has actually helped to unite artists from the global graffiti scene, including Stay High, Tracy 168, Cope2, Part, SPE, and Tats Cru.

Formerly, the building housed Crane Street Studios, where 200 artists paid below market prices for renting studio space. Wolkoff announced in 2011, after an accident that injured an artist, that he planned to redevelop the property to build high-rise residential towers put the future of 5 Pointz in jeopardy. Of course, seeing as the art is “grafitti art”, its demise seems oddly fitting, doesn’t it?
Art: \ärt\

1. skill acquired by experience, study, or observation <the art of making friends>
4. a) the conscious use of skill and creative imagination especially in the production of aesthetic objects; also: works so produced. b) 1. fine art 2. one of the fine arts 3. a graphic art

The question pertaining to 5 Pointz, and to graffiti in general, is “is this art?” Of course one will get different answers from different people, depending on who they ask. To some, graffiti, regardless of its placement and skill, has no place in the urban landscape. To others, its transience, much like anything else in the city, and pertinence to urban themes easily makes it an art.
2012
And from here, just because they look cool...
As someone closely connected with New York City’s underground dance scene and a regular commuter on the 7 train, I’ve been lead to 5 Pointz many times to watch dancers compete and have stared down at the painted face of Biggie on 5 Pointz on my way to school many times.

With the news that 5 Pointz, the graffiti mecca of the world, will be torn down I wanted to do something, *anything*, with the building covered in everything from Tweedledee and Tweedledum to Batman and meme faces such as “Y U NO LOVE ME.” I wanted to preserve all the art that I’d seen, for myself, so that I could look back on them sometime in the future. Of course, my obsession with the meaning of art also made me take tons of photos of this place, and I was able to see the change from a new perspective.
Citations

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