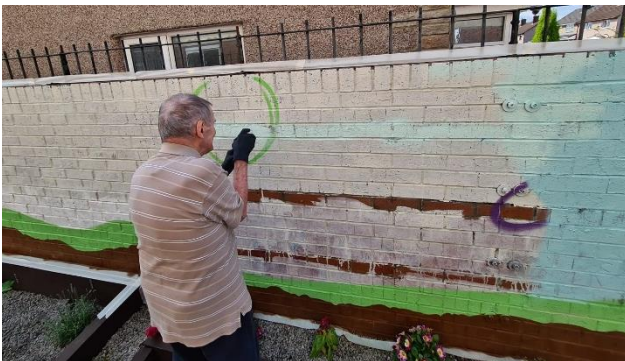


Unleashing Our Inner Banksy: why Graffiti Art Workshops are a colourful path to improving wellbeing for older people by Tom Glynn, August 2023

In a world bustling with life, it's easy to overlook the vibrant and artistic energy of older people. The notion that art is ageless becomes undeniable when a group of silver-haired seniors, armed with spray cans and some great ideas, takes to the garden of a sheltered accommodation complex in force – not to protest about changes in the law affecting them, but to engage in the exhilarating world of Graffiti Art. Yes, you read that right! Graffiti art, with all its urban charm and rebellious flair, is not just for the young and daring; it's a creative playground that's proving to have remarkable health and wellbeing benefits for people aged over 50:



1. **A Spritz of Youthful Vigour:** Remember the days when your Mum yelled at you for doodling on the walls? Well, guess what? Now it's your turn to graffiti away with abandon! Engaging in graffiti art workshops injects a sense of youthful exuberance and excitement. Channelling their inner rebels, participants can find themselves embracing a new lease of life and experiencing the zest of their younger selves.
2. **Laughter in the Air:** Have you ever seen a group of beginner 50+ year olds trying to master the art of spraying paint? It's a symphony of laughter and joy. Graffiti art workshops provide a platform to giggle like teenagers as participants navigate the spray cans, creating colourful masterpieces – not only on the canvas but also in the atmosphere.
3. **Mental Gymnastics:** The act of creating graffiti art demands a certain level of strategic planning and mental agility. From choosing colours and designs to envisioning the final piece, participants find themselves flexing their cognitive muscles. The workshops offer a stimulating way to maintain and even enhance mental acuity.
4. **Social Strokes:** Graffiti art workshops serve as a bustling hub for to connect and make friends with like-minded individuals. Sharing tales of their artistic escapades, they develop a sense of camaraderie that often turns into enduring friendship. The workshops become a creative support group that fosters positivity and a sense of belonging.
5. **Artistic Euphoria:** The sheer act of watching colours meld and blend on the canvas – or sometimes the wall – releases a cascade of endorphins. These "feel-good" chemicals work their magic, leaving participants with a sense of accomplishment and a dash of euphoria. After all, what's not to love about turning an empty space into a canvas of emotions?

6. **Physical Pizzazz:** Forget Zumba – the energetic movements required to wield spray cans and work on larger surfaces provide a fun and unconventional workout. Participants find themselves stretching, squatting, and even dancing as they bring their art to life. Who knew that spray-painting could be such a fantastic way to stay active?
7. **Eternal Learning:** Learning a new skill is a sure-fire way to keep the mind agile and the spirit youthful. Graffiti art workshops offer older people the chance to dive into a realm they might have considered unfamiliar. Each stroke of paint brings forth a lesson in creativity, and each completed piece serves as a testament to their continuous thirst for knowledge.
8. **Urban Adventurers:** Let's face it, there's an undeniable element of thrill and excitement when one takes to the streets armed with cans of paint. The workshops transform participants into urban adventurers, exploring their cities through an entirely different lens. Every wall, every alleyway becomes a potential canvas, allowing them to view their surroundings in an entirely new light.

Society often underestimates the potential of older adults, graffiti art workshops stand as a vibrant testament to the fact that creativity knows no age limits.

As our workshops attendees pick up spray cans and unleash their inner Banksy on the urban landscape, they're not just creating art; they're nurturing their wellbeing and celebrating the golden years in a kaleidoscope of colours.

So, the next time you see a group of older people gathered around a wall with spray cans in hand, don't be surprised – they're not just creating graffiti, they're painting a portrait of vitality, joy, and the timeless spirit of art.

Tom Glynn is the Director of [Power by Hip Hop CIC \(UC Crew\)](#) based in St Helens, a national award-winning Hip Hop organisation, who use the power of Hip Hop arts to improve communities.

If you would like to talk to Tom about future projects or how to get involved in Graffiti Art, please contact him: hello@poweredbyhiphop.org or hello@uccrew.co.uk

