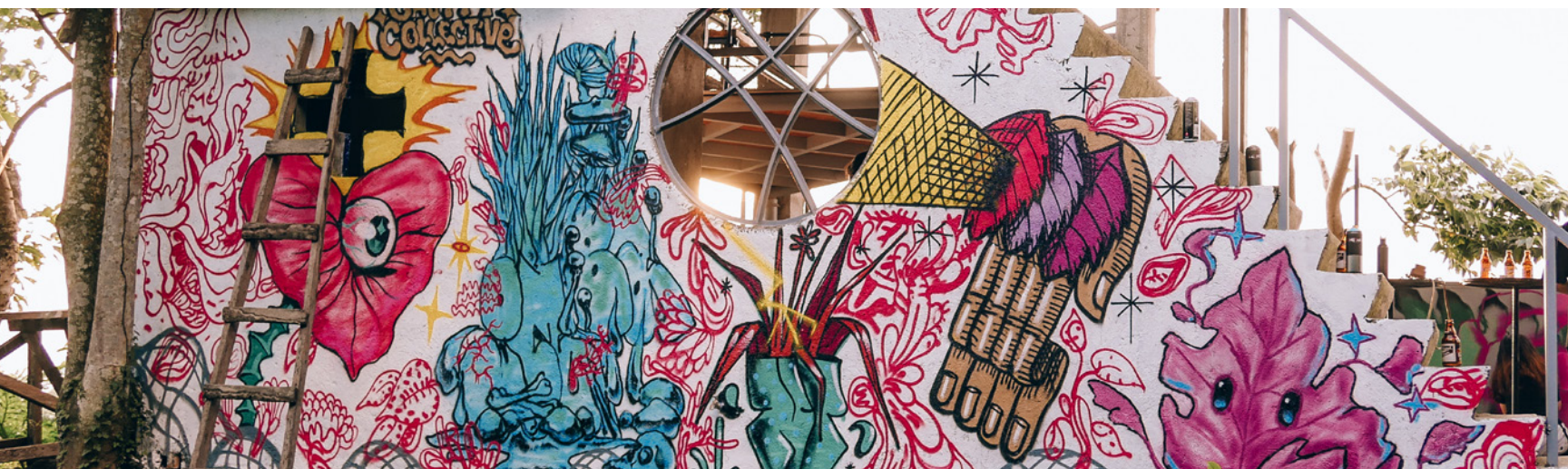




ART



WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING

Wallhunters take refuge in an artist collective that resuscitates the urban art scene. They call themselves the Cavity Collective.

BY HANNA SORBITO

We're no stranger to seeing graffiti and art-embellished walls in abandoned structures in the metro. For street artists, the city has become their canvas, and they draw two kinds of spectators: those who appreciate and those who irk on the sight (and idea) of vandalism.

This is the thin line that a Metro Manila-based artist collective aspires to thrive from. Cavity Collective started with humble art sessions in 2010 with only eight members. Inspired by the vision of other emerging crews like Pilipinas Street Plan during the burgeoning of urban art in the country, they peppered the walls of a local skatepark in Las Piñas with their eager creations. Their name was a wordplay of Cavite (where the collective was first formed) and "cavity," a representation of how spectators perceive them and their art when they were starting.

Often misunderstood, the collective has grown and has since envisioned to resuscitate the image of the urban art scene in the Philippines. Their goal: to provide an avenue for aspiring street artists to freely express their art in public spaces.

The unspoken rule about urban art and graffiti

Urban art is no vandalism—Cavity

emphasizes the difference between street art and graffiti. Each has its own audience and purpose. Graffiti is not intended to be appreciated by the people; instead, they are directed towards other graffiti writers or artists. They commonly manifest as intricately done and technically rendered characters, which we often perceive as territorial markers addressed to people of the same sphere of understanding. Think local or underground organized groups.

On the contrary, urban art is meant to be witnessed by the people. "Urban art is made to educate those who don't have access to galleries and museums. There are different types of art aside from the usual portrait and landscapes." Urban art, in any shape or form, is purposefully created to mirror certain realities in its space and serve as an eye-opener.

Cavity Collective in existence

Having differences in style, meaning, and purpose does not hinder Cavity Collective from nurturing street artists. They consist of members who are socially-relevant and known for their signature styles, whether it's traditional urban art, vandalism, or graffiti piecing.

Urban art has opened a lot of opportunities for its members to eventually get recognized and hold their own art exhibits, where they are given ample recognition as budding street artists. Despite this recognition, there's still a certain thrill to wall hunting that the group breeds from.

For their members who do graffiti, nighttime is still the best time to work on the streets. Here's the clincher: art in public spaces is still illegal in the Philippines. That's why members who prefer to hunt walls are always at risk of getting caught and being penalized by local government units. However, urban art would never be a violation of public space for Cavity Collective. It's an expression of their vision and the message that they want to project towards society and the space they occupy.

"Urban art is a gift for the people," street artist and Cavity Collective member Blic reminds us. "We are professionals that transform gray walls and create a more lively ambiance." What these crews call for are recognition and support. Yet until spaces are safeguarded from metropolitan art, these wallhunters shall continue to creep into the night and surprise us with their creations as dawn arrives. 📌