OPEN WALLS

TOWARD THE PROMOTION OF CULTURE AND DEMOCRACY

YASH
Snösätra (2014)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

INTRODUCTION

An open wall is a surface on which anyone can write or draw what they want. An open wall can be used by many different people, but it is currently harder for certain forms of cultural expression to find surfaces on which to express themselves than for others. In many places in Sweden today, graffiti and street art are forms of art without a sanctioned surface on which to exist, despite the fact that graffiti is often called the world's biggest artistic movement.

Despite the great popularity of graffiti art and the fact that it has now been in existence in Sweden for more than 30 years, both knowledge and understanding of this art form are often lacking. Graffiti and street art should be treated the same way and granted the same space as other art forms – and this publication aims to propose how such a change might be brought about.

Gargantuan arenas, shopping centres, housing and roads have become synonymous with "creating a city". But an attractive city needs to be inclusive and affirmative of its residents wishes and passions when it comes to the cityscape. We believe that tapping into small-scale, local phenomena, affirming diversity and allowing many different types of expression are prerequisites that need to be met if we want to be an attractive city in the future. If the wish really is to promote creativity and innovation, you cannot at the same time decide what tools are to be used to promote them.

An open wall is a place for people to meet and express themselves in a way for which the public discourse has not set aside any other obvious space. It is an interface between young people and adults; here traditional artists can stand shoulder to shoulder with graffiti artists, engaging in creative work with the general public as their audience. There are a great many people who never visit museums or art galleries and for whom an open wall provides an entirely novel opportunity to view and be inspired by artistic expression.

Our aim in *Open walls – toward the promotion of culture and democracy* is to contribute good advice and examples to help municipalities and others get started on open wall projects.

Hugo Röjgård – Graffitifrämjandet (the Graffiti Association)
Karin Lekberg – Subtopia
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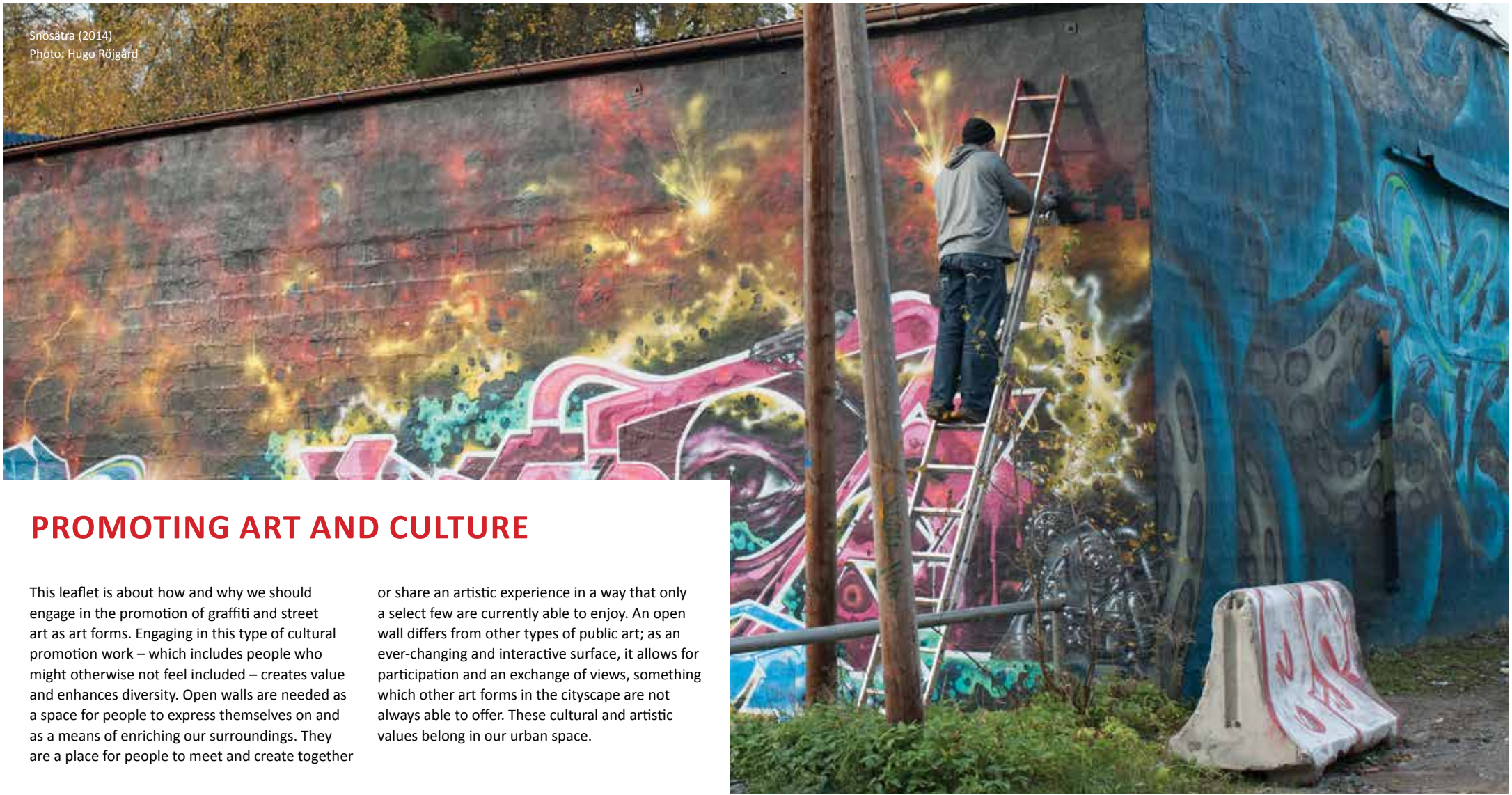

Snösätra (2014)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

PROMOTING ART AND CULTURE

This leaflet is about how and why we should engage in the promotion of graffiti and street art as art forms. Engaging in this type of cultural promotion work – which includes people who might otherwise not feel included – creates value and enhances diversity. Open walls are needed as a space for people to express themselves on and as a means of enriching our surroundings. They are a place for people to meet and create together or share an artistic experience in a way that only a select few are currently able to enjoy. An open wall differs from other types of public art; as an ever-changing and interactive surface, it allows for participation and an exchange of views, something which other art forms in the cityscape are not always able to offer. These cultural and artistic values belong in our urban space.

WHY AN OPEN WALL?

What is democracy? Think about it for a minute. Don't worry if you're not familiar with the Swedish Constitution. I have asked this question many times, and it can stump even politicians. Maybe it's like a fish in water – those of us who live in a democracy take it so much for granted that we do not even notice it.

In a democracy, there is something called public space, which is primarily made up of the city's streets and squares. What is this public space for? Keep these two questions in mind as you read this booklet.

Different types of expression emerge in a public space. Like us citizens in our clothing and vehicles, or architecture, infrastructure, and advertising. All these types of expression communicate with us. They denote eras and styles, and what the wearer or creator wants to say. Most permanent types of expression, such as infrastructure, architecture and advertising, are shaped by public authorities and companies. We citizens also engage in expression. We enjoy the freedom of assembly and expression, and can dress, speak and move about pretty much however we want. But those who wish to express themselves in a more permanent fashion often lack the space in which to do so. This shortage of space has prompted three forms of expression:

1. "Tagging" has existed for at least a couple thousand years (see the ruins of Pompeii, for instance). Tags are often scrawled spontaneously; it's less about how it is written than what it says. Everyone should be able to read it.

2. Street art came to Sweden in the late 1990s, although there are also earlier examples from the political clashes of the 1970s. Street art is often planned; the aesthetic is important. As is true of tagging, everyone should be able to read it.

3. Graffiti came here from New York in the mid-1980s. Just like improvisational music, graffiti is a carefully-prepared, spontaneous moment. The important thing is not what it says, but how it is written. The aesthetic and style are the content. Just like certain types of music, understanding graffiti requires a certain amount of prior knowledge, which distinguishes it from both tagging and street art.

Until the 1990s, Swedish cities were notable for their relatively messy public spaces. As long ago as 1891, a letter to the editor signed Homeowner in Västmanlands Läns Tidning (a newspaper in Västmanland County) complained that youth "have affected as a diversion the practice of scribbling on house walls and gates with chalk and nails…a respectable sense of propriety is driven to distraction by such disorders, and property owners' budgets suffer serious encroachment." If you look at photographs from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s will see shabby-looking cities with a great deal of tagging. The mass exodus from the city centres to the newly-built suburbs was happening at that time, leaving the inner cities to fend for themselves.

The city centres became attractive again in the 1990s. This could be seen in the public discourse surrounding public space. Terms like "attractive and safe" marked the commercialisation of Swedish cities. Today, property rights increasingly trump the vision of a space for the general public, and the privatisation of public space continues. Sweden may not have travelled quite as far down this road as the Oslo described by Norwegian journalist and author Øyvind Holen: "Private wealth and public poverty". But for nearly 20 years, many Swedish cities have been moving distinctly in that direction.

Graffiti and street art have come to constitute some of the most obvious battle lines drawn between the private and the public spheres. At the same time, the conflict has grown ever more complex.

That zero tolerance is an ineffective policy is easy to conclude. If it were effective, graffiti and street art would no longer exist. That these forms of expression have not only survived, but adapted and even grown says much about the powerful forces they channel. Street art and graffiti are probably the world's largest artistic movements. Why do people choose to express themselves in public places? And how is this need satisfied?

Graffiti and street art communicate creativity, idiom, attitudes, and mystique. These expressions show that a city is made up of different voices and volitions. They give us citizens a voice.

So, what is democracy? Naturally, there is no simple answer to that question. But the rights of the citizen are at the very heart of a democracy. Not least the human rights enshrined in the Swedish Constitution. Some of the most important rights – freedom of speech and freedom of assembly – are ones that we only enjoy in public spaces. This is why public spaces have such an important role to play in a democracy. Could it be that the street and the square are the most important arenas for democracy?

A hundred years ago, the right to vote in Sweden was restricted by age, gender and wealth. Only wealthy men over a certain age were allowed to vote. Once universal suffrage was instituted, all Swedish citizens having reached the age of majority were elevated to equal standing in the parliamentary process. Today, visual freedom of speech is conditional in the same way that the right to vote was a hundred years ago. Those who can afford to can buy advertising space on billboards all over Sweden. Those who cannot pay are unable to engage in visual dialogue in the public space. In other words, we are unable to communicate with our fellow citizens, politicians or the advertisements around us, whether in writing or figuratively.

"Graffiti and street art communicate creativity, idiom, attitudes, and mystique. These expressions show that a city is made up of different voices and volitions."

Tobias Barenthin Lindblad
editor of "Dokument Press" and
board member of the Graffiti Association.

There are those who argue that we suffer from a deficit of democracy in public spaces. It is said that dialogue is one of the most important constituent elements in a democracy. How can we engage in dialogue today with those who buy space in our streets and squares? Where can we engage in such dialogue? In order to be able to take democracy, dialogue and equality seriously, public spaces are required where ordinary citizens are able to express themselves in words and images. Places where we can exercise our visual freedom of expression on the same terms as those who buy space. Visual freedom of expression on open walls is at heart a matter of democracy. It's a matter of freedom of expression in the public sphere, which is so very important to a democracy.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF WALLS

There are a number of different kinds of open walls in various places in Sweden and around the world. These walls can vary in appearance. Some are purpose-built, and others are existing surfaces that have been opened to graffiti. Open walls can be found at different spots in the city; cities are different and need to be seen from the perspective of their particular characteristics. Open walls can also work in different ways. Below are some examples of how.

Totally open

The wall may be painted on by anyone at any time. An example of such a wall is the “Anna” parking garage in central Malmö.

Staffed

The wall, often fenced in, may be painted on during specified hours when the area is staffed, by people who are sometimes paid.

Curated

There is a person or group responsible for what is painted on the wall; a person who wants to paint presents a sketch and is assigned a surface to paint on.

Permanent mural

A permanent painting (often a large one) is done on a wall. It may be painted over after a few years, or not at all.

IKAROZ
Subtopia (2012)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

The Nyköping graffiti wall (2014)
Photo: Hanna Andersson

THE NYKÖPING GRAFFITI WALL

The idea of opening a graffiti wall in Nyköping was discussed on and off for 10 years, but the work got started in earnest in 2011. In a motion formulated with the help of local painters, the question was brought before Nyköping's Youth Council. The issue was sent on to the Municipal Council, which passed the motion and assigned the Board of Culture and Recreation the task of designing the graffiti wall.

A liaison group was formed composed of officials from different municipal administrations (the Culture and Recreation Administration, the Technical Division, the Communications Division, the Youth Council and the Children's Cultural Centre), representatives from the police as well as active painters (which later became known as Graffitifrämjandet Nyköping). The group, chaired by an official from the Board of Culture and Recreation, drew up documents for the wall's location, as well as a blueprint, budget and maintenance plan, along with a communication plan and informational materials. Following its adoption by both the Board of Culture and Recreation and the municipal government, the plan was brought to fruition in the spring of 2013.

Graffitifrämjandet Nyköping are an association and stakeholder organisation formed when the Nyköping graffiti wall opened in June 2013. The association's objective is to monitor the interests of the city's (and surrounding area's) graffiti artists, and to serve as a link between them, the municipality and public authorities.

Today, the liaison group bears overall responsibility for Nyköping's graffiti wall and for evaluating how it is used. Day-to-day responsibility for maintenance and upkeep rests with the Technical Division. Public interest in the graffiti wall has been significant, and in a survey conducted by the municipality of Nyköping, 94 per cent of respondents said they liked the wall. The municipality has organised various activities near the wall through the Children's Cultural Centre, but most organised activities have been arranged by Graffitifrämjandet Nyköping with the help of Studiefrämjandet Sörmland (Source: Communications Department, Municipality of Nyköping.)

"Those of us who are active in Graffitifrämjandet Nyköping come from a variety of backgrounds, and have taken different routes to becoming involved in graffiti and street art. We collaborate with various organisations, including Studiefrämjandet Sörmland in the arrangement of various graffiti events."

Robin Rundström och Linn Lidberg

Nyköping (2014)
Photo: Robin Rundström

FACTS
Wall type: Totally open.
Size: Four free-standing walls of 16, 4, 4, and 2 meters in length and 2.1 meters in height, yielding a total of 60 m on which to paint.
Materials: Modular concrete (T-supports).
Garbage disposal: Receptacles are provided for spray cans and other waste.
The area: The walls are illuminated and have benches, and are located next to a skate ramp and near a walking path. A playground and a football pitch are just a stone's throw away.

Subtopia (2012)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

SUBTOPIA'S OPEN WALL

The idea to build a graffiti wall was raised at a meeting between Subtopia and Graffitifrämjandet in 2012. To build a graffiti wall, the project applied for a Drömdeg ("Dream dough") grant for SEK 10,000 from Botkyrka Municipality. The project was awarded the grant, and the municipality made an additional contribution of SEK 15,000 through the Alby area group. Donations were also made by private individuals. The wall was opened in the summer of 2012 in a ceremony attended by artists and musicians. Workshops were held, and the wall received over 1000 visitors in its first six months.

The wall is located in a fenced-in area, and is staffed by wall staff. Since the autumn of 2014, the staff have been paid. This is handled through Subtopia's real estate department, and is financed jointly by Subtopia and Studiefrämjandet. Having staff on hand means that help is always available for beginners, and that passersby always have someone to ask about the wall. Communication in its various forms has been extremely important in getting this project to work smoothly. Representatives from both of Sweden's dominant political blocs were invited to attend the opening ceremony, as were community police officers and local organisations.

Communications initiatives via websites and social media about the opening hours and rules of conduct have been instrumental in avoiding misunderstandings. Those interested can also use Instagram to follow the wall's various guises.
The Little Subtopia Wall has also been open since 2014. It is an open wall, approximately 30 m in length, built of plywood and secured to a metal railing. The Little Subtopia Wall is not staffed, and is open every day of the year. The wall is operated by Subtopia, which also maintains a permanent collection of street art paintings in an outdoor gallery surrounding its buildings.

According to Botkyrka Municipality, the work on open walls has been a contributing factor in reducing cleanup costs by SEK 250,000 from previous levels (Source: Willy Viitala (M), *Graffitivägg i Botkyrka har minskat klottret (Graffiti Wall in Botkyrka has Reduced Tagging)*, SR P4 Stockholm, 2014/04/10.)

MAD C
Subtopia (2013)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

FACTS
Wall type: Staffed, with paid workers.
Size: 70 x 2.4 meters.
Materials: Wooden construction with plywood boards and ground anchors.
Garbage disposal: Receptacles are provided for spray cans and other waste. Subtopia bears the costs for these.
The area: The Subtopia culture cluster is located in the Stockholm suburb of Alby, in Botkyrka Municipality.
The wall is adjacent to (6 m from) a hangar building used for concerts, circus performances, and so on.

BAYNE
Snösätra (2014)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

BUSO
Snösätra (2014)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

SNÖSÄTRA INDUSTRIAL PARK

Snösätra industrial park is located in Rågsved, in Stockholm. Since July 2014, the site has transformed into an art centre for graffiti and street art, with hundreds of visitors every week. The entire operation is coordinated by Daniel Rohlin, who was inspired by the legendary 5 Pointz area in New York (which unfortunately no longer exists), long seen as the Mecca of the graffiti world. The objective at Snösätra is to have the highest possible aesthetic quality, and for visitors to feel welcome and encouraged to understand.

It all started when Daniel and a few friends received permission to paint on a wall in the local area. Nearby property owners were sceptical at first, but when they saw the results, they too wanted to have their façades painted. The initiative took off, and today nearly every wall is adorned with paintings. The property owners' pride in the initiative only grew as more and more families, pensioners and school classes started visiting the walls. It has not always been like this.

Snösätra used to be a notorious place with a bad reputation. Police routinely pulled cars over here, and crime was rife in the area. That is now a thing of the past. The property owners can testify that the problems in Snösätra have abated. And the police, whose deployment frequency to the area has improved significantly, are also pleased with the initiative.

Daniel engages in dialogue with all the property owners to decide who is allowed to paint and where. Those wishing to do a painting contact him with reference images; if they are able to produce a painting of high quality, they are given a surface to paint on. Initially this caused some irritation among those not approved to paint, but now the policy is widely accepted, and motivates artists to develop and become better at what they do.

"There have always been back pages out there to paint on, but it feels great to have been part of creating a 'front page'."

Daniel Rohlin

PUPPET INDUSTRIES
Snösätra (2014)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

FACTS
Wall type: Curated.
Size: 500 meters of street with walls on both sides.
Materials: Plaster, brick, corrugated sheet metal, sheet metal doors.

HÄRNÖSAND STREET ART WEEK

Street Art Week is somewhat of a folk festival in Härnösand. Over the course of the week, the public is invited to attend workshops, lectures and exhibitions. Most attention is usually paid to the large, permanent murals that artists have painted on building walls throughout the city by invitation.

Street Art Week is arranged by Graffitifrämjandet Härnösand with support from the municipality; the fruitful cooperation with the cultural administration and the municipality's urban architects (who approved building permits for the permanent murals) has been an especially important factor. The city's art gallery, library and adult education college have also risen to the occasion by providing both facilities and financial contributions. Street Art Week and other events are also held in conjunction with Härnösand's free cultural association, a progressive force in the city.

Everything started when a citizen's motion was voted down. The motion proposed that the municipality should establish an open wall where everyone could paint, but it was voted down on the grounds that public interest in graffiti in Härnösand was insufficient to justify the initiative. A group of people set themselves the task of disproving the notion. They knew that there was great interest in graffiti in Härnösand. Shortly thereafter they formed Graffitifrämjandet Härnösand.

ELMO
Härnösand (2014)
Photo: Lasse Nässtrom

"The fact that Street Art Week's first year was so successful probably had to do more than anything with the good fortune we had of being able to book some big names that drew both crowds and media buzz. Carolina Falkholt's mural, which emerged the first year the event was held, is now cited by the municipality as an example of Härnösand's strong cultural profile."

Alveola Ämtling

"What we have definitely succeeded in is to create a more positive image among the public in Härnösand as to what graffiti and street art are."

Alveola Ämtling

CAROLINA FALKHOLT
Härnösand (2013)
Photo: Lasse Näsström

FACTS
Wall type: Permanent mural.
Size: 12 x 16 meters.
Materials: Plaster.
The area: Carolina Falkholt's painting was done on a residential building in an area dominated by older wood and brick buildings and small-scale industry.

8 COMMON MYTHS ABOUT GRAFFITI AND STREET ART

Open walls lead to increased vandalism
According to the National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå for short in Swedish), there has been no research into this matter, meaning that the statement cannot be corroborated. In cities where there are open walls and where the municipal government has worked to manage these in an active and serious way, assessments show that they do not lead to increased vandalism. One example is Botkyrka Municipality, which reported reduced cleanup costs since having put up an open wall. (source: SR P4 Stockholm, Graffitivägg i Botkyrka har minskat klottret (Graffiti wall in Botkyrka has reduced tagging), 2014-04-10.)

There have been open walls in Helsinki since 2008, and the city now boasts over a kilometre of walls that the public can paint on legally. In 2012, Paavo Arhinmäki, then Finland's Minister of Culture and Sport, wrote that "the amount of graffiti and tags in prohibited areas has not increased – on the contrary, it has decreased greatly." (Source: Jacob Kimvall, Noll Tolerans – Kampen mot graffiti (Zero Tolerance – the fight against graffiti), 2012.)

Open walls are used to "practice on" before doing illegal graffiti
Just like a football pitch, an open wall is used both for training and for matchplay. Of course you can use an open wall to practice and improve your painting technique, but that this should lead to illegal painting is not substantiated by relevant research.

Concrete is destroyed by spray paint
The statement that spray paint is harmful to concrete walls per se is false. Many of Sweden's open walls are in fact concrete walls. In many cases, spray paint can help protect the concrete surface. But if you have specific questions in this regard, you should address them to experts on concrete. For example, the trade publication Betong has a query function on its website: www.betong.se.

Graffiti creates unsafe environment
There are no scientific studies to prove the claim that graffiti makes an area less safe. On the contrary; property owners in Snösätra testify that the open wall has provided a boost to the area by drawing people to it – a sharp contrast to its previous desolation at many times of day. In 2015, the capitals of all the Nordic countries, including Stockholm, will have open walls. There are also functioning open walls in many other Swedish cities, including Malmö, Gothenburg and Norrköping. These places provide new opportunities for people to meet, and make an art form that may previously have been alien to people more familiar.

MAD C
Subtopia (2013)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

Once the wall has been painted on, people simply move on and paint elsewhere
The reason for having open walls should be, in the first instance, a desire to give artists a space to practice their art. An open wall is also in a state of constant change, meaning that artists are allowed to paint over each other's work. Graffiti and street art are not created primarily in order to be preserved; in other words, the wall can be repainted over and over again without creating any problems. There may be a need for more open walls in different settings in order to reach out to different audiences and attract different types of painters.

Spray paint is harmful to both health and the environment
Most spray paints are indeed unhealthy, but protection against harmful aerosols is available in the form of gas masks and plastic gloves. It is also important to handle empty spray cans responsibly by disposing of them as hazardous waste. It is also possible to paint on an open wall using non-spray paints for those who want to.

Those who paint using spray paint steal the paint
This is not something that graffiti shops currently see as a problem. Today there is a wide variety of relatively inexpensive spray paint formulated with graffiti in mind, and such paint is readily available in shops, both in shops and online.

Young people involved in graffiti are at risk of becoming criminals
According to the National Council for Crime Prevention report Strategic youth crime in the 2000s, those convicted of vandalism as their first offence (including "tagging"), are at low risk of continuing down a path of crime.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Different public places need to be taken care of in different ways; grass in a park requires mowing, while a playground needs rubbish bins. Here are a few things that are important to keep in mind when setting up an open wall. This list has been developed based on reports and experiences gathered at open walls from Umeå to Malmö.

Local involvement

Without local involvement, it is difficult to know what the local population wants, which in turn makes it difficult to work on the issue in a fruitful manner. Initially it is important to find people who are involved in graffiti or street art and bring them into a liaison group. Well-functioning open walls are often supported by a group – a local graffiti association or others – that works with the municipality or other stakeholders to make sure that the wall is set up and cared for.

Location

There are examples of well-functioning walls located in out-of-the-way areas as well as others in the heart of a city – both have their advantages. If a wall is put up somewhere without engaging in dialogue with those who are supposed to use it, there is a risk that the result will be sub-optimal. It is important to identify possible locations in consultation with the wall's future users. Keep in mind that this can also turn into a venue where visitors can view the art, and a public meeting place as well.

Garbage disposal

Unfortunately, spray cans have no redemption value. This is why it is very important to provide appropriate receptacles for spray can recycling right next to the wall. These receptacles should be closed and fitted with locks so that children or malicious characters cannot access the spent cans and use these in the wrong way and in the wrong place. Because spray cans are considered hazardous waste, there should be a separate receptacle for other kinds of rubbish. Walls where waste is not separated are at risk of possible spillover effects and littering.

Sample costs retrieved from Subtopia's open wall: In 2014, the wall was opened to painting on 31 different occasions, during which it was visited by approximately 340 people. This resulted in 277 kg of hazardous waste (spray cans). The disposal cost for these was SEK 2410, excluding VAT (SEK 8.7/kilo). Personnel costs are not included in this amount. (Source: Subtopia.)

Rules of conduct

It is important to be clear about the rules in effect at the wall. Certainly for the sake of those using the wall, but also for the sake of local residents and other outside parties, so that everyone knows what the rules are and what you are allowed to paint. The rules should be formulated in a respectful way – not as a threat. It may be a good idea to install signs on surfaces right next to the wall indicating that it is not allowed to paint on them. At some walls, such as the Nyköping graffiti wall, there has been some painting on the asphalt in front of the walls. This should be taken into consideration and should be made the subject of a dialogue with the painters.

Financing

In many cases, there will already be walls or surfaces that can be made available for painting, meaning that waste disposal will be the only cost. But if you wish to build and operate an open wall, there are various ways to finance it. One alternative is for the municipality, as was the case with the open wall in Nyköping, to take responsibility for the construction and operation of the wall. There they built a wall using what is referred to as T-supports, which is a relatively inexpensive solution. If you as an individual or as a member of an association have to fund the wall on your own, it may be beneficial to turn to crowdfunding or some other way of collecting dues from those who will be using the wall. For young people under 25, there are often small grants that you can apply for from the municipality for this type of project, as was the case when Subtopia built its open wall in Botkyrka. For additional help when it comes to financing and operating an open wall, please contact Studiefrämjandet or another educational association.

SKIL
Subtopia (2012)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

WHAT WOULD AN OPEN WALL LOOK LIKE IF YOU GOT TO DECIDE?

I would put my dream wall in a central location where hundreds of people would walk past it every day, in a park for instance. It shouldn't be just a wall, but several different types of walls. There should be a high, oblong wall for major productions or collaborations, a somewhat smaller version, and an even smaller one for artists who want to express themselves solo. The material should be base-coated concrete for the large walls and brick for the smallest one. The walls should be lit so that the motifs can be seen clearly round-the-clock. It would also be nice to have a pond with a little waterfall next to it so that artists could hear the water ripple while they paint. Please let this dream wall become a reality!

Adam Algotsson, Appear37

My dream wall would actually comprise multiple walls that together form a mobile "house of painters" that could be built, disassembled and transported to a variety of public locations. In this house of painters, people would be able to paint during both the summer and winter months. It is a living, mobile art project giving both individuals and groups a place to engage in daring forms of expression. It is a venue for inter-generational exchange where everyone can make their voice heard.

My dream would be for the initiative to focus on issues relating to equality, gender equality and democracy, and to let people express themselves by creating a mobile venue for discussion and creative expression. The house of painters will go where the people are, and will open up closed public spaces that are otherwise only available to the few.

Lina Eriksson, LE

Neither the location of the wall nor the material it is made of are important to me. It can be a building wall, a tunnel, a bridgehead, an underpass, any type of wall. In my head the only things that matter are the colour, the subject and the mood at the actual time of painting. Being able to paint, create and express myself the way I want to gives me a total feeling of freedom. Not having a wall to paint on blocks my energy and creativity, and many others' too. Sometimes people will like the result, other times not – and people should feel free to paint over it. After all, it's no more than a bit of paint.

Magnus Wallström, www.gatukonst.se

LE
Subtopia (2014)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

KAOS, MAD C, BATES
Subtopia (2013)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

APPEAR 37, EDGE
Snösätra (2014)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

WHY DO WE SUPPORT THIS?

Graffitifrämjandet
Graffitifrämjandet is a national theatre association that is politically and religiously unaffiliated. We work to elevate the status of graffiti as a form of artistic expression, and to disseminate knowledge about graffiti, street art and related forms of artistic expression at the local, national and international levels. To make this possible, there need to be interfaces between artists and audiences. One such interface can be an open wall, and we think that all Swedish cities should have one. The purpose of this publication is to provide concrete tips and knowledge about the work that we and others have been doing on open walls in order to help others who wish to promote one of the world's largest artistic movements.

Studiefrämjandet
Studiefrämjandet is an educational association that has no party, religious or trade union affiliations. Our mission and our core values include catering to young people's desire to be active in art and culture and improve their skills. We work on the basis of the participants' needs and their views of culture. Graffiti is an art form that often attracts young people who do not participate as cultural practitioners in the society's other cultural offerings, and Studiefrämjandet intends to be a forum for those wishing to practice the art form in a legal framework. Graffiti is a permissive form of popular art that often questions norms, and serves as an alternative to the art found in the institutional establishment. Studiefrämjandet wishes to contribute to graffiti gaining wider recognition as an art form.

What we do draws on a popular education approach, and we offer everything from study groups and cultural events to meeting places. Please contact your local Studiefrämjandet office to ask about the types of support you are eligible for – this can include help launching a study group, organising lectures, or event support.

Subtopia
Subtopia is a creative cluster of businesses and organisations that are active in the area of art and culture. Our purpose is to provide support and to develop new, conducive conditions for the many different art forms represented at Subtopia or that wish to establish themselves in the cluster. In our way, we try to make the world a little bit better.

We have noticed that there is both an interest in and a need for venues providing space for new art in unexpected places in Sweden. Subtopia has plenty of space to offer, and we support all forms of artistic expression, irrespective of format. In 2012, we built a wall next to Hangaren Subtopia in collaboration with Graffitifrämjandet. We also have a smaller open wall and a growing outdoor gallery with contributions from artists from all over the world. We continue to develop opportunities for artists doing work in the public sphere, and this publication, which we are producing hand-in-hand with Graffitifrämjandet and Studiefrämjandet, with support provided by the European Culture Foundation, is part of that effort.

FURTHER READING

There is a plethora of literature about graffiti and street art. Here are a few reading tips that may be of use to open wall projects.

Noll Tolerans – Kampen mot graffiti (Zero Tolerance – the fight against graffiti) (2012)
by Jacob Kimvall

Sätta färg på staden (Painting the Town) (2010)
by Kolbjörn Guwallius

Graffitiframjandet.se
Here you can find more information and contact details for the people behind this publication and others who are involved in or possess expertise about open wall initiatives in Sweden. Among other things, you can read about how the open wall in Märsta came to be and how it operates today, or find links to Street Art Örebro, Artscape and No Limit Borås, plus information about the many graffiti and street art festivals held annually around the country. The website also has a list of open walls in Sweden and contact information for local graffiti promotion councils and enthusiasts.

SAUS, HOLEM
Snösätra (2014)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

ERSE
(2013)
Photo: Hugo Röjgård

GRAFFITIFRÄMJANDET
VI TAR KONSTEN VIDARE

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