

MARTINEZ GALLERY -New York

On Jan. 9, 1999, the Martinez Gallery in New York City opened its doors to a historic event: the first-ever exhibition of graffiti art. The gallery, located in the heart of the city, was filled with a diverse collection of graffiti art from various artists. The exhibition was a celebration of the art form, showcasing the creativity and skill of the graffiti community. The gallery was open from 11 AM to 7 PM, and the event was a success, with many people attending and purchasing art. The exhibition was a landmark moment in the history of graffiti art, and it was a testament to the power of the art form to bring people together and create a sense of community.

Arrival, about 1000 people, 15 writers from both coasts, ready to paint a cross-section of graffiti art, cultural, and economic backgrounds, all painting together in a hall of fresh canvas for two weeks in late December '98. Once completed, the gallery was covered up, and the event was a success. The gallery was open from 11 AM to 7 PM, and the event was a success, with many people attending and purchasing art. The exhibition was a landmark moment in the history of graffiti art, and it was a testament to the power of the art form to bring people together and create a sense of community.

Ultimately, the Jan. 9 opening reception proved to be the biggest turnout for a show in the history of the Martinez Gallery with writers such as Dali 167, West FC, Link2, Angst FB, Bronx King, Cope2, Oniro BY, and others seen chilling throughout the joint. Most painting ensued while blackbooks got passed around, hands were shook, and the crowd bugged out on Soe RRE's slide presentation of Bay Area graffiti. Although considered an overall success on many levels, there were some areas that were left open to criticism. Like the fact that some felt the lineup did not fairly represent each of the respective coasts and that many important writers were left out. Others, like Ality Gtz, saw graffiti as less about art and more about a way of life (which he stated in his finished work) while some even felt that graffiti had no business being put in a gallery setting in the first place. More than a few writers in the show objected to seeing a school. Snake 1, WC 188's piece got buffed out before the opening night. Whatever its shortcomings, though, if only the show's success was judged by the show's artists as being less about graffiti politics and more about personal growth. In a much deeper sense, the vibe was more like Mingus, Coltrane and Byrd sitting in an impromptu session than it was KRS and Shari battling it out. Late night sessions where Oniz and Riff 170 discussed letter structure, or like when Duke Temor, Moo and Bama peeped the evolution of hand styles from Philly to the Bronx and its possible connections and similarities to L.A., and a lettering from the same time period came to mind. Writers were taking all trips through the intricate structure of the writing movement, dissecting it down to subatomic levels and reassembling it again, coming away with new understandings of letter craftsmanship. Friendships were made and bonds were formed. Like when Coco 144 invited everyone to his home to enjoy a home-cooked Puerto Rican dinner with his family, while Snake 1 broke out a blackbook from '74 and they led the West Coast's as to get up in it, a profound honor to say the least. And in the end, when controversy fades and soap opera battles fade away, these are the behind-the-scenes things that make graffiti something more than just a series of tags on lifeless surfaces. The experiences that build bridges from the old to the new, and a path leads to a large and beautiful graffiti community, growing like a tree into the coming century. Props to all the artists in the show.

0000 144 SABB BAYAMUR, MOO, FANTOT, TRACY 168, ST. PASTO, EARSNOT, JEFFER CASE 2, NITO, RIFF 170, CHAZ BO, ORIO, DREAM, SNER, TRAE, DUE, AMAZE, RETNA, SOME, TEMOR 1, SPE, 3REX, BRA, L, and BLES.



