

SCHOOL'D BY FUNKMODE

You want to become a Hip Hop expert? Learn the info below and you're on your way, yo!

HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO HIP HOP CULTURE - PART 3 (FASHION AND GRAFFITI)

With nearly every one of our SCHOOL'd lessons, we reiterate the importance of contributing to the culture. In this week's lesson, the final of our three part series, we aren't just going to encourage you to get out there and participate in Hip Hop, again we're actually going to give you many concrete examples of things you can do right now to get started. Today's lesson is going to be for those who love Hip Hop fashion and graffiti art. To help people who are just starting out as well as those that are already more advanced, we will divide our suggestions into basic actions that anyone can follow and ideas for those looking to become professional artists.

We've written about how fashion trends have changed in Hip Hop since the 1970s. We've seen some trends go quickly, while others have remained for a long time and some even come back around again. In the 1990s, we saw the emergence of companies that created clothes specifically for those within the Hip Hop culture like FUBU and Phat Farm. We also saw how many rappers tried to jump on the success of these companies by creating their own fashion lines. Today, Hip Hop fashion is still more about what kids in the street are choosing to wear than just what is being sold to them in stores. In fact, in case you were not aware, there are actually people hired by big companies to go to places where young people are hanging out, especially kids seen as unique or influential in their group, to observe what they wear and how they wear what they wear. They take what they find back to these companies so that they can imitate these styles in the clothes they mass produce. The idea here is that people will want to wear these styles that are popular amongst the popular kids. Of course, Hip Hop has always been more about creating than following. If you love Hip Hop and also love creating your own styles, you can be a Hip Hop trendsetter. Unless you are able to actually make your own clothes, the simplest way to start your own fashion is to change the way you wear your clothes and how you accessorize. You can chop up clothing, add colors with paint, fabric or even just markers. For example, by cutting up a basic t-shirt, you can change it in more ways than almost anyone can imagine. If you cut up multiple t-shirts and have some basic knowledge of sewing, you can combine them to create something totally fashionable and unique. There are many hats and shoes sold that are completely plain (and therefore often cheaper than ones with designs), giving you a blank canvas to create your own designs. Accessories are one of the best ways to make your fashion original. Not only does choosing your particular combination of accessories set you apart, but again, how you wear them makes a big difference. For instance, chopping your t-shirts up might give you strips of fabric that you can wear on other parts of your body like wrist cuffs or leg wraps. For most people, a scarf goes around your neck, but maybe you think it works better as a belt. Cool colored socks can be chopped up and worn as gloves. If you're starting to think that fashion is something that you might want to do professionally one day, perhaps it's time to think about creating your own logo and brand name. You can write it on every piece of clothing you create, especially if you're getting the blank clothing as mentioned earlier. There are many companies online that can take logo designs you create and turn them into patches and stickers to put on your clothing. If you're creating complete designs, companies can make entire pieces of clothing for you. Even better, if you learn how to actually create clothes yourself, you can make pieces that are totally original and less expensive since you're only paying for materials. And if you are going towards the professional route, it is essential that you learn how clothes are made so that you can make them yourself and lead other designers. To start to get your designs out to other people, you can 1) let friends borrow the clothes you design, 2) give your designs to people as gifts, 3) chop up others' clothes for them or even 4) sell your designs online through many websites created specifically to help clothing designers reach the public. The important thing is to choose something and get to work. You can be the one creating tomorrow's Hip Hop fashions today.

Visual art is a completely different means of expression than dancing, rapping, making music or creating new fashions. In Hip Hop culture, the visual artists tend towards graffiti art. Graffiti is the oldest of all the methods of Hip Hop inspired art. Of course, the main challenge with graffiti is that it is generally illegal to just go up to a building and start spray painting. However, there are still many options if you want to express yourself in this medium. The first thing most graffiti artists do is start an art book. All of their designs go into this book. To bring them into real life, you need a place to practice. You can buy canvases at art shops which can be reused. You can even use a simple piece of plywood that you can get at any hardware store. Some people may have a wall on their property that can be used over and over again. You can spray paint onto clothing as well, thereby combining graffiti and fashion. Some art classes allow and encourage training in graffiti art. This can not only help you develop your art but give you a chance to show it off. Professional graffiti artists have held art shows in exactly the same way that the more established visual artists have, selling literally millions of dollars worth of art in a single show. They also get hired to do their art on buildings. Like all art, the name of the game is practice. And once you've acquired the skills, you have to show them off. Put these tips into action and you can make your stamp on the world of art and Hip Hop.

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HIP HOP WORDS OF THE WEEK

Come correct: To be honest about something, especially that which may have been lied about or hidden.

EX: "I was playing a joke on my friend but she was starting to believe it so I had to come correct."

Rollin' deep / mob deep: To travel with a large group of people.

EX: "A huge group of my friends rolled crazy deep with me to Disneyland last Christmas."

Dip: To leave.

EX: "I couldn't stay for the whole party so I had to dip early."

BONUS: Create a sentence using all words of the week

EXTRA LEARNING

- 1) Name a website where you can design and sell your own clothes.
- 2) Are you more likely to create art through fashion or graffiti? Why?