

# RULES OF THE INFORMAL: OBSERVING SUB-CULTURAL VALUES

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From the mods and the rockers, drag culture, parkour and graffiti artists, sub-cultural groups all share a common suppressor - The City and the mainstream.



SAMO were pioneering NY Graffiti artists, photograph sourced at: <https://www.widewalls.ch/80s-graffiti-new-york/>

Through distinguished values, sub-cultural groups exclude, and are equally excluded from mainstream society. They operate in chosen spaces, within their own networks and on their own schedule, ungoverned and adrift from conventional frameworks.

***The reinforcement for their momentum is a collective reluctance to accept the limitations of the modern world and how society implies we should act, what we should wear and how we should be.***

I entertain the idea that, much like a pool of water mirroring a city's skyline, sub-cultural networks similarly parallel the functions of the regular world, operating from a dim lit distance. They use the light the city sheds but are not defined by it.

From families in drag culture, to skate parks emulating the workplace and formal competitions, sub-cultures emulate the need for a form of routine.

Short of absolute rejection of normal conventions, sub-cultures revise the terms of identity and lifestyle. Skateboarders reject the city's sign language which dictates where and when urbanites can operate, instead creating their own signs, disregarding certain indicators (such as defensive designs), in favor of more pleasurable ones (stair sets and concrete ledges). They remain operational within the city, yet appropriate and recreate the city's purpose, extending the possibilities of the environment.

This DIY mentality stems from a necessity to create and express. Graffiti artists see opportunity in the quieter, less operated-in quarters of the city and New York's drag culture in the 80s saw Balls and competitions being held with no assistance from authorities.

***Doing it yourself because no one else will to help you do it is what drives these creative expressions and the momentum is not halted through oppression and resistance.***

Members are willing to engage and integrate anyone who shares their passion and values, with the result being abnormally inclusive networks of like-minded people.

Duality has always been an acknowledged trait of sub-cultural groups. Rodney P is one of the UK's pioneers in Hip Hop and has recalled how Hip Hop was intertwined with Graffiti and breakdancing. In New York, Hip Hop has always been a sibling to street art, displaying how members of these communities often traverse the underbelly of unconventional occupations.



*London Posse, photographed above, photograph sourced at:  
<http://www.iamhiphopmagazine.com/reviewlondonposselive/>*

***Creative Capital is a powerful asset and groups do not need the go-ahead from formal authorities to accumulate it.***

The advent of the tech revolution has undoubtedly had a snowballing effect on sub-culture mobility, with borders undergoing a digital disintegration, allowing those niche interests to reach wider networks with similar values and ideas of what the world means to the individual, and the collective.

***In a world encapsulated with meaning and simultaneous meaningless, it would not be illogical to see that many do not fit into the conventions of the lives they are 'supposed' to live.***

Excluded or not, we are social creatures with innate cravings for integration and a group to identify with, and so increasing exposure granted from the internet only throws more fuel on the fire of excluded groups and their momentum as they push their values into an increasingly accepting mainstream.