

A Paul Curtis power-washed mural in San Francisco's Broadway Tunnel



Say It, Don't Spray It

GRAFFITI ARTISTS ADD vivid guerilla splashes of color to the urban landscape, but they do it with toxic paint loaded with VOCs. Enter a new breed of eco-tagers who are ditching the spray cans for natural materials such as water, mud and moss.

Paul Curtis (street name: Moose) draws in dirt — mimicking the phantom fingers that write “Wash Me” on dusty car windows. With soot-covered walls as his canvas, he sprays high-power blasts of soapy water through wooden stencils. “I create a contrast. Where it’s dirty and where it’s clean you can see these images like they’re black and white,” explains Curtis. He recently teamed with Green Works, a cleaning products company, to scrub a section of San Francisco’s Broadway Tunnel. He scoured a 140-foot mural of indigenous flora into decades’ worth of exhaust fumes; now pale gray flowers and trees sway in silhouette against the grime.

A little less clean, but just as eco-friendly, **Jesse Graves** uses mud and stencils to post sustainable slogans like “Beat Back Industrial Farming” on local walls. Once the message is delivered, the graffiti slowly fades back into the elements.

Edina Tokodi says it with moss. She “tags” industrial buildings in Brooklyn with patches of lichen in the shape of rabbits, deer and bears, giving nature-starved New Yorkers a glimpse of green.

Anna Garforth uses a similar technique, sculpting letters from moss to spell out her subtle eco messages.

To make your own organic graffiti, download stencils from mudstencils.wordpress.com or grow your own moss with a recipe from environmentalgraffiti.com. —J.S.

