

BUSHWICK STREET ART

History of the 'hood

Bushwick, one of the original six towns of Brooklyn, comes from the Dutch word “boswijck,” meaning “town in the woods.” Chartered by Director General of New Netherland Peter Stuyvesant in 1661, Bushwick was settled in the nineteenth century by tobacco and grain farmers from France, Scandinavia, England, and Holland. In the mid 1800’s a majority of the immigrants in Bushwick were German, so by 1890, Bushwick established a brewery industry, including 14 breweries operating in a 14 block area called “Brewer’s Row” and Bushwick was dubbed the beer capital of the Northeast.



The subdivision of farms begun in 1869 led to a population growth that gained even more momentum after 1888 when railway access made commuting to Manhattan easy and living in Bushwick increasingly attractive to professionals.

After World War II, Bushwick started losing both its economic linchpin and middle class stability. The beer companies began to move their production outside of New York City, and families fled to the suburbs. The biggest blow came on July 13, 1977, during a citywide blackout that lasted 26 hours. The looters and arsonists ran wild in Bushwick and by the time the lights came back on, 35 Bushwick blocks were nearly destroyed and \$300 million in damage was done. Within a year, one-third of Bushwick’s stores closed, and more than 40 percent of Bushwick’s commercial and retail establishments went out of business; by 1980, the population had fallen by more than 20 percent. Bushwick’s social problems persisted through the 1980’s with the onset of the crack epidemic. In the mid-90’s, community social service initiatives and construction of low income housing set Bushwick on an upswing. Though still one of the city’s poorest neighborhoods, Bushwick is now the next place for colonization by hipsters who are priced out of neighboring Williamsburg. Source: <https://freetoursbyfoot.com/new-york-tours/brooklyn-tours/bushwick-brooklyn-walking-tour/>

The Bushwick Collective



Conceived and curated by Bushwick native Joe Ficalora, the Bushwick Collective has evolved into an extraordinary open-air gallery since its first mural surfaced in 2011.

Attracting a wondrous array of local, national and international artists, it showcases first-rate street art -- from legendary Blek Le Rat stencils to huge collaborative walls by such renown artists as Case Ma'Claim and Pixel Pancho.

Within the past few years, the ever-expanding Bushwick Collective has transformed its environs from a largely grim industrial neighborhood into a vibrant tourist destination.

Born in 1978, Joe Ficalora came of age in Bushwick in the 1980's - at a time when the area was crime-ridden and grim. In 1991, Ficalora's father was murdered outside a local subway station. In 2011, his mother died of a brain tumor. In his effort to revive himself, Ficalora was determined to revive his neighborhood. The Bushwick Collective is the astonishing result of his personal fight to erase his painful memories, as he transformed his neighborhood into an incredible open-air gallery. The Bushwick Collective is a testament to not only Joe Ficalora's extraordinary resilience and vision, but to the power of art to transform a neighborhood.

Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/gRPwr3J5>