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LIFESTYLE

How to Get NYC's Coolest Jobs, According to the People Who Have Them



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Updated On 02/15/2017 at 11:32AM EST
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Rich Garr, street art tour guide at Gotham SideWalks

Citywide

Rich leads tours around the city that instructs people on all forms of street art and introduces them to the artists to learn more about their work.

How he got the job: “I got to teach film photography to kids at the Educational Alliance Art School on the Lower East Side. We would go on photo walks around the neighborhood, in and out of Chinatown markets and alleyways with each kid clicking away. One could definitely say that these were my first NYC ‘walking tours.’ I would sprinkle history and art tidbits into the walks, and the kids loved it. On other days, I was teaching adults collage art. Knowledge of the Lower East Side galleries soon followed. I started recommending places to see good art, whether it was in a gallery or on the streets. This is when my street art and graffiti vocabulary really started to grow. In 2008, I made the decision to get my tour guide license and start a business, Gotham SideWalks.”

Why you’ll want the job: “I do art walks that explore all art on the streets, but a major focus is building context around graffiti. It’s really more of an art tour without pretension. Through the relationships I make while being a tour guide I’m able to get to know artists like Mast, Revs, Swoon and ELBOW-TOE in Gowanus, and Lee, Invader, Os Gemeos, and JR around the Lower East Side. On the fringes of art -- like street art and through formats like photography, architecture, design -- there’s an authenticity to be discovered. And there’s always excitement.”

How you can get the job: “A job like this requires you to know traditional boundaries of art history, and to have the will to break them. My masters degree in history helps, as does a penchant for open dialogue and community news. I’m also a middle child, and see myself as someone who naturally brings people together. For good art tours, rubbing elbows with folks in every corner of the art world is important. For me, artists always come first, but curators, critics, dealers, and museum folks are all important people to know.”