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Internationally acclaimed artist teaches teens street art at R.L. Stevenson Branch Library

Gajin Fujita returns to his childhood library to inspire Boyle Heights youth



Artist and East L.A. native Gajin Fujita visited his childhood library, R.L. Stevenson Branch in Boyle Heights, to give teens from Oscar De La Hoya Ánimo Charter High School a lesson in street art.

LOS ANGELES (July 12, 2019) – Gajin Fujita, an internationally acclaimed artist influenced by East L.A. graffiti, today returned to his childhood library—R.L. Stevenson Branch in Boyle Heights—to teach local teens street art.

“This is the library I frequented as a kid forty years ago,” said Fujita, an East L.A. native. “I feel like I’ve come full circle sharing my passion for art with students, and hopefully enlightening and empowering them.” Fujita merges iconic Japanese imagery and Latino graffiti art in a striking style that captures the vibrant, urban landscape of Los Angeles.

(more)

Peter Persic, Public Relations & Marketing Director

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During the art workshop, Fujita shared his personal and professional story with ninth graders from the nearby Oscar De La Hoya Ánimo Charter High School.

"It's a special feeling to connect with teens in my old neighborhood," said Fujita, who designed L.A.'s limited-edition library card, which is available while supplies last at all 73 locations of the Los Angeles Public Library. "It's tough growing up with limited resources. Things don't just happen instantly. It takes conviction. If you have heart, things will follow. Hopefully the kids will take that away from today's art workshop."

Fujita also taught the students his style of street art and guided them in creating their own art using spray paint and chiseled markers on art boards.

"We are excited that Gajin came back to here to his childhood library to talk to teens about how growing up in Boyle Heights and hanging out here at the R.L. Stevenson Branch changed his life," said Lupie Leyva, the branch Senior Librarian.

Fujita established himself on the streets of Los Angeles with graffiti crews KGB and K2S, but his earliest artistic influences were informed by his father, who was a painter, and his mother, a conservator of Japanese antiquities. Fujita's works are in institutions worldwide including the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.

As a second-generation Japanese American, Fujita found himself drawn to the Japanese folkloric heroes and legends that he came to know through his parents, who immigrated to Los Angeles from Japan.

A recipient of the nation's highest honor for library service—the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, collection of more than 6 million books, state-of-the-art technology accessible at www.lapl.org, and more than 25,000 public programs a year provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for lifelong learning.