

# Fusing Graffiti Art and Music: A new form of live entertainment in Kigali

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A graffiti artist at work.

The one of a kind 'Graffiti & Music' event which took place from 2 to 8pm on KCT's rooftop yesterday was a first for Kigali.

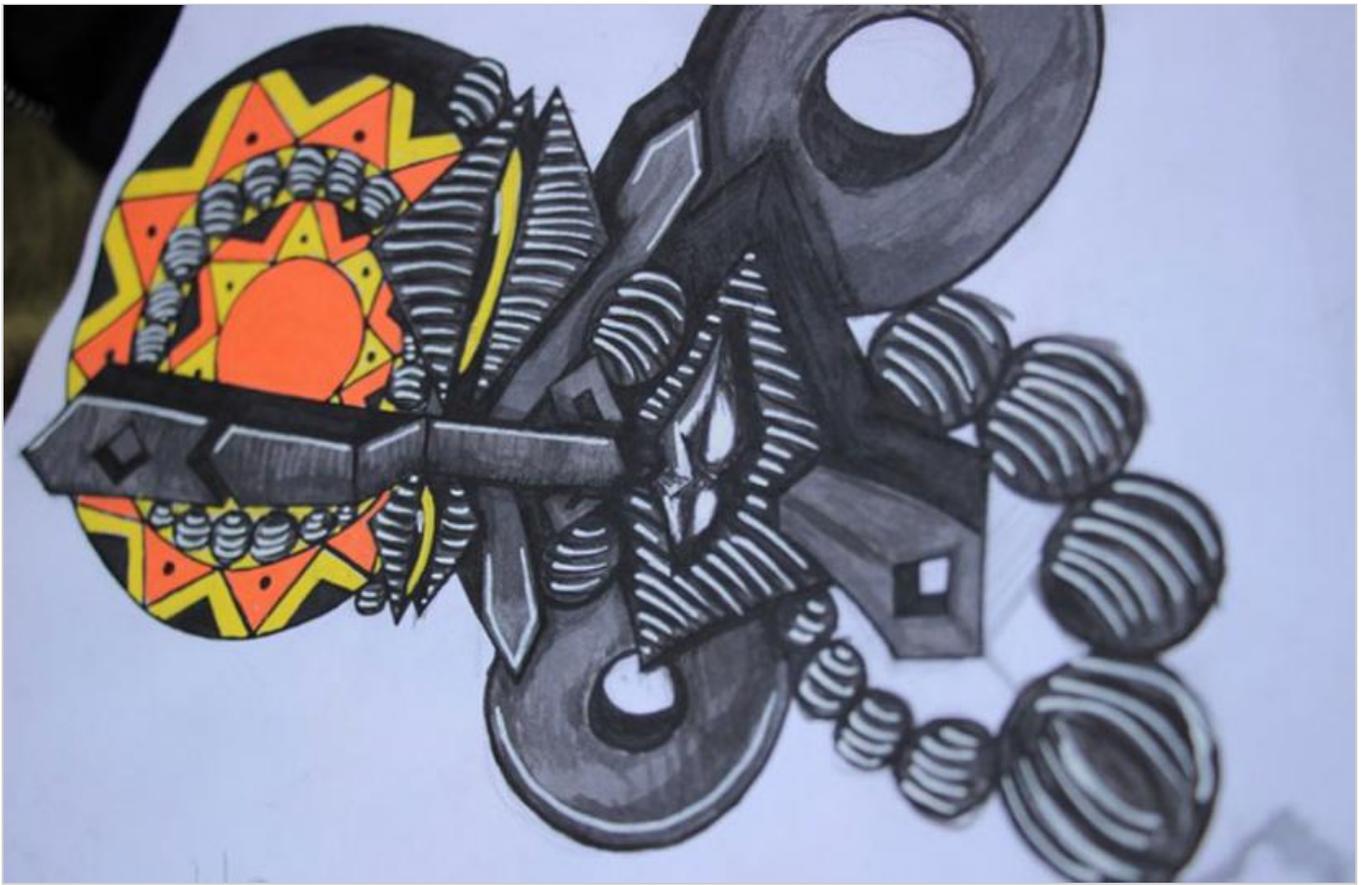
Sponsored by Coke Zero, the event was a true breath of fresh air in a city not used to mixing street art with good organic music. Needless to say, the resulting fusion was fascinating!



One of Wise Two's sketches with his signature masks.

Now, imagine if art could be a driving force in Kigali? What a vibrant city it would be! With that in mind, three graffiti artists and DJs came together to offer the best of both art and music worlds.

Wise Two, one of the pioneers of the Kenyan graffiti art scene, was one of them. Together with the public arts social enterprise called Kurema, Kureba, Kwiga and his fellow street artists, he is one of the first to bring this form of art to town.



Graffiti Artist at work.

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“Kigali is still behind on the public art scene but I can see it growing. There is still a lot to do but there is also a lot of potential, not to create just any art but to create really good art,” observed Wise Two.

The talented graffiti artist uses African influences which date back to pre-christianity. He looks at the way African tribes communicate with spirits, and historic civilisations.



Wise Two at work the Graffiti and Music Event

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“Why be influenced by European or American styles when we can have our own style?” he asks; a style coming from a culture of freedom fighters and shamans in his case. Indeed, this becomes instantly apparent in his signature work; the tribal masks.

But what about Rwanda? Have Rwandan contemporary artists found their own style?



Wise Two

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“In Kigali, there is not so much of art for art yet as there is art for sale” admits WiseTwo on his third visit to Rwanda’s capital city. “Artists have to cut barriers and be true to themselves. Following traditions is the easy option and the one that sells to tourists. They have to find their own style, do something different and have their own persona”.

That is what will create a distinct identity both locally and abroad. In the end, art is not for everybody. There will always be people to like and others to dislike an artist’s work. But the more you develop a specific style, the more your art becomes meaningful and researched” added the leading Kenyan graffiti artist.



This alternative event was a first test to see how it could work in the Kigali context. “We are like ghosts”, says WiseTwo, “we come and go, then people start talking. This is not about fame, it is about opening a platform up for other artists”.



With such a response, the future of Kigali’s underground art and music scene is showing to be promising. Art is not just something to be enjoyed on canvas. Art is a powerful and

innovative tool which connects people to places and to each other but also which invigorates a city's identity and activity!

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