

Grafreeti

express yourself

Experimental Media '09



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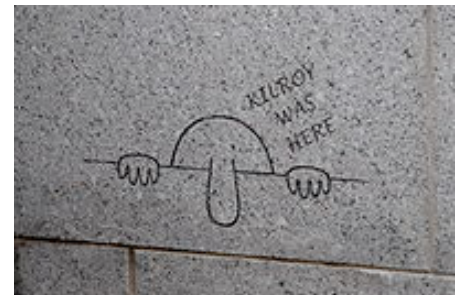
GRAFFITI

Graffiti is the name for images or lettering scratched, scrawled, painted or marked in any manner on property. Graffiti is sometimes regarded as a form of art and other times regarded as unsightly damage or unwanted.

Graffiti has existed since ancient times, with examples going back to Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire and may range from simple scratch marks to elaborate wall paintings. In modern times, spray paint and markers have become the most commonly used materials. In most countries, defacing property with graffiti without the property owner's consent is considered vandalism, which is punishable by law. Sometimes graffiti is employed to communicate social and political messages. To some, it is an art form worthy of display in galleries and exhibitions, to others it is merely vandalism. There are many different types and styles of graffiti and it is a rapidly evolving art form whose value is highly contested, being reviled by many authorities while also subject to protection, sometimes within the same jurisdiction.

Modern Graffiti

Graffiti is often seen as having become intertwined with hip hop culture as one of the four main elements of the culture (along with rapping, DJing, and break dancing). However, there are many other instances of notable graffiti this century. Graffiti has long appeared on railroad boxcars. The one with the longest history, dating back to the 1920s and continuing into the present day, is Bozo Texino. During World War II and for decades after, the phrase "Kilroy was here" with accompanying illustration was widespread throughout the world, due to its use by American troops and its filtering into American popular culture.



In the sixties, its popularity was eclipsed by American graffiti proclaiming that "Yossarian lives!", a reference to the protagonist of Joseph Heller's novel, *Catch-22*. The student protests and general strike of May 1968 saw Paris bedecked in revolutionary, anarchist, and situationist slogans such as *L'ennui est contre-révolutionnaire* ("Boredom is counterrevolutionary"). A famous graffito of the 20th century was the inscription in the London subway reading "Clapton is God". The phrase was spray-painted by an admirer on a wall in an Islington Underground station in the autumn of 1967. The graffiti was captured in a now-famous photograph, in which a dog is urinating on the wall. A popular graffito of the 1970s was the legend "Dick Nixon Before He Dicks You," reflecting the hostility of the youth culture to that U.S.

president. Graffiti also became associated with the anti-establishment punk rock movement beginning in the 1970s. Bands such as Black Flag and Crass (and their followers) widely stenciled their names and logos, while many punk night clubs, squats and hangouts are famous for their graffiti.

CHARACTERISTICS

Some of the most common styles of graffiti have their own names.

Tag

A "tag" is the most basic writing of an artist's name in either spray paint or marker. A graffiti writer's tag is his or her personalized signature. "Tagging" is often the example given when opponents of graffiti refer to vandalism, as they use it to label all acts of graffiti writing (it is by far the most common form of graffiti). Tags can contain subtle and sometimes cryptic messages, and might incorporate the artist's initials or other letters. As well as the graffiti name, some artists include the year that they completed that tag next to the name, so that Tox, an artist from London, becomes Tox03, Tox04, etc. John Tsombikos claimed subsequent to his arrest that his "Borf" tag campaign, which gained recognition for its prevalence in Washington, D.C., was in memory of a deceased friend.



Throw-up

Another form is the "throw-up," also known as a "fill-in," which is normally painted very quickly with two or three colors, sacrificing aesthetics for speed. Throw-ups can also be outlined on a surface with one color. A "piece" is a more elaborate representation of the artist's name, incorporating more stylized "block" or "bubble" letters, using three or more colors. This of course is done at the expense of timeliness and increases the likelihood of the artist getting caught. A "blockbuster" is a large piece done simply to cover a large area solidly with two contrasting colors, sometimes with the whole purpose of blocking other "writers" from painting on the same wall.



Wildstyle

A more complex style is "wildstyle", a form of graffiti involving interlocking letters, arrows, and connecting points. These pieces are often harder to read by non-graffiti artists as the letters merge into one another in an often undecipherable manner. A "roller" is a "fill-in" that intentionally takes up an entire wall, sometimes with the whole purpose of blocking other "writers" from painting on the same wall. Some artists also use stickers as a quick way to "get-up". While critics from within graffiti culture consider this lazy and a form of cheating, stickers can be quite detailed in their own right, and are often used in conjunction with other materials. Sticker tags are commonly done on blank postage stickers, or indeed anything with an adhesive side to it.



Stencils

Stencils are made by drawing an image onto a piece of cardboard or tougher versions of paper, then cut with a razor blade. What is left is then just simply sprayed-over, and if done correctly, a perfect image is left. Many graffiti artists believe that doing blockbusters or even complex wildstyles involves too great an investment of time to justify the practice. Doing wildstyle can take (depending on experience and size) three hours to several days. Another graffiti artist can go over that piece in a matter of minutes with a bubble fill-in. This was exemplified by the writer "CAP" in the documentary Style Wars, who, other writers complain, ruins pieces with his quick throw ups. This became known as "capping" and is often done when there is "beef", conflict between writers.



USE

Graffiti often has a reputation as part of a subculture that rebels against authority, although the considerations of the practitioners often diverge and can relate to a wide range of attitudes. It can express a political practice and can form just one tool in an array of resistance techniques. Or it can be an art piece, an expression of a point of view, a tool to achieve something etc

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Belgium

Like it is in the European policy Belgium does not allow graffiti on public properties. But Belgium does not ban the sale of spray cans like England. Some spots are accessible for legal spraying. But if you want to spray here you have to join a community of graffiti artists and you have some rules you have to follow. So we can conclude that graffiti is possible but not everywhere.

Hasselt

If take a look at Hasselt we can conclude that Hasselt offers one spot for graffiti artists. They give the bridges of kapermolen to the artist community. If you don't like to take any risk to so anything illegal you'd better join 'graffiti jeugddienst vzw'. This organization is fully informed about graffiti in Belgium. What is legal, what isn't. Where you buy you cans, which rights you have as artist etc

PROBLEM

Even though Hasselt offers a legal spot to spray, they keep getting plagued by illegal actions. Tags, stickers and other 'garbage' can be found on public and private walls, litter bins, trains, station,...

We want to deal with this problem by launching community where we promote legal graffiti.

GRAFREETI

The project is named grafreeti. Where we see the link between graffiti and free. It is absolutely free to add your art. You have no limitations whatsoever.

COMMUNITY

The community will look like a youtube version for graffiti art. In this way we use the recognizability of the video community. Every user has a profile. Coupled to that profile there are video's, artworks comments etc. This data is filtered differently on every page. On the arts page we have a collection of artworks ranked from high ratings to low ratings. On the artists page we have artists ranked from master in arts to students. And we have a map of Hasselt where the artworks are tagged on.

TAGGING

When an artist made an artwork he takes a picture and uploads it to the community. There he tags his work as one of his and fills in extra data like size, category, theme,... . As a proof you have to record your activity and upload it together with your picture.

This tagging happens on a map of Hasselt. However only the bridges of kapermolen are legal to spray on. Therefore we promote artists to use these. On the other hand some artists would like to spray on other buildings and objects. For them we have the simulation possibility.

If you like to paint the wall of kolonel dusart this becomes possible. You take a picture of the piece you want give a make-over and you edit it in Photoshop or other manipulation software. Afterwards you can upload it to the community and make a geotag of it.



In that way we can view Hasselt online but with a graffiti look. This view is a mixture of real and unreal imagery.

OPEN SOURCE ART

Everybody that uploads art has to agree on the open source agreement. In this agreement every artist accepts that his work may be copied, mixed or reproduced. In this way it will be possible to spray a virtual artwork on a real wall. By recombining and mixing, works from the past get a new life.

MODERATION

Pre moderation

As you spray on walls it's obvious that you keep your arts child friendly. However when we have a simulation application in our community artists have no limits anymore. They can use artistic nudity, provocative words etc. Still users have to be warned if adult content follows therefore we use notification flags for adult content, violence, nudity,...

So by uploading they have to tick the selection box if their work contains any violence, nude, criminality... in that way the artwork is categorized and not immediately visible on the site. You have to accept the flag and then you can see the image.

Pre-reactive moderation

First we have the pre moderation. After uploading and tagging an artwork, 4 (online) participants are asked to give their opinion. Is this an artwork? Is this rubbish? Or don't you know?

If 3 out of 4 approve this as an artwork it becomes available in the rating system.

If 3 out of 4 say that they don't know the request is sent to a general moderator which shall decide if it is an artwork or rubbish.

If 3 out of 4 say that this is rubbish it will be deleted.

Post moderation

If the uploaded picture is approved by 4 users the artwork will be dropped in the rating system, other participants can rate your work. If you get a high score your work is being saved. If not it will be deleted.

You can increase the rating score if you produce art that is related to actuality, politics, issues.

Automatic moderation

The automatic moderation takes care of spambots. Comments with spamlinks, fake accounts and other spam material will be deleted automatically.

Reactive moderation

There always will be people who like to spoof good intentions. For those we have the abuse button. If anyone misbehaves he's rejected from the community by deleting his account and artworks.

ART IS NEVER LOST AGAIN

As graffiti is over painted all the time, Hasselt loses magic artworks.

But not anymore. Since we save high rated artworks, we now can peel of the layers that are over painted. So it's possible to take a look at the graffiti of half a year ago. Now it's possible to investigate if graffiti changes in time.

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

In the community we have several levels of art. Each level has more facilities.

To reach a higher level you have to make artworks that get high rankings. The more artworks are saved in the database the higher your level will be.

As you gain the master in arts level you will be contacted whenever the community gets an assignment for any artwork. Or if we do activities where the press is invited you get to opportunity to get publicity.

If we do a publicity campaign the chance is high that you are invited to cooperate. Your artwork can be used as promotion material.

| Level | Viewing | Uploading and tagging | Rating | Option to an assignment |
|-------------------|---------|-----------------------|--------|-------------------------|
| Master in arts | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Professional | ● | ● | ● | |
| Semi professional | ● | ● | ● | |
| Student | ● | ● | ● | |
| Wanne be | ● | ● | | |
| Visitors | ● | | | |