

The Graffiti Reader

Introduction

This proposed, virtual collection is my selection of the most interesting and useful English-language scholarship on graffiti, to be taken as a broad introduction to academic approaches to graffiti and as a supplement to the vast popular literature. Since the advent of mainstream graffiti publishing in 1980s and the international success of *Subway Art* (1984) and *Spray Can Art* (1987), the following decades have seen a proliferation of sub-cultural and popular publications about the many forms of graffiti, from 'zines and movies, to memoirs and websites. However, writing that develops critical and conceptual responses to graffiti are less common. The selection here cover the key areas in which graffiti has been theorized. As this is an invented collection, I've also included two of my own essays, in areas where little writing exists. Some caveats: my collection is skewed towards the analysis of hip-hop style graffiti that originated in the US and its international adaptations, though a thorough history of this global spread, as detailed in books such Nicholas Ganz' *Global World: Street Art From Five Continents* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004) remains to be written. There is also little mention of the full effect of new media and the Internet on the production and reproduction of graffiti or the history of graffiti as an ethnographic research method, such as the pioneering study of latrinalia lead by sex researcher Alfred Kinsey in 1953. Comments and additions welcome.

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Articles

Doing graffiti

- Extracts from Craig Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982)
- Extracts from William Upsi Wimsatt, *Bomb the Suburbs* (New York: Subway and Elevated Press, a division of Soft Skull Press, 1994) ISBN 0-9643855-0-3,

Graffiti as media

- Jean Baudrillard, "KOOL KILLER, or The Insurrection of Signs" in *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (London: Sage, 1993)
- Joe Austin, "ReWriting New York City" in George Marcus (ed.), *Connected: Engagements with Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996)
- Lachlan MacDowall, "The Graffiti Archive and the Digital City" in Danny Butt, Jon Bywater and Nova Paul (eds) *PLACE: Local Knowledge and New Media* (Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2008)
- Roth, Evan, *Geek Graffiti: A Study in Computation, Gesture and Graffiti Analysis*. www.ni9e.com/graffiti_analysis/graffiti_analysis_09.pdf, accessed January 15, 2008.

Graffiti as history

- Extracts from Juliet Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001)

- Extracts from Austin, Joe. 2001. *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became An Urban Crisis in New York City*. New York: Columbia University Press
- Lachlan MacDowall, "In Praise of 70K: Cultural Heritage and Graffiti Style," *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media and Culture* 20: 4 (December 2006): 471-484
- Sonja Neef, "Killing Kool: The Graffiti Museum" in *Art History* 30:3 (June 2007): 418-431.
- Allen F. Roberts, "Mystical Graffiti and the Refabulation of Dakar" in *Africa Today* 54: 2 (Winter 2007): 50-77

Graffiti aesthetics

- Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik, "Graffiti" in *High and Low: Modern Art, Popular Culture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1991)
- Stewart, Susan. 1987. *Ceci Tuera Cela: Graffiti as Crime and Art*. In John Fekete ed. *Life After Postmodernism*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Hal Foster, "The Expressive Fallacy," in *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1985)
- Robin Mackay, "Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Wildstyle in Full Effect" in Keith Ansell Pearson (ed.) *Deleuze and Philosophy: The Difference Engineer* (New York: Routledge, 1997)

Graffiti as identity

- Bushnell, John. 1990. *Moscow graffiti: Language and Subculture*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Ivor Miller, "Vandalized Names: The Search for a Title," *Race Class* 38: 1, 1996
- Nancy MacDonald, *The Graffiti Subculture: Youth, Masculinity, and Identity in London and New York* (New York: Palgrave, 2001)

Graffiti as crime

- Extracts from Jeff, Ferrell, *Crimes of Style: Urban graffiti and the Politics of Criminality*, photographs by Eugene Stewart-Huidobro (New York: Garland, 1993)
- Mark Halsey and Alison Young, "Our Desires are Ungovernable: Writing Graffiti in Urban Space," *Theoretical Criminology* 10: 3 (2006): 275-306
- Extracts from Michael Taussig, *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labour of the Negative* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999)
- "Zero Tolerance" in Christine Dew's *Uncommissioned Art: An A-Z of Australian Graffiti* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2007)