

Graffiti Visual Vocab

...

Types of Graffiti



TAG

The most basic form of graffiti, a writer's signature with marker or spray paint. It is the writer's logo, his/her stylized personal signature.



THROWUP

Over time, this term has been applied to many different types of graffiti. Subway art says it is "a name painted quickly with one layer of spray paint and an outline", although some consider a throwup to be bubble letters of any sort, not necessarily filled. Throwups can be from one or two letters to a whole word or a whole roll call of names. Often times throwups incorporate an exclamation mark after the word or letter. Throwups are generally only one or two colors, no more. Throwups are either quickly done bubble letters or very simple pieces using only two colors.



PIECE

A graffiti painting, short for masterpiece. It's generally agreed that a painting must have at least three colors to be considered a piece.



BLOCKBUSTER

Big, square letters, often tilted back and forth and in (usually) two colors. Mainly invented to cover over other people and to paint whole trains easily, but they are effective on smaller walls for maximum coverage. Blade and Comet claim to have invented these.



BURNER

Originally a well-done wildstyle window-down whole train car, a burner is a very good piece. Obviously, the reference to a window-down car is not applicable for pieces that are not on trains. A burner is any piece that has good bright colors, good style (often in wildstyle) and seems to "burn" off of the wall.



MURAL

A large-scale type of piecing, done top to bottom on a wall; usually a large production involving one or two pieces and usually some form of characters.

Styles of Graffiti



BUBBLE LETTERS

A type of graffiti letters, usually considered to be an older (and sometimes outmoded) style. Often used for throwup letters because of their rounded shape, which allows for quick formation.





CHARACTER

A cartoon figure (usually, but not necessarily) taken from comic books, TV or popular culture to add humor or emphasis to a piece. In some pieces, the character takes the place of a letter in the word.



CLOUD

Stylistic form applied to pieces. Usually behind letters. The use of clouds is not as frequent now as it was in the early days of subway car painting. See "background".



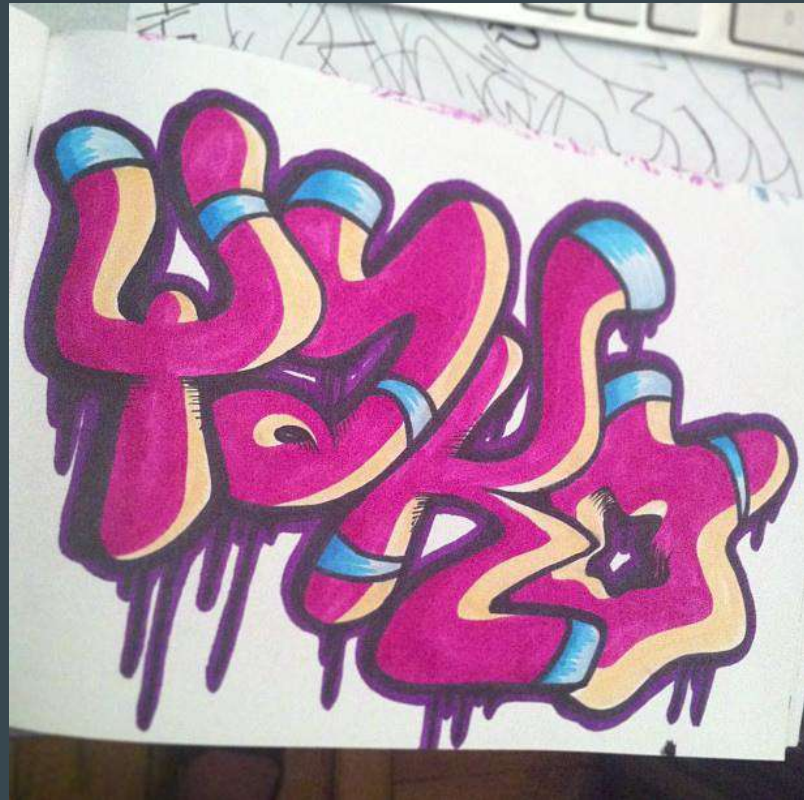
COMPUTER STYLE

A certain style of wildstyle that looks digital or bitmapped, as if it came out of a computer.



PIANO KEYS

Lines put into the 3D part of the letters as a decoration and to make them look more three dimensional



DRIPS

Stylized drips drawn onto letters to add effect. Although inept paint application causing unintentional drips is considered the mark of a toy and is wack, stylized drips drawn on letters are acceptable.



FADE

To blend/blended colors.



3D

A three-dimensional style of letters, used for added effect on basic letters, sometimes applied to wildstyle for an extra level of complexity. This style was invented by Phase 2.



WILDSTYLE

A complicated construction of interlocking letters. A hard style that consists of lots of arrows and connections. Wildstyle is considered one of the hardest styles to master and pieces done in wildstyle are often completely undecipherable to non-writers.

Other Vocab

GOING OVER

One writer covering another writer's name with his/her own. Also known as "X-ing out" or "crossing out". "Crossing out" is usually just that, painting an X over another writers tag or piece.

BUFF

Any means employed by the transit authority to remove graffiti from trains. The more modern usage is when any graffiti is gone over or removed from any surface, not necessarily just from trains.



Supplies

CAP, FAT or SKINNY (tips)

Interchangeable spray-can nozzles fitted to the can to vary the width of spray, from skinny to thick.

PIECEBOOK or BLACKBOOK

A writer's sketchbook where outlines and ideas to be executed are kept and worked out. Also referred to as a "black book" or a "writer's bible".



+++++TERMS FOR PEOPLE

TOY

An inexperienced or incompetent writer. Someone whose writing is either wack, who uses sucker tips, or whose style is just plain cheesy. One old definition of "TOYS" is that it stands for "trouble on your system".

WRITER

Practitioner of the art of graffiti.