

EVALUATION OF GRAFFITI ART WORKS
IN GREATER KUALA LUMPUR

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Field of Study: *Visual Arts*

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ABSTRACT

‘Graffiti art/Writing’ consists of four forms: tag, throw-up, piece and character. With the beginning of the 21st century, graffiti art became a constant component of global urban landscapes, including that of Greater Kuala Lumpur (GKL). However, the Malaysian public and academics do not possess a full and detailed descriptive understanding of the content of works produced by the graffiti art culture. Even on a worldwide scale, graffiti art still remains partially unexplored by scholars. Therefore, this present study provides insight into the often ‘hidden’ content of graffiti art works.

The study is using mixed methods of research to investigate the contemporary graffiti art culture’s visual products. Primary data were collected from fieldwork. Participants are graffiti artists. Qualitative ethnographic research tools, such as interview, photo elicitation and observations form the basis of this study. Quantitative research methods are used for the determination of exact average sizes and partially for the investigation of the content of graffiti art works in GKL. Some personal interviews included a legibility research experiment. Data were also obtained through emails, surveys and distributed questionnaires.

The research results show that firstly, graffiti artists evaluate other graffiti art works based on the presence of the graffiti artist’s works in a public space and on the original ‘style’ of such works. The aesthetical preferences of 20 graffiti artists identified 28 graffiti art works as aesthetically pleasing (with a 24–44% consensus); the sample consisted of 1003 graffiti art works from GKL (153 tags, 150 throw-ups, 250 characters, 450 pieces). Interesting findings include the facts that graffiti artists consider tags as the building blocks of graffiti art, throw-ups as the technically and stylistically most difficult form of graffiti art, pieces as the most appreciated form of graffiti art, and characters as the most disliked and unpopular form of graffiti art, generally produced to please the public. Secondly, that the research results suggest that the skill to ‘decipher’

illegible letterform-oriented graffiti art works can be acquired; especially through knowledge of graffiti art styles, through knowledge of graffiti artists' tag names, and through connoisseurship of individual styles. Thirdly, that the research results demonstrated that the content of themes and motifs present in Malaysian graffiti art works is not only a partial reflection of the local Malaysian culture, but also a reflection of themes and motifs globally present in graffiti art works. Fourthly, that the exact measurements of the dimensions of graffiti art works help to expand our knowledge about graffiti art works.

A Major contribution to this study has been the focus on graffiti art works from GKL. The research provides to the uninitiated viewers of graffiti art, insights into the often 'hidden' content of graffiti art works. It is concluded that graffiti art is a dilemma manifest in contradictions. Additionally it is proposed that the 'authenticity' of graffiti art works negatively affects the quality of life of people living in cities and that through a more tolerant approach towards graffiti art, as a possible form of public art, the quality of life in cities might be marginally improved.

ABSTRAK

‘Seni grafiti/Penulisan’ terdiri daripada empat bahagian: *tag*, *throw-up*, *piece* dan *character*. Bermula daripada abad 21, seni grafiti telah menjadi suatu komponen bagi pembangunan kawasan bandar, seperti bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (GKL). Walaubagaimanapun, orang awam dan para akademik di Malaysia tidak mempunyai pengetahuan yang mendalam tentang hasil seni grafiti ini. Berdasarkan skala diseluruh dunia, seni grafiti masih belum diterokai sepenuhnya oleh para akademik. Oleh itu, kajian ini memaparkan apa yang tersembunyi disebalik hasil karya seni grafiti.

Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kaji selidek bagi menyiasat budaya produk visual bagi kotemporari seni grafiti ini. Data utama diperolehi daripada kerja penyelidikan. Peserta adalah terdiri daripada grafiti artis. Kualitatif etnografi sebagai alat kajiselidek seperti temubual, perincian gambar dan pemerhatian adalah asas kajian ini. Kaedah kuantitatif kaji selidek ini digunakan bagi menentukan saiz tepat dan sebahagiannya daripada penyiasatan yang dibuat terhadap hasil kerjaseni grafiti di GKL. Temubual eksklusif sebagai eksperimen kaji selidek. Data juga diperolehi melalui email, kajiselidek dan soalan.

Kajiselidek pada awalnya menunjukkan bahawa grafiti artis akan menilai hasil kerja grafiti pihak lain berdasarkan kewujudan hasil kerja grafiti di tempat awam dan keaslian hasil kerja berkenaan. Keutamaan ‘*aesthetical*’ daripada 20 grafiti artis telah mengenal pasti 28 hasil seni kerja grafiti sebagai ‘*aesthetical*’ menyenangkan (24–44% persetujuan); contoh mengandungi 1003 hasil seni grafiti daripada GKL (153 *tags*, 150 *throw-ups*, 250 *characters*, 450 *pieces*). Suatu penemuan menarik adalah grafiti artis mempertimbangkan *tags* batu bangunan seni grafiti, *throw-ups* adalah secara teknikal gaya yang paling sukar bagi seni grafiti, *pieces* adalah yang paling dihargai di dalam seni grafiti, dan *characters* adalah yang paling tidak disukai dan tidak popular dikalangan artis grafiti di mana ianya hanya untuk menarik perhatian umum. Kedua,

kajian menunjukkan kemahiran untuk mentaksirkan illegible letterform-oriented hasil seni kerja grafiti boleh diperolehi melalui pengetahuan gaya seni graffiti daripada tag nama artis grafiti dan juga melalui connoisseurship gaya individu. Ketiga, kajian menunjukkan bahawa kandungan tema dan motif yang wujud di dalam kerja seni grafiti adalah hasil pengaruh adat resam dan kebudayaan Malaysia dan apa yang sedang berlaku pada masa berkenaan. Keempat, ukuran yang tepat bagi sesuatu kerja seni grafiti memberi penerangan tentang hasil seni kerja grafiti tersebut.

Kajian yang dibuat adalah grafiti seni GKL. Kajiselidek bagi menarik pembaca untuk mendalami apa yang tersembunyi di dalam hasil kerja seni grafiti. Secara kesimpulannya seni grafiti menunjukkan seni sejarah yang tersendiri yang belum diterokai oleh dunia seni. Adalah juga ia mencadangkan bahawa suatu 'ketulenan' terhadap hasil seni grafiti masih dianggap negatif oleh masyarakat awam di kawasan bandar dan sekiranya terdapat suatu kaedah lebih sesuai bagi hasil kerja grafiti, ia akan dapat membantu kualiti persekitaran yang lebih baik.

[Translation to *bahasa Malaysia* from the original English Abstract – pages iii-iv.]

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

[?]	Unknown
~	approximately
<01/08>	January 2008
cm	centimeter (1 cm = inch. 2.41 cm)
DBKL	Kuala Lumpur City Hall (Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur)
DN	David Novak
GKL	Greater Kuala Lumpur
H	height of a graffiti art work
KL	Kuala Lumpur
KTM	commuter train service (Keretapi Tanah Melayu)
LGA	Local Government Act
LRT	rail transport system (Light Rail Transit)
MIA	Malaysian Institute of Art
N=	sample size; number of respondents
No. (#)	Number
p.	page
pp.	Pages
pc	piece (amount of something!)
px	pixel
PW	Phiber Wryte (crew)
PHB KLIK	Phobia Klik (crew)
SA	Shah Alam
TLG	Thalangjang (crew)
TSS	The Super Sunday (crew)
VI-CA	Visual Catalogue
W	width of a graffiti art work
x	Not (negation); or multiple times symbol

TERMINOLOGY

3D

The 3D style is a graffiti art style used to produce pieces. The 3D style is an illusionist style with dimensional depth. There are no outlines used in the 3D style of pieces. The letterforms are constructed through indications of light and shadow. A graffiti artist needs to be very creative, but also very skilled in terms of technique to produce an outstanding 3D piece. The inventor of this graffiti art style can be considered to be FLIN707 from New York City of the 1970s.

B-Boy

B-boy is a term used for a hip-hop break dance performer. There is also a b-boy style of characters. Such characters are often having thick outlines, over emphasized large eyes and a gesture expressed by a hand. This character style is rather minimalistic.

Background

‘Background’ are all the elements enhancing the background of a piece or character. Backgrounds can be illusionistic, such as skylines or graphical, such as bubbles or color transitions. A background is rarely part of the forms tag and throw-up. Backgrounds were originally developed in New York City of the 1970s to completely cover up the underlying graffiti art beneath new work on the sides of subway trains.

Balai Seni Visual Negara

Balai Seni Visual Negara is the Malaysian National Visual Arts Gallery.

Battle

Battles are non-violent style competitions between graffiti artists.

Beef

Beef refers to a dispute between graffiti artists or crews.

Bite

Bite means to copy a graffiti artist. To bite is considered within the graffiti art culture as undesirable, as individual originality is emphasized within the graffiti art culture. Beginners often start by biting works of established graffiti artists.

Blackbook

Blackbooks are private sketchbooks of graffiti artists. They used to have black covers. Today a blackbook also refers to any notebook dedicated to the practice of graffiti art forms. Blackbooks can include attached photographs of graffiti art works by an individual or a crew. Graffiti artists use various tools to draw into sketchbooks. However, the most common tools are pencils and markers.

Blockbuster

Blockbuster style is typical in pieces with straight letterforms and large scale. The style is typified by its legibility, as legibility should be the aim of a blockbuster piece. The style had evolved in New York City by the 1970s, on the sides of subway trains and is closely related to the graffiti artist BLADE (born 1958), recognised as one of its inventors.

Bombing

Bombing refers generally to the illegal practice of painting in public spaces on all kinds of surfaces, especially with tags and throw-ups. Essentially, 'Bombing' is the prolific spreading of a graffiti artist's tag name. However, among Malaysian graffiti artists the word bombing is often used as an equivalent to 'paint' – legally or illegally.

Buff

Buff is a term of reference for the cleaning activities of graffiti by the authorities, in other words, – white washing.

Can

Can is a reference to the spray paint container. Nowadays there are many types of professionally developed spray paint brands for graffiti artists (Montana, Molotow, Ironlack, Zenith Cans and other brands). Such industrially made spray paints have varying properties such as low or high pressure and a very wide range of colors. Graffiti artists also use hardware spray paint brands (in Malaysia especially the brands Pylox, Arrow, Anchor, Rainbow, Samurai and others).

Cap

Caps are spray paint nozzles. Nowadays there are many types of professionally developed spray paint caps especially designed for graffiti artists. Fat caps produce a very thick line, calligraphy caps enable a calligraphy like quality to a line and skinny caps produce a fine line. There are many other types of caps for various spray paint brands. (There are also spray paint connector caps enabling the connection of a cap to a 'male' spray paint can.)

Character

Character is one of the four main forms of graffiti art. This form of graffiti art works is very popular among the public as characters represent objects and scenes. Objects represent portraits, figural painting, cartoon figures, machinery and other object-oriented imagery. Scenes represent images of skylines, landscapes and other sceneries.

Crew

A crew is a graffiti art group. Crews are loosely organized. Graffiti artists form crews based on friendship, style mastery, goal-orientation amongst other reasons.

Cross

Crossing is an aggressive act aimed at altering a graffiti art work by using a tag or throw-up to partially cover another graffiti art work. As a result of such an alteration the graffiti art work loses its original value and is considered to be free to be painted over.

Dedications

Dedications are commonly part of graffiti art works such as pieces and characters. A graffiti artist often acknowledges other graffiti artists and friends by writing out their names next to his piece or character.

DJ

DJ is a term used for a hip-hop disk jockey playing music from vinyl discs on turntables and by mixing the sound.

E2E

E2E is an abbreviation of the term end-to-end. E2E refers to either a single long panel piece or to a long collaborational panel piece stretching over the entire train car beneath the windows. (On other variations of train related forms of graffiti art works see Panel, T2B, Wholecar).

Fade

Fading is a graffiti art technique used in the production of pieces and characters. Colors are fluently mixed and the fading technique creates soft transitions between two or more colors.

Fame

Fame is one of the conscious or unconscious goals of a graffiti art career. Graffiti artists generally desire to become famous through their creativity both within and beyond that of graffiti art culture.

Fill-in

Fill-in is the space within the letterform outlines in pieces or throw-ups. All letterforms commonly possess a fill-in. Fill-in designs range from monochromatic to multicolored. There are many different fill-in possibilities such as faded fill-ins, bubble fill-ins, linear fill-ins and other fill-in techniques.

Flicks

A flick is a photograph. Graffiti artists often refer to photographs of graffiti art works as flicks.

Getting up

Getting up is the prolific spreading of a tag name in the public space. Getting up was coined by the researcher Craig Castleman in early 1980. (See also ‘Bombing’.)

Going over

Going over is referring to the act of painting over another graffiti art work. Graffiti art works are ephemeral and going over other graffiti art – especially over a piece or character – is considered as justifiable within the graffiti art culture providing a graffiti artist entirely covers the underlying work.

Graff

A short version of the term ‘graffiti art’.

Hall of Fame

Halls of fame are locations where graffiti artists create generally sanctioned graffiti art works. Halls of fame are usually in locations with a higher visibility, but not necessarily. In halls of fame, it is commonly possible to encounter the most impressive graffiti art works – pieces, characters and graffiti art productions.

Highlights

Highlights are usually visual elements indicating light reflections in a piece. Highlights can be created with lines or shading techniques.

Hip-Hop

Is a youth culture trend from New York City of the 1980's. Hip-hop is represented by breakdancing, disk-jockeying, rapping and graffiti art. Nowadays, Hip-Hop is part of the global pop culture.

Jam

Jams are gatherings, where graffiti artists congregate to socialize and to work together on their graffiti art works. Jams commonly take place in an acknowledged hall of fame.

King

King is the graffiti artist who has the most credit and respect within the graffiti art culture. A king is considered to have achieved a very high proliferation on a local and global level as well as a highly praised, individual style of graffiti art work.

Magazines (Zines)

Since the 1980's The graffiti art world has produced its own magazines. Such publications reproduce graffiti art works. The content of the graffiti art magazines commonly spreads local graffiti art works, and in the majority of cases pieces (also panel pieces). Among the most well-known magazines are: Backjumps, Flashbacks, Graphotism, IGT (International Graffiti Times), Invasian, On the Go, On the Run, Overkill, Terorist, Underground Productions, Upstream, Wanted and Xplicit Grafx.

Oldschool

The term oldschool refers to the pioneers of the graffiti art culture on the local level. During the early 2000's, as graffiti art became a global phenomenon, every country lays claim to its own oldschool story. However, on the global level, oldschool refers to the times and to the graffiti artists from the 1970's and 1980's New York City. The term oldschool often refers to something that is old and that relates to graffiti art culture.

Outlines

Outlines are the lines defining letterform contours in a piece or throw-up (or character).

Panel

Panel is a piece placed on the exterior side of a train car beneath the windows and in between the doors. However, nowadays a panel generally means any kind of a piece placed on the side of a train car beneath the windows, but not necessarily exactly placed in between the doors.

Piece

Pieces are one of the four main forms of graffiti art. Pieces are considered by graffiti artists as the best and most elaborate, original artistic products of the graffiti art culture. The subject matter of pieces is commonly the tag name of the graffiti artist. Pieces are letter oriented. The production of a piece commonly takes several hours to produce and the graffiti artists generally use a number of colors to produce pieces. The letterforms in pieces range from legible to highly illegible.

Production

A production is a collaboration of at least two graffiti artists on a larger painting or mural. Generally, a production involves pieces and characters as the predominant graffiti art forms. Graffiti artists use for example the same background colors or some other unifying visual elements, such as patterns, characters or themes, to make a graffiti art production look unified. Painting production is a kind of creative socialization process among graffiti artists.

A production might possibly be perceived as an additional graffiti art form along with tags, throw-ups, pieces and characters. However, it is not one, as it commonly uses only the four-standard forms of graffiti art works, especially pieces and characters. Production in this sense should not be confused with the classical understanding of the term '*production*' used in art history for the production process of an artwork, as I use this term in the majority of cases throughout this thesis.

Quick pieces

Quick pieces represent a transitional category between throw-ups and pieces.

Rap / MC-ing

Rap is nowadays often called hip-hop. It is a music genre based rhyming lyrics, which are chanted to a musical accompaniment. Its origins are in 1970's New York City.

Sketch

Graffiti artists commonly practice graffiti art works in sketchbooks. A sketch is often used as a guideline during the production process of a graffiti art work.

Stencil

Stencils are commonly used in street art, as one of its forms. Stencils are commonly cut out from paper and spray paint is used as a medium to transfer the stencil cutout pattern onto a surface. Stencils are generally not used in graffiti art, as graffiti art is strongly relying on the freehand skills of a graffiti artist and as such stencils are dismissed by graffiti artists as dull.

Sticker

Stickers are used by graffiti artists and street artists to spread their tag names or messages in public spaces. They have been used within the graffiti art culture since the 1980's. Stickers represent a less invasive form of proliferation in public spaces than graffiti art works. Stickers can be hand painted or industrially printed.

Style

Style is one of the most used terms within the graffiti art culture. Graffiti artists use this word on many occasions. However, generally style refers to a certain established, universal graffiti art style used to create graffiti art works. There are certain styles established for writing tags, throw-ups, pieces and characters. Well-established styles are for example wildstyle, 3D style or bubble letter style used for the production of pieces.

To develop an individual style for graffiti art works is usually the ultimate goal of every true graffiti artist. Such style is then individualized to such a high level that every other graffiti artist, with a basic knowledge of the graffiti art culture, can recognize the author of such a graffiti art work.

T2B

T2B is an abbreviation for top-to-bottom pieces. The term refers to a piece partially covering the exterior side of a train or subway train on its vertical axis.

Tag

Tag is one of the four main forms of graffiti art. Tags are stylized signatures of a graffiti artist's tag name. A tag is a signature and it is both the simplest, and the most significant form of graffiti art. It is one of the fundamentals of graffiti art. Tags are commonly placed in public spaces and they are produced with spray paint and markers as the main tools of production. Tags represent in public spaces a sort of visual communication between graffiti artists. Tags can also be viewed as territorial markers.

Tag Name

A tag name is generally the subject matter of tags, throw-ups and pieces. A tag name is a self-chosen graffiti art name. Every graffiti artist identifies with a tag name and tries to promote his tag name both within and beyond the graffiti art culture. Tag names should have a bold meaning and sound. Graffiti artists often modify standard words of a language by replacing some letters within a word with other letters, to make the word sound better or make the word look better in terms of typographical possibilities (for example from 'Word' to 'WORT'). Graffiti artists also invent fictional combinations of words and names to find interesting letterform combinations to form an original tag name.

Tag names are often accompanied by numbers to distinguish the tag name from other tag names with the same name. Therefore, it is common to see tag names accompanied by the numeral 'One', '2' or other numerals to indicate that the graffiti artist is the first one or the second one to use such a name. Sometimes numerals can be

derived from street numbers, house numbers and other related indicators to show where a graffiti artist lives or relates to. This is because it is inappropriate to write the same name as another graffiti artist – it is a kind of taboo.

Throw-up

The throw-up is one of the four main forms of graffiti art. Throw-ups are line oriented, commonly roundish letterform abstracts. Throw-ups are very typical for graffiti art. They are generally executed in 1-2 colors and their production time is around 1-2 minutes. Throw-ups are manifestations of a graffiti artist's style in letterform shaping. Throw-ups are closely related to bombing.

Toy

Toy is a derogative term for a beginner and an incompetent graffiti artist. Toy is also used as a word for graffiti artist that is not taking graffiti art seriously, as true graffiti artists dedicate all their energy and lifestyle for the sake of their graffiti art.

Wholecar

Wholecar is a term referring to a piece covering a train or subway train across the entire vertical and horizontal exterior side.

Wildstyle

Wildstyle is one of the many graffiti art styles. However, wildstyle is one of the most well-known graffiti art styles. Wildstyle is typical with a lower level of legibility and quite commonly, a high usage of interlocking and intertwined letterforms and arrows as elements forming a piece. This style is associated with the graffiti artist TRACY168 from New York City around the first half of the 1970's.

Writer

The term writer is derived from the activity graffiti artists do – they write letterforms. From the perspective of graffiti art, a writer is the correct term for a graffiti artist. Graffiti artists call themselves writers since the early days of the graffiti art culture in the 1970's. However, the media and researchers generally do not use this appropriate term. I use the term graffiti artists in this thesis, as it is a common practice in Malaysia.

1 CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

Graffiti art is part of today's global urban visual culture. However, neither the Malaysian public nor academics pose a full and detailed descriptive understanding of the content of works produced by this culture.

Even on a worldwide scale, graffiti art still remains partially unexplored. For example, the researcher Lachlan MacDowall, from the University of Melbourne noted in a paper, in 2006, that '*while many academic studies have included photographs of graffiti [art], they provide little visual or aesthetic analysis*'.¹ Also the Yale University graduate Ronald Kramer observed in his 2009 PhD dissertation *A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005* that: '*...beyond those who directly participate in the culture and a small handful of "outsiders", not much is known about graffiti writing*'.² Further, the art historian Lois Fichner-Rathus (born 1953) states in the 2013 tenth edition of the textbook *Understanding Art* that: '*Everyone has seen graffiti [art], but the complexity of the work and the social atmosphere from which it is derived may not be common knowledge*'.³ Especially with regards to Malaysia, it can be stated that there is in general a lack of studies concerned with the urban phenomenon represented by the contemporary graffiti art culture.

This present study attempts to reveal, to scholars and the general public the obscure content of graffiti art works for a better understanding of this current urban phenomenon. The American studies scholar Joe Austin argued in favor of graffiti art, as of a neglected part of modern art and concluded, after a rigorous discussion, that graffiti

¹ Lachlan MacDowall, "In Praise of 70k: Cultural Heritage and Graffiti Style," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 20, no. 4 (2006). p. 472.

² Ronald Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005" (PhD. Dissertation, Yale University, 2009). p. 3.

³ Lois Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Art*, 10 ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2013). p. 132.

art ‘*enhances city life*’ and stated that ‘*graffiti art is aesthetically credible as art and it bears the marks of connection to widely accepted and valued visual traditions*’.⁴ The focus of this study is on graffiti art works (tag, throw-up, piece, character). The research firstly focuses on the evaluation process by which graffiti artists evaluate other graffiti art works, secondly on the legibility of letterform oriented graffiti art works, thirdly on the non-letterform oriented contents represented in graffiti art works and fourthly on the exact sizes of graffiti art works. The study is based primarily on photographic evidence of graffiti art works from the urban area of Greater Kuala Lumpur (GKL) in Malaysia, in the region of Southeast Asia.

Since its first historical occurrence, more than 45 years ago, graffiti art still seeks its niche within the art world and as a result graffiti art (Writing) is not part of the art historical canon.⁵ The general connection of graffiti art to art history, if at all, is commonly established through references to prehistoric painters⁶, or to Jean Dubuffet (1901–1985)⁷, and especially through references to the artists Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960–1988)⁸ and Keith Haring (1958–1990)⁹. The art historian Margo Thompson (PhD, 1998), the author of the book *American Graffiti*, excellently shed light on the question, why Basquiat and Haring established in the 1980’s as fine artists with an art

⁴ Joe Austin, "More to See Than a Canvas in a White Cube: For an Art in the Streets," *City: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action*, 14, no. 1-2 (2010). p. 44.

⁵ Lisa Gottlieb suggested, on page 32, in *Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art* that the: ‘*canonization of graffiti art has continued in museums and galleries*’ since the first manifestation of this phenomenon. However, graffiti art is often not included in books about art at all, as is for example the case in (and many others): A. N. Hodge, *The History of Art: Painting from Giotto to the Present Day* (London: Arcturus, 2008). Grant Pooke et al., *Art History: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2008). Jonathan Harris, *Art History: The Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Penelope J. E. Davies et al., *Janson's History of Art: The Western Tradition*, 8 ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2011).

⁶ Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Art*. p. 132; Jesse Bryant Wilder, *Art History for Dummies* (Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing, 2007).

⁷ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages: The Western Perspective, Volume 2*, 14 ed., vol. 2 (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2014). p. 790; Davies et al., *Janson's History of Art: The Western Tradition*. p. 1042.

⁸ Marilyn Stokstad et al., *Art History Volume Two*, 4 ed., 2 vols. (London: Laurence King, 2011). p. 1107; Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages: The Western Perspective, Volume 2*. pp. 835, 857; Davies et al., *Janson's History of Art: The Western Tradition*. p. 1042; Wilder, *Art History for Dummies. The Art Book*, (London: Phaidon, 1994; reprint, 1996). p. 29.

⁹ Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages: The Western Perspective, Volume 2*. p. 857.

historical lineage, and why authentic New Yorker ‘writers/graffiti artists’ from the 1970’s and 1980’s were rather dismissed as fine artists with an art historical lineage.¹⁰

In fact, graffiti art is a very ephemeral site-specific art form and the majority of valuable works produced by this culture was intentionally destroyed by official governmental authorities¹¹ or was painted over by the graffiti art culture itself. The majority of graffiti art works is preserved only through photographic documentation.¹² One of the reasons for the non-recognition of graffiti art, as of a form of art, is, besides others, the close connection of graffiti art with vandalism – especially in the Western world¹³ – and the surficial impact¹⁴ of graffiti art works, which commonly only spreads the identity of their authors’ in the form of stylized, often illegible letterforms.

There are also some minor exceptions to what has just been stated. In the above cited book *Understanding Art*, graffiti art is briefly mentioned within the texts and we read on the opening pages that: ‘*We shall follow the journey of art...from the wall paintings of our Stone Age ancestors through the graffiti art of today’s subway station.*’¹⁵ However, the only real connection to the urban graffiti art culture in the very same book is established merely through the introduction of *Spray Paint* as a tool to produce paintings.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Lois Fichner-Rathus, also raises in the book some interesting questions with regards to graffiti art, and to graffiti artists, and asks: ‘*Why do they do it? Is it art? urban ritual? Will it speak in history to the trials of inner-city*

¹⁰ Margo Thompson, *American Graffiti* (Parkstone International, 2009).

¹¹ Ibid. p. 7.

¹² Also many classical works of fine art got lost during the human history as was for example pointed out in: Paul Johnson, *Art: A New History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003). pp. 2-3; Rick Gekoski, "Lost, Stolen or Shredded: Stories of Missing Works of Art and Literature," (London: Profile Books, 2013).

¹³ Joe Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005".

¹⁴ Susan Stewart, "Ceci Tuera Cela: Graffiti as Crime and Art," in *Life after Postmodernism: Essays on Value and Culture*, ed. John Fekete (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987). p. 176.

¹⁵ Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Art*. p. 3.

¹⁶ Ibid. p.132.

living?’¹⁷ Some of these raised questions are partially and indirectly addressed in specific sections of this present thesis.

It also needs to be stated that many global graffiti artists do not even seek the direct recognition and approval of graffiti art through the art world, as graffiti art is an avant-garde movement producing art-for-art’s-sake. The world famous graffiti artist AROE (born in the early 1970’s) said, while visiting Kuala Lumpur during the official event *Kulsign Festival 2010*, that: ‘People who do graffiti [art] don’t care about showing their stuff in galleries. It’s art for art’s sake.’¹⁸ Thompson also stated that: ‘Not all subway writers wanted to become [in the 1970’s and 1980’s] gallery artists’.¹⁹ Many graffiti artists see their main audience in other graffiti artists, who are able to evaluate graffiti art works based on their own self-critical experience of the graffiti art culture, and who are best placed to appreciate the beauty of graffiti art works.²⁰ Therefore, this study aims to provide a possible base for other researchers, and the public, to better understand the subcultural evaluation procedures used by graffiti artists to evaluate artifacts created by this culture.

The practitioners of graffiti art are often self-taught artists, outsiders, even though some graffiti artists went through official art education and profit from their official schooling experiences, while producing graffiti art works outside of the mainstream culture. However, the experience with the official art educational system does not have a direct influence on the status of a graffiti artist within the loosely organized – or more correctly unorganized, but structured graffiti art community. Sometimes, in a sense, the experience of an official art education is viewed within the graffiti art culture as a

¹⁷ Ibid. p.132.

¹⁸ Beverly Rodrigues, "Talking Walls: We Talk Tags, Style & Vandalism with Some of the World's Most Respected Graffiti Writers," *Travel 3Sixty* March 2011. p. 73. (For the very good website of AROE see: <<http://aroemsk.com/>>.)

¹⁹ Thompson, *American Graffiti*. p. 29.

²⁰ Staffan Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art," (2001). p. 5 (Aesthetics of Graffiti). Thompson, *American Graffiti*.

‘negative’ factor. Also for this reason, the present study is focusing on the opinions and on the consensus among graffiti artists, who actively form and represent this global culture, rather than to apply external views and opinions about the graffiti art culture. I felt entitled to present this research as I had direct experience of the graffiti art culture myself.

The main motivation of this thesis is to shed light onto the material products of the graffiti art culture and possibly expand our knowledge about this phenomenon, as graffiti art works remain till today rather unexplored – especially the ones in Malaysia.

1.0.1 Writing/Graffiti Art

‘Graffiti’ is a term used for unauthorized writings and drawings. Graffiti can be writings or drawings scribbled, scratched, and sprayed illicitly on walls or other surfaces in public spaces.²¹ Graffiti is commonly created in public spaces on public or private property alike and nowadays they are often classified by the law as vandalism, due to the visual modification of an object. One specific type of graffiti occurring in urban spaces is today, known as ‘graffiti art’. The term ‘graffiti art’ is used throughout this thesis even though the correct term to designate this urban culture would be ‘Writing’.²² Writing is the more appropriate term, as the practitioners of graffiti art have called themselves ‘writers’ since the early 1970’s and also because the term ‘graffiti’ not only implies something illegal a social construct imposed, however reasonable, upon the visual culture of American society since the 1970’s.²³ However, graffiti art nowadays is very often created with permission and so the term ‘graffiti’ simply does

²¹ Oxford Dictionaries: The world’s most trusted dictionaries. <oxforddictionaries.com/definition/English/graffiti> Accessed: 04 August 2013.

²² For further examples of this discussions see: Susan Alice Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers" (PhD. Dissertation, University of California, 2008). p. 15; Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005". pp. 2-3; Thompson, *American Graffiti*. p. 10; Lisa Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art" (PhD. Thesis, University of Toronto, 2006).

²³ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*; Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005".

not apply in such situations anymore.²⁴ Furthermore, some products of the graffiti art culture assume even three-dimensions, as various graffiti artists create also sculptures, based upon the graffiti art traditions, and therefore the technical term 'graffiti' can hardly be applied to such works either.²⁵ Nevertheless, the term 'graffiti art' is used in this study, as this term is more established in Malaysia²⁶ and partly in scholarly literature.

Graffiti art is historically a new breed of graffiti, which evolved independently of 'traditional graffiti' forms in the late 1960's Philadelphia and New York City.²⁷ The first and probably the most outstanding graffiti art historian, artist,²⁸ and teacher Jack Stewart (1926–2005) noted that an important difference amongst others between traditional graffiti and graffiti art is in its aesthetic concern:

*Comparison of...graffiti [art] with [traditional] graffiti done prior to 1970 shows it to be distinctly different, and it also demonstrates that this is the first significant difference that has occurred in the entire history of graffiti. The cause of this difference is the introduction of aesthetic concerns and objectives...*²⁹

Graffiti art is customarily created by young males in urban spaces. These specific graffiti artists call themselves 'writers' or 'graffiti artists', as was noted above.³⁰ Graffiti artists repeatedly write in public spaces their self-given subcultural names with markers, emulsion paint and spray paint. They use for this purpose an intentionally invented

²⁴ Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005".

²⁵ For accounts of graffiti art sculptures see: Markus Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond* (Berlin: Die Gestalten Verlag, 2003).

²⁶ "Opening Speech by Mayor of KL: Launch of Kulsign Festival 2012 & Graffiti Art Book "Hembusan Seni Kuala Lumpur," http://www.dbkl.gov.my/portalv7/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1493&Itemid=24&lang=en; "Graffiti Art Contest and Battle of the Bands Draw Crowds," *The Star*, 18. May 2010; admin, "A Leap Forward for Graffiti Art in Malaysia," *Arteri: Following Art Wherever It Goes* <http://www.artermalaysia.com/2010/12/22/a-leap-forward-for-graffiti-art-in-malaysia/>; Fazleena Aziz, "Graffiti Artists Given a Place to Work On," *The Star*, 18 February 2012; Priscilla Dielenberg, "Hip-Hop Touch to Graffiti Art," *The Star*, 24. April 2010; Andrea Filmer, "A Park for Graffiti Artists," *The Star*, 20. April 2011; Tricia Lim, "Calling All Graffiti Artists," *The Star*, 25 February 2013; Fairuz Mohd Shahar, "Contest for Graffiti Artists," *New Straits Times*, 27. February 2013; Anu Venugopal, "Taking Graffiti Art to a Higher Level," *The Malay Mail*, 04 January 2011.

²⁷ David Ley et al., "Urban Graffiti as Territorial Markers," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 64, no. 4 (1974).

²⁸ Craig Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York* (The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1982; reprint, 1997).

²⁹ "The Jack Stewart Collection," THE OGDEN MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN ART, <http://www.ogdenmuseum.org/collections/stewart/stewart.html>.

³⁰ Jack Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978" (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1989). p. 493.

³¹ The term 'graffiti artist' is used throughout the thesis as it is commonly used in Malaysian media reports. See also the footnotes 22 and 26.

anonymous name – the so called ‘tag name’. The graffiti artist’s self-chosen tag name usually relates in some way to the life or the intention of a graffiti artist. Nevertheless, graffiti artists also choose tag names based on typographically pleasing letterform combinations.

The Malaysian graffiti artist Hafiz Ab Rahman (born 1986), for example, has chosen for himself the tag name KATUN, as he used to draw cartoon characters in school classes. Other pupils always asked for more cartoon drawings from Hafiz Ab Rahman and his nickname established as KATUN [Cartoon].³¹ For graffiti art works by KATUN see Figure 1.1–Figure 1.7.

After selecting a tag name, graffiti artists repeatedly re-produce – write – their tag names³² in public spaces in their neighborhoods, districts, cities, countries and on a global scale. The tag name becomes the main subject matter of a graffiti artist’s creativity and of his life. The repetition of the tag name in visible public spaces brings to the graffiti artist, within the subculture, glory – ‘fame’. The most prolific graffiti artist, with the most original and appealing individual artistic style becomes the so-called ‘king’. Lisa Gottlieb (born 1971), a researcher and the author of the thesis *Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art*, observed that:

*Graffiti art...conveys only one type of message – specifically, the “identity” of a graffiti writer. But just as important as the name itself is how the writer chooses to depict the name.*³³

The tag name is generally the central subject matter of three, of the four, graffiti art forms (tag, throw-up and piece (Table 1.1)).³⁴

³¹ KATUN, Audio-recorded Interview, 28 February 2009. For KATUN’s work see for example Figure 1.16 (p. 25) or the research article: David Novak, "Western Influences in Southeast Asian Paintings: Comparison of a Balinese Ink Painting and of Two Malaysian Graffiti Artworks," *Annals of the Náprstek Museum*, no. 33 (2012).

³² John Dorst, "Tags and Burners, Cycles and Networks: Folklore in the Teletronic Age," *Journal of Folklore Research* 27, no. 3 (September 1990). p. 186.

³³ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p. 31.

Table 1.1 Graffiti Art Forms.

Graffiti Art: Four Forms³⁵			
1. Tag (Figure 1.8)	2. Throw-Up (Figure 1.9)	3. Piece (Figure 1.10)	4. Character (Figure 1.11)

Further below are the illustrations of all four graffiti art forms – tag, throw-up, piece, and character (Figure 1.8-Figure 1.11). All four graffiti art forms were produced by the graffiti artist Bone Alfie (born 1982) aka BONE, who lives in Kuala Lumpur and is one of the pioneer graffiti artists in Malaysia.³⁶

A tag is the most basic and simplest form of graffiti art. Tags are unique, individualized, monochrome signatures of graffiti artists (Figure 1.8). Throw-ups are in a scale larger than tags. Throw-ups are often executed in two colors, and represent abstract, simplified, rather roundish silhouettes of letterforms (Figure 1.9).

The multicolored and large-scale pieces (short for masterpieces) represent stylized, elaborate letterforms and among the graffiti artists are considered the most complex graffiti art works (Figure 1.10). The public finds pieces attractive, because of their aesthetical appeal.³⁷ Characters represent objects and scenes, such as figural paintings or urban skylines, and characters represent, in the perception of the public, the most accepted graffiti art form (Figure 1.11).

As can be observed in Figure 1.8 – Figure 1.10 the legibility of graffiti art works, without provided captions to the figures, might be difficult. For the trained eyes of graffiti artists it is obviously much easier to read and decipher graffiti art works, but for

³⁴ David Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley" (Master Dissertation, University of Malaya, January 2011). pp. 17-24.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ The graffiti artist BONE was featured for example as the main graffiti artist in the report: Eunji Lee, "Hip-Hop Fun & Thrills: The Soud Showdown Street Fest 2011 by 8tv Attracted Some 8,000 Fans to Catch Top Local Dance Crews in Action," *The Sun*, 03 October 2011a. Sarah Rahim, "Graffiti Artists Given a Free Hand," *New Straits Times*, 02 March 2012.

³⁷ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p. 57.

the uninitiated eye, it is usually a very difficult and sometimes nearly impossible task to perform.³⁸ For the uninitiated eye, it is much easier to interpret a character. The painting in Figure 1.11 is easily interpreted by viewers, as nearly every observer can relate to a figural painting. However, only few observers would understand, without deeper research and knowledge, that the graffiti artist BONE represented, in his individual style in the character in Figure 1.11, the popular culture figure ‘Mojo Jojo’ from the television channel’s *Cartoon Network* animation series *Powerpuff Girls* (see Figure 1.12).³⁹ Therefore this study examines not only the letterforms oriented graffiti art works (tag, throw-up, and piece), but also the content of non-letterforms oriented graffiti art works, characters, and interprets their underlying hidden meanings contained in those works. Such an analysis shall lead to a better understanding of graffiti art works produced by this culture. Further, it is also difficult to transmit, through photographic reproductions, the sizes of graffiti art works to observers not very familiar with graffiti art works. Therefore, this present study partially explored the sizes of graffiti art works and consequently it can be reported that the piece in Figure 1.10 is to a scale of 505 cm in width by 190 cm in height. The results of this study are based on graffiti art works produced in the urban area GKL during the years 2000–2014.

Summary of study focus:

- I. Evaluation and aesthetical preferences with regards to graffiti art works
- II. Legibility in letterform-oriented graffiti art works
- III. Content of non-letterform-oriented graffiti art works
- IV. Exact average sizes of graffiti art works

³⁸ Graffiti art works are commonly to most people illegible. In the first sentence of the abstract to the PhD thesis *The International Graffiti Movement: Mixed Metaphors and Aesthetic Disruption* it is for example stated that ‘graffiti-artists...perform illegible...pieces’: Florence Merle, "The International Graffiti Movement: Mixed Metaphors and Aesthetic Disruption" (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 1998). p. iii.

³⁹ BONE, Audio-recorded Interview (1/1), 25 February 2012. [06:50min.]



Figure 1.1 KATUN's monkey character with a spray paint and a roller created for 'Dripsndrops' enterprise.
06 November 2013. Imbi, KL.



Figure 1.2 KATUN's monkey character with a spray paint at the 'Tempatan Fest 3.0'.
20 November 2013. Near KLCC Conventional Centre, KL.



Figure 1.3 KATUN's monkey character among other characters at the 'Meeting of Characters 2013'.
06 March 2014. Jelatek, KL.



Figure 1.4 KATUN's monkey character next to a VOLRE piece in the 'Phbkklk Strictly Wild Style' production.
06 March 2014. Imbi, KL.



Figure 1.5 KATUN's monkey character surrounded by playful kids by DREW.
06 March 2014. Imbi, KL.



Figure 1.6 KATUN's monkey character on a branch next to a parrot by an Australian graffiti artist.
06 March 2014. Imbi, KL.



Figure 1.7 KATUN's female character of the Singaporean female graffiti artist INK10 holding a brush and can.
06 March 2014. Imbi, KL.



Figure 1.8 BONE tag.
08 April 2012. Jalan P. Ramlee, KL.



Figure 1.9 The graffiti artist BONE with a spray can in his hand and his freshly finished throw-up. 05 July 2010. Imbi, KL.



Figure 1.10 BONE piece. Width 505 cm; height 190 cm. 31 March 2011. Wangsa Maju, GKL.



Figure 1.11 Character by BONE, accompanied with a piece by SIEK. Height of character: 313 cm. 25 February 2012. Central Market, KL.



Figure 1.12 The 'Mojo Jojo' villain character from the animation series *Powerpuff Girls*.
Source of image: <http://imageshack.us/photo/my-images/399/mojo2fn5.png/sr=1>.

1.1 Problem Statement

Graffiti art is currently a typical visual feature of global urban spaces and of urban life.⁴⁰ With the beginning of the 21st century, graffiti art has also become a constant component of the urban landscape of Greater Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

*"Like it or not, graffiti has become a reality in all cities," said Mohammad Salleh Abdullah, special officer to the mayor...[of Kuala Lumpur].*⁴¹

However, the majority of people confronted with graffiti art in their daily life do not understand the products of this culture. People commonly express their dismay about the two-dimensional representations of tags and throw-ups in public spaces, but show understanding for the production of characters and pieces, which are in their perception 'nice'. During informal talks with the public, I have even observed that people sometimes refused to believe that the works in Figure 1.8 and Figure 1.9 were produced by the same graffiti artist, who produced also the works in Figure 1.10 and

⁴⁰ Nicholas Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*, ed. Tristan Marco (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 2004).

⁴¹ Grace Chen, "Brighter Banks for Klang River," *The Star*, 06. March 2012.

Figure 1.11. People have difficulty understanding the conception, that tags and throw-ups can be to somebody, as to the graffiti artists in this case, aesthetically pleasing. This situation presents a problem. It is necessary to explore the opinions on the perception of beauty of graffiti artists, with regards to graffiti art works, in order to make a better evaluation of graffiti art works in general. The graffiti art culture regulates, loosely, its aesthetics by a consensus among graffiti artists.⁴² It is of interest to explore the opinions of graffiti artists to understand their motivations and to expand our knowledge on such a very important topic, as graffiti art, which is confronting every urban citizen on a daily basis. An understanding of the evolutionary processes of graffiti art works, used by graffiti artists, might possibly help us to appreciate the inner beauty of this urban phenomenon (even though the artistic principles of graffiti art might not be in accord with everyone's taste). Nevertheless, an introduction to the aesthetics and purposes of graffiti art works might be a step towards a contemporary urban phenomenon, that does not simply disappear,⁴³ especially as this form of public expression has been constantly growing since its appearance 45 years ago.

The content of graffiti art works has often been interpreted by outsiders who lack a much deeper knowledge of the aesthetics of graffiti art. I consider this a problem, because if we continue to misinterpret graffiti art (and its content), and omit the real letterforms oriented content of graffiti art works, we might never understand its real aesthetic value – if any – and graffiti art will be continuously inaccessible to many people, who are not part of the graffiti art subculture as discussed here, but who are confronting graffiti art every day in cities around the world.⁴⁴ The art historian Margo

⁴² For some suggestions of art criticism among graffiti artists see: Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art." p. 5 (Aesthetics of Graffiti).

⁴³ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*; Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005".

⁴⁴ This argument does not want to sound simplistic, but represents rather a possible suggestion to the resolvment of the graffiti art problem. See also the section '1.3 Important Warning in the Beginning'.

Thompson stated with regards to the obscure paintings of graffiti artists from New York City of the 1980's:

...their paintings remained strange and exotic even to their fans: as one [graffiti artist/] writer, DAZE put it, 'Graffiti [art] was this language that they wanted to get to know on a superficial level, but they didn't want to be able to speak it fluently'.⁴[⁴⁵]⁴⁶

Therefore, it is of interest to thoroughly examine the works of the graffiti art culture. If graffiti art was correctly interpreted and understood, it might be possible to have a better critical evaluation of its social value and perhaps answer the question of whether it can also stand for art instead of only for vandalism. Additionally, art historians might get a better insight into the graffiti art compositions, to examine these works based on a deeper understanding. In order to interpret and understand the compositions of graffiti art works correctly, it is necessary to take the time and deeply examine the mainly letterforms oriented graffiti art works. Any analysis of letterform oriented graffiti art works requires the ability to 'see', to 'perceive' the letterforms within the graffiti art works. The ability to 'see' letterforms within the compositions requires an introduction to the 'legibility' of graffiti art works, which is one of the objectives of this study. Along with the legibility analysis of letterform oriented graffiti art works it is of advantage to perform content analysis of non-letterform oriented characters, in order to acquire more knowledge about the authors of graffiti art works and about their individual lives reflected in their graffiti art works. The examination of graffiti art works will help better understand the graffiti art culture and make graffiti art more accessible to other researchers and to interested segments of the public.

⁴⁵ Interview with DAZE, 26 July 2006. In: Thompson, *American Graffiti*. p. 10.

⁴⁶ Ibid. pp. 7-10.

Further, scholars commonly refer to sizes of graffiti art works in general terms and state that a tag is small and that a piece is large.⁴⁷ This presents another problem, as these general indications do not provide any exact references to exact scales of graffiti art works. Therefore it is important to better anchor the proportionality of graffiti art – especially pieces – in the minds of uninitiated readers

1.1.1 Objectives

This study aims to present its readers with a profound understanding of the content of graffiti art works (with emphasis on Malaysia). It is necessary to recognize the content of graffiti art works to understand, criticize, and research the graffiti art culture's productions.

My central thesis is that the graffiti art culture has its very own, unique, art criticism and aesthetics, and that it is necessary to understand the represented content within the graffiti art forms tag, throw-up, piece, and character. The '*content*' of graffiti art works – '*(1) subject matter, (2) elements and composition, and (3) underlying or symbolic meanings or themes*'⁴⁸ – needs to be explored in all four forms of graffiti art (tags, throw-ups, pieces and characters), as all these four forms of graffiti art construct 'only' together the urban phenomenon known as 'graffiti art', or as 'Writing'.

The present study aims to provide to uninitiated outsiders, insights to the often 'hidden', invisible content of graffiti art works.⁴⁹ In order to do that I will firstly explore the evolutionary process used by graffiti artists to judge graffiti art works, and research the aesthetical expectations of graffiti artists with regards to graffiti art works. Secondly, I will investigate the legibility of letterforms, which represent the compositional

⁴⁷ Kim Dovey et al., "Placing Graffiti: Creating and Contesting Character in Inner-City Melbourne," *Journal of Urban Design* 17, no. 1 (2012). p. 25. Jeff Ferrell, *Styles of Crime: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996). p. 76. Jeff Ferrell, "Hiding in the Light: Graffiti and the Visual," *Criminal Justice Matters* 78, no. 1 (2009). Gregory J. Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground* (New York: New York University Press, 2009). p. 34. Ibid. p. 41.

⁴⁸ Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Art*. p. 98.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p.132.

elements in letterform oriented graffiti art works. Thirdly, I will examine the underlying themes expressed mainly through characters. Finally, I will research the exact sizes of graffiti art works as this has never been done before and represents a significant property of graffiti art works.

1.1.1.1 Research Questions

Research questions explored in this study:

- 1) How do graffiti artists evaluate graffiti art works and what are their aesthetical preferences with regards to tags, throw-ups, pieces and characters?
- 2) How to approach the legibility of letterform-oriented graffiti art works?
- 3) What content do graffiti art works have besides letterforms?
- 4) What is the exact average size of a graffiti art work, especially of the graffiti art form piece?

1.1.1.2 Definition of Terms

‘Tag’

*[A] stylized signature of a graffiti writer’s name. All graffiti writers work under a pseudonym, which usually consists of a single name or the combination of a name plus number. This pseudonym, in turn, forms the basis of the graffiti image.*⁵⁰

*To think of “tags” as signatures would be slightly anachronistic in relation to the early 1970s. At this stage, tags more closely resembled a writer’s general handwriting style. The extent to which early tags were stylized varied from writer to writer. ... The idea of stylizing a tag such that it could be called a signature or “hand-style” was a later development.*⁵¹ (See Figure 1.13 for an example of the production of stylized tags.)

‘Throw-up’

n. “An outline of a name filled in with one or two colors, so called because it is quickly executed. Usually rendered in a bubble style letter. Many writers think of the throw-up as an art form unto itself, as the trademark or logo of a writer. They consider a piece to be an extension of the throw-up.” (Miller 2002:197) “A name

⁵⁰ Square brackets added by present author.

Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p. 31.

⁵¹ Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005". p. 36.

painted quickly with one layer of spray paint and an outline.” (Chalfant 1984: 27)⁵²

Throw-ups vary from writer to writer, but they generally resemble simplified letters. They are simplified in two senses: First, in terms of the use of line, and second, in terms of physical appearance. Throw-ups are usually sketched, filled in and outlined very fast.⁵³ (See Figure 1.14 for an example of the production of a throw-up.)

‘Piece’

Pieces, short for masterpieces, are considered the pinnacle of graffiti art. ... Pieces, with their range of colours, intricate lettering, backgrounds and visual details, are all about style.⁵⁴

“a large scale word or name rendered in spray paint on a train, wall or canvas.”(Miller 2002: 1996; Castleman 1982:31) “Mural done with aerosol spray paint.”(Walsh 1996: 135)⁵⁵ (See Figure 1.15 for an example of the production of a piece.)

‘Character’

Characters, which started off as ancillaries to letters, now form their own graffiti group and range from comical figures to those of perfect photorealism.⁵⁶ (See Figure 1.16 for an example of the production of a character.)

‘Content’

The content of a work of art is everything that is contained in it. The content of a work refers not only to its lines or forms but also to its subject matter and its underlying meanings or themes.

The Levels of Content

We may think of works of art as containing three levels of content: (1) subject matter, (2) elements and composition, and (3) underlying or symbolic meanings or themes.⁵⁷

‘Letterform’

The graphic form of a letter of the alphabet, either as written or in a particular type font.⁵⁸

‘Legibility’

Legibility is the degree to which glyphs (individual characters) [letterforms] in text are understandable or recognizable based on appearance. "The legibility of a typeface is related to the characteristics inherent in its design ... which relate to the ability to distinguish one letter from the other." Legibility includes factors

⁵² Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers". p. 315.

⁵³ Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005". p. 40.

⁵⁴ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p. 32.

⁵⁵ Square brackets added by present author.

Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers". p. 314.

⁵⁶ Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*. p. 10.

⁵⁷ Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Art*. p. 98.

⁵⁸ "Letterform," Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/letterform>.

*such as "x-height, character shapes, stroke contrast, the size of its counters, serifs or lack thereof, and weight."*⁵⁹

*Legibility: ...the legibility of the word presented in the graffiti art [tag, throw-up, or] piece. Legibility takes into account the degree to which the individual letters that form the word can be identified.*⁶⁰

‘Graffiti art’

*...graffiti art, is commonly called ‘hip-hop’ or ‘New York style’ graffiti and derives from a tradition of subway graffiti that originated in New York in the 1970s. This type of graffiti has spread to large urban centres around the USA and the rest of the world, especially in Europe. Where subway cars like those in New York are unavailable, walls, rocks, road signs, billboards, train carriages and even motor vehicles are considered suitable ‘canvases’. Graffiti artists may or may not belong to ‘crews’, which are groups of artists at different levels of proficiency. Their work ranges from simple monochrome ‘tags’ (the artist’s ‘name tag’ often represented in exaggerated cursive style) to elaborate, multicolored works called ‘pieces’ (derived from the word ‘masterpiece’), which are considered in some circles to be of museum quality.*⁶¹

In the context of the present study the term ‘graffiti art’ includes all four forms of graffiti art – tags, throw-ups, pieces, and characters – produced with spray paint, emulsion paint, marker and other media. These graffiti art works could have been produced with permission or without it, and could have been produced under patronage or self-financed. The surfaces for such graffiti art works include walls, other urban objects, canvases, sketchbooks, boards and many other surfaces. Of importance is the association of the artifact’s author with the graffiti art culture and the works should follow graffiti art’s cultural traditions.

‘Greater Kuala Lumpur’

*Greater KL/KV [Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley] is composed of 10 local authorities[.] 2010 population (5.7mln)[.]*⁶²

Klang Valley (Malay: Lembah Klang) is an area in Malaysia comprising Kuala Lumpur [Figure 1.17] and its suburbs, and adjoining cities and towns in the state of Selangor. An alternative reference to this would be Kuala Lumpur Metropolitan Area or Greater Kuala Lumpur [GKL]... It is geographically

⁵⁹ [1] Strizver, Ilene (2010). *Type Rules: The Designer's Guide to Professional Typography* (3rd ed.). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons. p. 73. In: <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legibility>>

⁶⁰ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p. 264.

⁶¹ Phillips, Susan A. Graffiti. In: *The Dictionary of Art*. (13: Goodnough to Habsburg.) Edited by Jane Turner. New York: Grove, 1996. p. 270.

⁶² "Official Website of Greater Kuala Lumpur / Klang Valley," Ministry of Federal Territories, <http://app.kwpkb.gov.my/greaterklkv/>.

*delineated by Titiwangsa Mountains to the north and east and the Strait of Malacca to the west. The conurbation has a total population of over 4 million as of 2004, and is the heartland of Malaysia's industry and commerce. In the most recent census, the population in the Klang Valley had expanded to 4.7 million, and in 2006, the population in this area is estimated to be 6.0 million.*⁶³

⁶³

Square brackets added by present author.

Klang Valley. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia.

< http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klang_Valley>. Accessed on: 21. May 2010.

NOTE: The term Greater Kuala Lumpur started to be used very often in connection with the planned “Greater Kuala Lumpur MRT project”. Greater KL MRT. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia.

< http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_KL_MRT>. Accessed on: 19. February 2011.

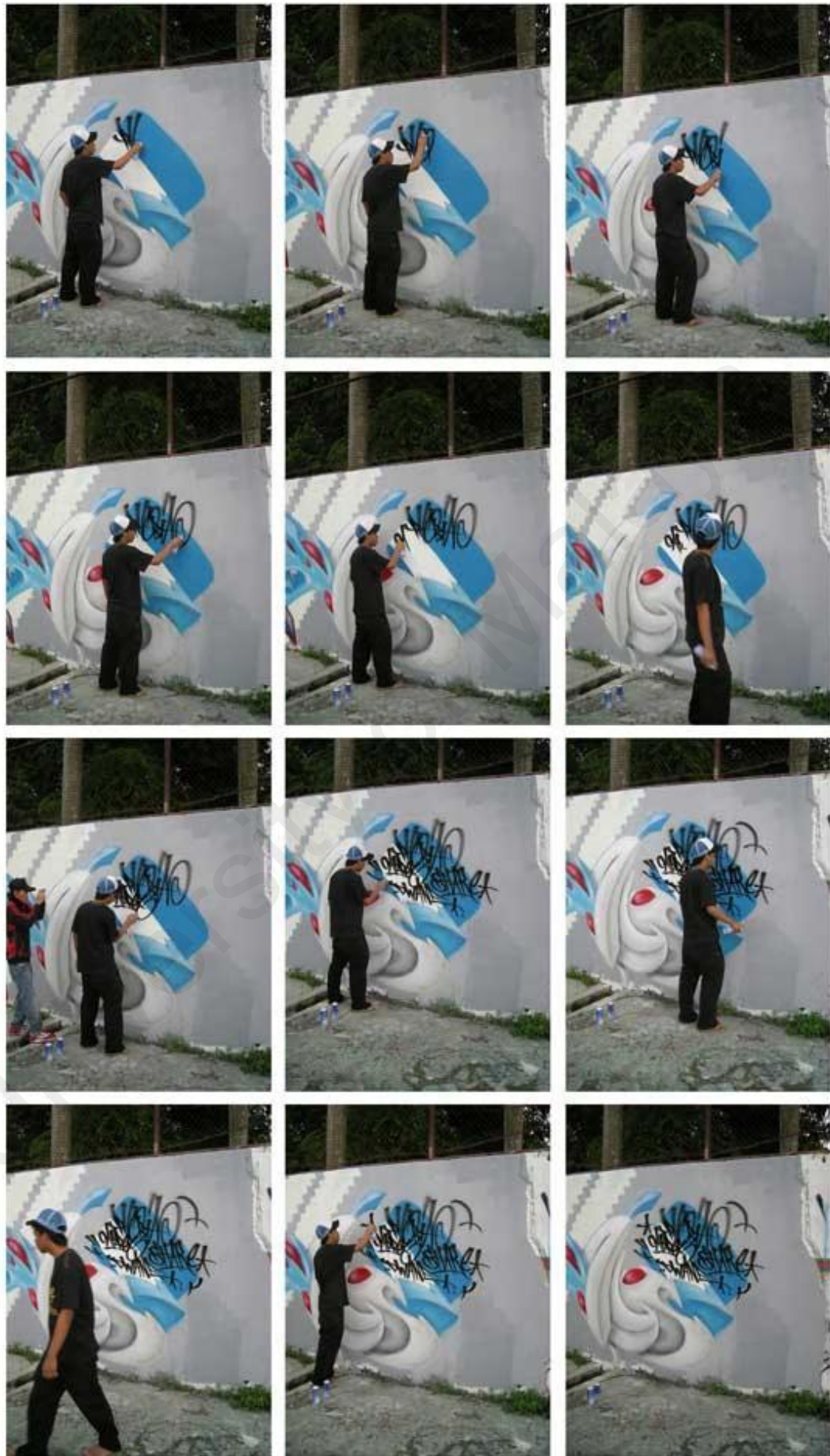


Figure 1.13 a-l CARPET writing out his and his associates' tag names. The tagging took around 110 seconds.
18 October 2008, Melawati, GKL

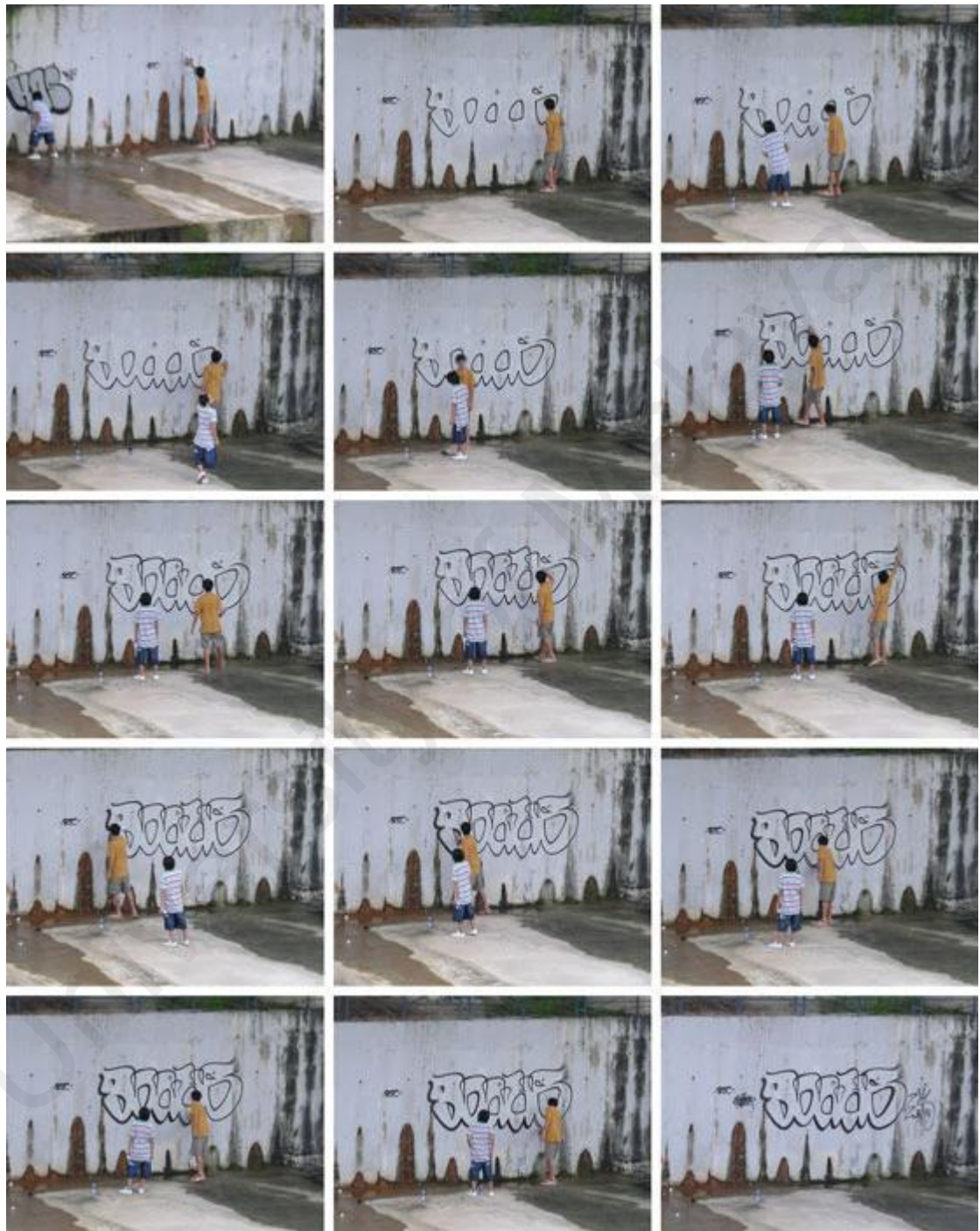


Figure 1.14 a-o Throw-up outlining by BONKS, as seen from the Dato Keramat LRT station. The outlining including the applied drop shadow effect took 2 minutes.
20 March 2010, Dato Keramat, KL.



Figure 1.15 a-o SIEK while painting his tag name as a piece next to a character. The piece was produced in 4 hours.
27 February 2009, Melawati, GKL.



Figure 1.16 a-l KATUN painting his character, a male head on top of spray can. KATUN needed 3 hours to finish this work.

21 February 2009, National Visual Arts Gallery, KL.



Figure 1.17 The KLCC Twin Towers and the KL Tower forming a section of Kuala Lumpur's skyline
13 May 2013. Bangsar, KL.

1.2 Justification

This present study uncovers and illuminates the inner principles and contents of graffiti art works. There is a need for such a study to broaden our knowledge on this specific subject.

In a paper published in 1987, Susan Stewart (born 1952) vibrantly synthesized and in depth pointed out many problems surrounding graffiti art in the USA as a 'not legal' – criminal – practice. Susan Stewart condemns graffiti art as a social practice, because it is negative by itself, meaningless, lacks use, and has no lasting value.⁶⁴ However, it has been observed, that in present day Malaysia graffiti art is often spreading positive, social messages and has been acknowledged to possess a certain value for the Malaysian society. The City Hall of Kuala Lumpur (DBKL), for example, in the years 2010 and 2012 invited local and international graffiti artists, during the event *KulSign*

⁶⁴ Stewart, "Ceci Tuera Cela: Graffiti as Crime and Art." p. 176.

Festival, to paint walls in the city center of the Malaysian capital (Figure 1.18).⁶⁵ The Mayor of Kuala Lumpur stated with regards to the 2012 event:

Speech by mayor of KL: Launch of Kulsign Festival 2012

This graffiti art competition was first organised by DBKL in December 2010. It has since received enthusiastic participation and positive feedback from graffiti artists and residents of Kuala Lumpur.

The second edition of the KULSign Festival takes place here, at the Central Market LRT Square over the weekend. KL city residents will be pleased to know that this festival has earned a place in the 'Malaysia Book of Record' for the "longest wall featuring graffiti art in Malaysia", 450 meters all together!. This year it is going to get longer by at least another 125 meters. We are looking at another record.

*The main objective of this Festival is to invigorate the urban culture scene of our city. By encouraging closer ties between DBKL and members of the local underground art scene, we can celebrate an art form, born out of modern city living. We received 200 entries for KULSign 2012 and you will be able to witness the creative talents of local graffiti artists and of those from Italy, Sweden, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Singapore. ...*⁶⁶

This present study about graffiti art works enables scholars and other interested readers to gain an insight into graffiti art works (Figure 1.19). Such a research studying the visual content of graffiti art works is virtually missing from the 45 year old history of graffiti art.

In the year 2006, Lisa Gottlieb established a classification system for 14 graffiti art styles. These 14 graffiti art styles were identified and specified by graffiti art experts 'who possessed knowledge of graffiti art styles and the aesthetic components that define these styles.'⁶⁷ The 14 identified graffiti art styles were:

1. *Abstract*
2. *TFP*
3. *Silvers*
4. *CTK*
5. *Pichador*
6. *Semi-wild*
7. *Los Angeles Cholo-based*

⁶⁵ "Beautiful Works of Art on Walls," *The Star*, 1. December 2010.

Aziz, "Graffiti Artists Given a Place to Work On."

"Dbkl Anjur Festival Kul Sign 2012," *Kosmo*, 22. February 2012.

⁶⁶ "Opening Speech by Mayor of KL: Launch of Kulsign Festival 2012 & Graffiti Art Book "Hembusan Seni Kuala Lumpur."

⁶⁷ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p. 37.

8. *Swedish Train*
9. *Neo Classic American Freight*
10. *East Coast Piecing Style*
11. *No-neg*
12. *Dimensional*
13. *Dortmund*
14. *Wild.*⁶⁸

Gottlieb's classification system, in general, allows uninitiated people, standing outside of the graffiti art culture to identify specific graffiti art styles. The graffiti art styles classification system is based on 13 facets (*legibility, number of colors, symmetry, dimensionality, letter outlines, linearity, letter strokes, negative space, letter overlap, use of arrows, letter space consistency, fill effects and fill consistency*)⁶⁹, which provide the grounds for style identification. Legibility is the first facet on the list and has the following 3 foci as possible answers to the identification of legibility: a) illegible, b) partially legible, c) legible.⁷⁰ Now it would be beneficial to expand the general knowledge on the 13 single facets – components – forming these graffiti art styles. I believe that it is of importance to develop a basic descriptive and visual guidance system for the legibility in graffiti art works, pieces especially.⁷¹ This is important for the critical evaluation of graffiti art works. Insight into the legibility of graffiti art forms can be achieved through examination of selected graffiti art works in this thesis.

An examination of the graffiti art works' thematic content will enable researchers and interested readers to better evaluate the meaning of graffiti art works and pinpoint the motivations of the artists. An assessment of the content of graffiti art works will probably also reveal a great deal about the Malaysian graffiti artists and society, who produced the works examined here, because *'[e]ven a single work can reveal a great*

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 245.

⁶⁹ Ibid. pp. 267-279.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 67.

⁷¹ Also Mark Halsey and Ben Pederick reminded that graffiti art is illegible to the public: Mark Halsey et al., "The Game of Fame: Mural, Graffiti, Erasure," *City: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action* 14, no. 1-2 (2010). pp. 82-83.

*deal about the society that produced it.*⁷² A research of the content of graffiti art works produced in GKL is worth conducting, not least because as far as is known to me, until the present day no similar research has been done in this area – only Susan A. Lundy (born 1975) focused in 2008 on content analysis of graffiti art works in Oakland, USA.⁷³

One research question of this present study focuses on the exploration of the exact sizes of graffiti art works. This is of importance, as such research has never been conducted before, and there is no exact information on this feature of graffiti art works. It is very important to provide details about sizes of works of art in general, as is common practice in the discipline of art history. The art historian and archeologist Fred S. Kleiner (born 1948) wrote in the introduction to *Gardner's Art through the Ages*:

*The works illustrated vary enormously in size, from colossal sculptures carved into mountain cliffs and paintings that cover entire walls or ceilings to tiny figurines, coins, and jewelry that can be held in the hand.*⁷⁴

To know the exact size of a graffiti art work is vital, as they can significantly vary and it might not always be possible to understand the scale of a graffiti art work from a reproduced photograph.

⁷² Marjorie Munsterberg, "Writing About Art." <http://www.writingaboutart.org/pages/stylisticanalysis.html>. (no page numbering: Historical Analysis)

⁷³ Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers".

⁷⁴ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Concise Global History*, 2nd ed. (Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009). p. xi.



Figure 1.18 Photographers taking pictures during the first day of the KulSign Festival 2012. 25 February 2012. Pasar Seni, KL.⁷⁵

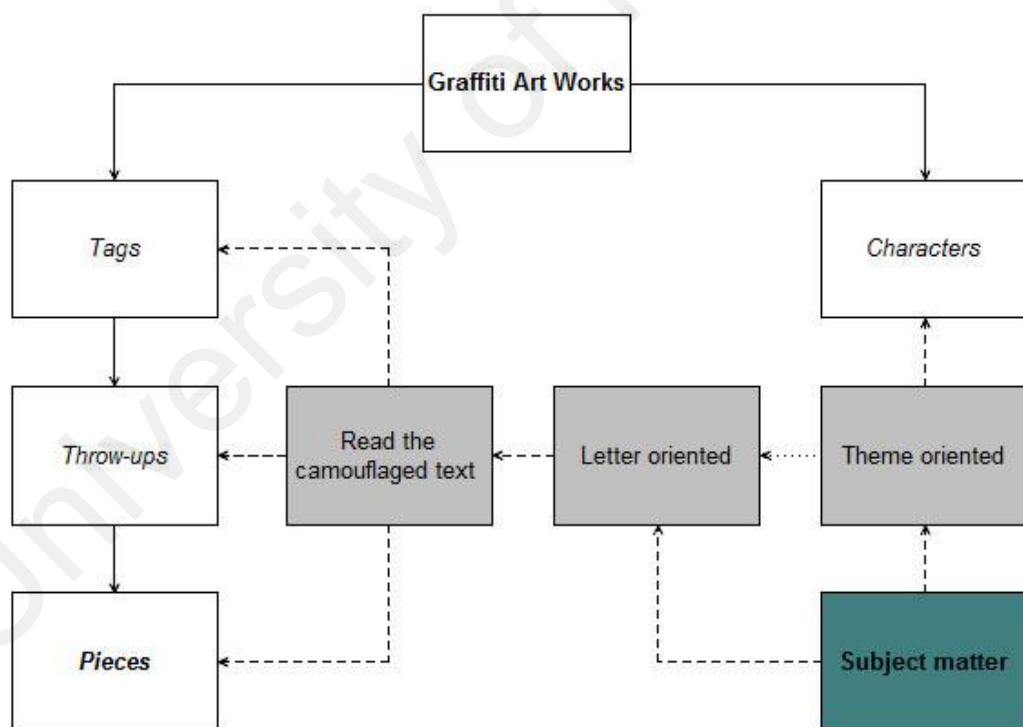


Figure 1.19 Insight into graffiti art works.

⁷⁵ The KUL SIGN Festival 2012 was sponsored besides others by global corporations such as: Swatch, Walt Disney Studios and Dulux Colors.

1.3 Important Warning in the Beginning

Graffiti art in many cases is an act not recognized by the law, because of the modification of public or private property – unless the owner issued permission. Even though in Malaysia graffiti art is fairly tolerated – because of its artistic contributions – this study is not encouraging the defacement of any property – public or private alike. All artworks, intended as such, should be produced with prior permission!

Graffiti in Malaysia is unlawful, if not permitted, as governed by the relevant section of Local Government Act 1976 (LGA). This Act uniformly governs all local councils in Malaysia. The local councils have the power to regulate their own rules, regulations or by-laws, within the limit as provided under the LGA. However, the fine for breaches of by-laws cannot exceed more than two thousand ringgit (RM 2,000) or a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year.⁷⁶

Graffiti art is examined and treated in this thesis as a form of art, if relevant, and many illicitly produced graffiti art works are analyzed similarly as officially sanctioned works of art in galleries.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

- a) The present study is focusing essentially on graffiti art works from the geographical area of Greater Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.
- b) The selection of samples for analysis was subjective, even though a wide range of samples is provided.
- c) English was the main language – *lingua franca* – during fieldwork in Malaysia.⁷⁷ Czech was used as the main language while conducting interviews

⁷⁶ For details see: LAWS OF MALAYSIA, Act 171; LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ACT 1976: PART XII: FURTHER POWERS OF LOCAL AUTHORITY, 101. PART XIII: BY-LAWS, General power to make by-laws, 102. By-law, etc., may prescribe fees and charges 102A. Penalties for breaches of by-laws 104.

⁷⁷ I apologize for any mistakes in my English.

in Prague, Czech Republic concerning the objectives of this study. Turkish was also used for communication during this research.

- d) All possible mistakes contained in this thesis, with regards to possible misinterpretations of interview statements or other are my own.

1.5 Significance of the Research

- a) It is the first time this type of research has been done in Malaysia and probably elsewhere in the world. Therefore, this research contributes – as one of the first studies – to the general understanding of graffiti art works through their visual content analysis.
- b) This thesis is a significant, and the only serious, scientific corpus on graffiti art works from Greater Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia. Therefore, this thesis can be used as a sort of reference work for other scholarly works, which can focus on expanding the many diverse sections of this present thesis.
- c) At the same time, the thesis also represents a unique reflection of the dynamic developments in the urban spaces of Greater Kuala Lumpur. The vast amount of photographs illustrates the historical changes of certain urban areas of this global metropolis.
- d) Results of the present study supply scholars with new, additional, and original information on the visual content of graffiti art works. This information can be used by academics in diverse disciplines.
- e) Results relating to the research of legibility in letterforms oriented graffiti art works can be used as a practical tool for the examination of graffiti art works.
- f) It is the first time that selected representations of graffiti art works are accompanied with exact indications of sizes.

1.6 Theoretical Framework: Spot Theory

I am using Jeff Ferrell and Robert D. Weide's *Spot theory* to highlight the importance of location at which a graffiti art work has been created at.⁷⁸ Since the early 1980's, James Q. Wilson (1931–2012) and George L. Kelling's (born 1935) *Broken Windows* theory has served as a widespread, but not exactly correct model to frame graffiti art works.⁷⁹ Gregory J. Snyder (born 1968), Ronald Kramer, Jeff Ferrell and Robert D. Weide demonstrated that the *Broken Windows* theory is too general and cannot be applied in many cases for the framing of graffiti art works.⁸⁰ *Broken Windows* theory suggests that minor crimes such as broken windows, graffiti, begging and other signs of disorder contribute to the rise of violent and more serious crimes in certain areas. Ferrell and Weide suggested that graffiti art's inner concepts are way too different from the *Broken Windows* theory, to be consistently applicable. Contrary to the *Broken Windows* theory, Ferrell and Weide's *Spot theory* correctly and appropriately interprets the spatial sociology of graffiti art spots and identifies the criteria and circumstances for the choosing of such graffiti art spots by graffiti artists, such as the visibility and the possible audiences of spots, the durability and longevity of the graffiti art works at such spots, and the availability and the competition for the spots in certain locations.

⁷⁸ Jeff Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory," *City: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action* 14, no. 1-2 (2010).

⁷⁹ James Q. Wilson et al., "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety," *Atlantic Monthly* (March 1982).

⁸⁰ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory."; Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005"; Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*.

1.7 Format of Thesis

The present thesis contains a preface, including a section with terminology, five chapters and appendices. The thesis has the following structure:

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

CHAPTER 4: Data Analysis and Results

CHAPTER 5: Discussion and Conclusions

APPENDICES: Appendix A–N

The present thesis expands the knowledge about graffiti art/Writing, especially with regards to the visual productions of graffiti artists in the urban area of Greater Kuala Lumpur (GKL).

The thesis is richly illustrated with photographic material to accompany the text; the thesis contains 425 figures in Chapters 1–5, and another 1,773 figures in the Appendices section. Figures are presented at the end of each section throughout the study. Figures are black and white due to immense costs of color prints and because the participants of this study were confronted with black and white photographs during photo elicitation sessions. The majority of figures were taken or produced by the present author, David Novak. Photographs taken by the present author have generally secondary captions, if space allowed, with indicatory information on the date when a photograph was taken and about the location where such a photograph was taken. In the case that a 'Figure' contained more than one image, subordinate identification letters 'a, b, c...' were distributed from left to right, row by row. The present thesis is inspired by the visual and data rich thesis *Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978* submitted in 1989 to the New York University by Jack Stewart.

The figures and sections of this present thesis are cross-referenced throughout the entire study. Cross-references were formatted with the cross-reference tool in Microsoft Word.

The voices of participants are often not directly cited, as English was only the *lingua franca*, a bridge language.

1.7.1 Chapter 1

The first chapter indicates that graffiti art is still, until the present day, an under-researched art form and that there is no full-scale knowledge available concerning all the facets of this current global urban phenomenon. Further, the first chapter briefly illustrated that the discipline of art history omitted the history of graffiti art from its canon almost entirely, with the exception of general links made to the fine artists Jean Dubuffet (1901–1985), Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960–1988) and Keith Haring (1958–1990), who, were on the other hand, not authentic participants of the graffiti art/Writing culture. Additionally, it was briefly shown that graffiti art in Malaysia represents an acceptable form of contemporary art.

1.7.2 Chapter 2

The second chapter summarizes a noteworthy portion of scholarly and popular literature written on this urban art form, with regards to the focused research location of this present thesis, in this case Malaysia, and from elsewhere, especially from the USA, where graffiti art research started as early as the 1970's. Through literature review, it shall be demonstrated that graffiti art developed in the 1970's and 1980's first on the exterior sides of subway trains in New York City and that graffiti art has been diffusing to other global areas since the 1980s, before reaching Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries in the third millennium. The summary of available literary resources shows that graffiti artists, in the secondary territories, such as in Europe, in the 1980's

not only copied the aesthetics of graffiti art works from New York City, but also imitated the behaviors of graffiti artists from New York City – especially with regards to the production of unsanctioned graffiti art works on the exterior sides of public transportation trains. However, in Malaysia, this production of graffiti art works on public transportation trains is not present and graffiti artists in Malaysia rather produce, ‘public pleasing graffiti art works’, as an analysis of Malaysian newspaper reports exemplifies. The literature review also introduces different, often recurring themes and motifs in graffiti art works. The second chapter also exposes important historical developments in terms of legibility of letterform oriented graffiti art works and about the stylization of graffiti art works. In addition to these topics, I shall further indicate that there is still room for improvement in the data gathering processes, with regards to graffiti art works, as it is for example until the present day not precisely clear what the exact sizes of graffiti art works are.

1.7.3 Chapter 3

The third chapter introduces and explains the qualitative and quantitative methods used during this present mixed methods research. The employed methods were derived from the disciplines of ethnography, library and information sciences or innovative methods were constructed for this present research, such as the Visual Catalogue of graffiti art works form GKL (VI-CA), the legibility research experiment, or for the measurements of sizes of graffiti art works. The main research location for visual data gathering was the urban area of GKL, Malaysia. The main graffiti art locations in GKL shall be introduced in all detail, as graffiti art is a site-specific art form and graffiti art is strongly linked to the urban locations where it is produced. All photographs represented throughout this thesis are therefore accompanied, generally, with a caption indicating the location and date of the represented graffiti art work. The participants in this study are local, Malaysian, and international graffiti artists, who are or were involved in the

graffiti art culture. Interviews, other data and other visual data for this current research were gathered mainly between the years of 2008–2014.

1.7.4 Chapter 4

The fourth chapter presents and analyzes the results of this study. The research about aesthetically preferable graffiti art works will show that 20 graffiti artists reached a 24%–44% strong consensus about 28 graffiti art works, contained in the 1003 images VI-CA selection of graffiti art works from GKL. Based on the evaluation of selected aesthetically preferred graffiti art works it will be shown that graffiti artists still evaluate graffiti art works mainly based on the proliferation of a tag name in public spaces – on the local and global level – and based on the original individual style of a graffiti artist. This is still the same evaluation process as was employed amongst graffiti artists in the 1970's and 1980's New York City. The research about aesthetically preferred graffiti art works shall further expose a transitional category of 'quick piece', which is situated between the graffiti art forms throw-up and piece. Further, two additional interesting discoveries shall show that the graffiti art form of throw-ups is considered amongst graffiti artists as the aesthetically and technically most difficult form of graffiti art and that amongst graffiti artists the form of characters is not particularly valued. Graffiti artists apparently prefer to use the form of characters to both improve their profile and to entertain the general public. The fourth chapter also partially focuses on the introduction to legibility of letterform-oriented graffiti art works. It will be suggested that this skill can be acquired through knowledge of graffiti art styles, by practice and through the knowledge of graffiti artists' tag names. This skill of 'seeing' the compositional content of letterforms-oriented graffiti art works is necessary for the aesthetical evaluation of letterforms-oriented graffiti art works, as I suggest that this skill is missing amongst art historians, and the potential analysis of the most outstanding productions in the last 45 years of graffiti art.

The fourth chapter will analyze and introduce, besides the letterforms-oriented graffiti art works, the content of some non-letterforms-oriented graffiti art works. Visual content analysis will mainly examine characters from the urban area of GKL and show that the content of some of the graffiti art works, from within a research sample, was not only influenced by local Islamic and other Malaysian cultural reflections, but also by global graffiti art themes and motifs. In general, this visual content analysis will show a rich content of motifs and themes within graffiti art works from GKL. This richness of themes and motifs shall further be exemplified in the shadow play thematic, present in some graffiti art works in GKL, on several graffiti art works of the Malaysian graffiti artist Mahathir Masri (born 1982) aka THEY, and on graffiti art works with content relating to the humanitarian thematic of the Gaza War in 2008–2009.

Finally, the fourth chapter will present the results of the study about exact sizes of graffiti art works. The results shall show that the average size of a piece, from GKL, is 473 cm in width and by 194 cm in height. It will be suggested that the sizes of graffiti art works might also indicate the importance and self-esteem of a graffiti artist, whereby larger works point toward a higher status of a graffiti artist within the graffiti art culture.

1.7.5 Chapter 5

The fifth chapter concludes the results of this current research and shows how the revealed findings expand previous studies, and what the major contribution of this current research is. The four research questions investigated in this research are discussed separately. One subchapter is suggesting that graffiti art has a dilemma manifest in contradictions and then graffiti art is briefly discussed in relation to authenticity, as a reflection of the city image, and as a possible form of public art. Subsequently there are several suggested possibilities for future research, before the four research questions are concluded in bullet form one last time.

1.8 Summary

This present research focuses on the evaluation, legibility and content of graffiti art works, based on works from Greater Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. Additionally, the study also researched sizes of graffiti art works. There is a general need for a deeper understanding of graffiti art works, as this topic is still not fully explored. This present study tries to fill this vacant research niche, especially with regards to the research location of Malaysia. The thesis is composed of five chapters, appendices and the study is richly illustrated with photographs to accompany the text.

2 CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Literature Review

In the context of Malaysian graffiti art, it needs to be highlighted that after 15 years of its history there are still only a few resources available on this subject matter. Interest in this severe subject matter that challenges the appearance of urban environments seems to be rather poor in Malaysia. The *Malaysian Theses Online* portal, *MyTo*, provided, for example, only one result with regards to graffiti.⁸¹ On 17 August 2014, the only listed document under the keyword 'graffiti' and 'street art' was my own MA dissertation *The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley*.⁸² However, there are at least three other studies on Malaysian graffiti art known to me. These include two works written in the Malay language Bahasa Malaysia, which are represented by the short BA study *Graffiti: Proses Penghasilan Karya Mural Aliran Baru* [Graffiti: The Production Process of New Age Murals] compiled by two students, namely Iqbal Hareez bin Osman & Mohamad Adib bin Hamzah, and a graphic design diploma work *Ilustrasi Informasi Terhadap Rekataip Graffiti* [Information on Illustration of Graffiti Design Type] by Mohd Faiz bin Omar (born 1983).⁸³ There is also a final project named *Graffiti House* in architecture by Mohd Danial B. Tajuddin.⁸⁴ Further, Malaysian graffiti art is shortly featured on four pages in the popular book *Graffiti Asia*.⁸⁵ The two most recent publications on Malaysian graffiti art are *Graffiti KL* by the late graffiti artist Champ Teh (1985–2010) aka JENG published by the

⁸¹ "Malaysian Theses Online: Myto," MyUniNet - Malaysian University Libraries & National Library Network, <http://myto.upm.edu.my/myTO/myto/1/search.html>. Accessed on: 17 August 2014

⁸² Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley".

⁸³ Mohd Faiz bin Omar, "Ilustrasi Informasi Terhadap Rekataip Graffiti [Information on Illustration of Graffiti Design Type]" (Diploma in Graphic Design, Pusat Teknologi Pengurusan Lanjutan, October 2007); Iqbal Hareez bin Osman et al., "Graffiti: Proses Penghasilan Karya Mural Aliran Baru [Graffiti: The Production Process of New Age Mural]" (BA Project, University Pendidikan Sultan Idris, 2007).

⁸⁴ Mohd Danial B. Tajuddin, "What If the Art of Graffiti Can Be Transformed into a House?" (Final Project, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, May 2007).

⁸⁵ Ryo Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia* (London: Laurence King, 2010). pp. 94-97.

National Visual Arts Gallery and the article *The Street Is Our Canvas: Graffiti Art in Kuala Lumpur* by the curator, and writer Eva McGovern in *Reactions – New Critical Strategies: Narratives in Malaysian Art*.⁸⁶ I also include in the literature review my own published research articles related to graffiti art in Malaysia. Two articles were published by the Czech National Museum in the *Annals of the Náprstek Museum* and they are partially focusing on the works of particular Malaysian graffiti artists.⁸⁷ One of my conference proceedings also focuses on a Malaysian graffiti artist and another conference proceeding turns its attention to graffiti art as a form of public art in Prague and Kuala Lumpur.⁸⁸

As I have been conducting continuous research on Malaysian graffiti art since 2008, I find the selection of featured artists in the above-mentioned publication *Graffiti KL*, published by the Malaysian National Visual Arts Gallery, a little bit questionable. Further, the 'Introduction' to the book *Graffiti KL*, besides others, also needs some corrections, as it states with regards to the global graffiti art history that:

*According to the book "The Art of Getting Over", it all started in early 1960's when a school kid in America started tagging his name and his street number, TAKI 183 on the streets and subway trains on his way to school.*⁸⁹

However, the first graffiti artist of the modern graffiti era is probably Darryl McCray (born 1953) aka CORNBREAD from Philadelphia of the late 1960's, not TAKI183.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the above quoted statement refers to the book *The Art of Getting Over: Graffiti at the Millennium* by the US American artist and former graffiti

⁸⁶ Champ Teh, *Graffiti KL* (Kuala Lumpur: National Visual Arts Gallery, 2012). Eva McGovern, "The Street Is Our Canvas: Graffiti Art in Kuala Lumpur," in *Reactions - New Critical Strategies: Narratives in Malaysian Art*, ed. Nur Hanim Khairuddin and Beverly Yong (Kuala Lumpur: RogueArt, 2013).

⁸⁷ Novak, "Western Influences in Southeast Asian Paintings: Comparison of a Balinese Ink Painting and of Two Malaysian Graffiti Artworks."; David Novak et al., "Comparison between Wayang Kulit Kelantan and Graffiti Art in Greater Kuala Lumpur: Similarities and Differences," *Annals of the Náprstek Museum* 35, no. 1 (2014).

⁸⁸ David Novak, "Reflections of the Shadow Play Imagery in the Visual Arts: The Case of Noncommercial Graphic Designs by 'Suga52'" (paper presented at the Bali Puppetry Festival and Seminar 2013, Kemenuh, Bali, Gianyar, Indonesia, 22nd-27th September 2013); David Novak, "Graffiti Art as Public Art and the City Image: A Comparison of Prague and Kuala Lumpur" (paper presented at the Contempart '14: Contemporary Arts and Art Theory Conference, Istanbul, Turkey, 24-26 April 2014a).

⁸⁹ Teh, *Graffiti KL*. No page numbering: Introduction.

⁹⁰ Emily Currier, "The Writing on the Wall," *Philadelphia Citypaper*, 8. June 2010; Ley et al., "Urban Graffiti as Territorial Markers."; Jon Reiss, "Bomb It," (2007).

artist Stephen J. Powers (born 1968) aka ESPO.⁹¹ It seems to me out of place to combine this interesting insider publication, about various topics related to graffiti art, with the historical figure of the New Yorker graffiti artist Demetrius aka TAKI183. It is true that TAKI183 is 'the first' globally recognised graffiti artist, but there are not a lot of references to TAKI183 in the book *The Art of Getting Over: Graffiti at the Millenium*. TAKI183 is an American, although of Greek descent as *Taki* is the diminutive for his Greek birth-name Demetrius. TAKI183 gained worldwide popularity for the saturation of his tag name TAKI183 around New York City in the very late 1960's and early 1970's,⁹² not early 1960's. Further, TAKI183 reproduced his signature around New York City during his time while working as a delivery boy rather than only on his way to school.⁹³ TAKI183 said:

*When I was sixteen, my first job was as a delivery boy, and I used to make deliveries all over the East Side [of New York City]. That's what made me so popular. I used to write my name in areas where influential people would see it. Those guys who write for newspapers, they all live in nice neighborhoods. So they would see it and they'd say, "Aw, God." But then they'd write about it the next day.*⁹⁴

The curator and writer Eva Mc Govern contributed to the publication *Reactions – New Critical Strategies: Narratives in Malaysian Art* with the article *The Street Is Our Canvas: Graffiti Art in Kuala Lumpur*.⁹⁵ This excellent and interesting article approaches graffiti art and street art as one phenomenon. This combined approach is justifiable in Malaysia, and probably even correct, as it is true that the Malaysian public understands graffiti art and street art as an identical phenomenon, even though the forms and objectives of these two art forms are different. There are indeed some valuable and remarkable sections in McGovern's article based on observations, even though some

⁹¹ Stephen Powers, *The Art of Getting Over: Graffiti at the Millennium* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). On Stephen Powers see also some sections of the publication: Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*.

⁹² "Taki 183' Spawn Pen Pals," *The New York Times*, 21. July 1971.

⁹³ Jack Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s* (New York: Melcher Media, 2009). pp. 20-23.

⁹⁴ Interview with TAKI183, 09 September 1983, NYC. In: *ibid.* pp. 20; 22.

⁹⁵ McGovern, "The Street Is Our Canvas: Graffiti Art in Kuala Lumpur."

segments are not entirely unreported. However, there are also major inaccuracies especially with regards to the Malaysian graffiti art history; these subsequently are discussed here.

McGovern listed the following graffiti artists as “*senior*” *practicioners*: ‘*They, Phobia, Joe Tribe, The Damis, A80s, Kioue, Anokayer, Tha-B, Mile09*’ and associated them with the city of Batu Pahat, as the place of origin of the Malaysian graffiti art movement of the late 1990’s.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, this fact applies only to the graffiti artists Mohd Nazri Arman (born 1983) aka PHOBIA and Zulkifli Salleh (born 1984) aka KIOUE, who were amongst the pioneers of the Malaysian graffiti art movement.⁹⁷ The graffiti artists Ardy Shafiq Arshad (born 1987) aka DAMIS, Arnis Tunguia aka A80S, Zulfadli Ahmad Nawawi (born 1986) aka ANOKAYER, Sharane Mat Zaini (born 1977) aka THA-B and partially even THEY are amongst the younger graffiti artists.⁹⁸ Contrary, McGovern lists the graffiti artists ‘*Askoe, Bonks, Elms, Keas, Kos, Some70, Nas-El, and Nenok*’ as younger artists. However, the graffiti artists ASKOE (born 1985), KEAS and Mohd Faiz bin Omar (born 1983) aka NENOK are among the senior practitioners in Malaysia. More importantly, NENOK is along with PHOBIA the most senior of all graffiti artists in the whole of Malaysia.⁹⁹ McGovern also suggests that:

*Stylistically, KL tagging is a mixture of bubble, blockbuster and wild style typographies, pop culture images and unique graphic, surrealist and realist characters. The main figures that focus on tagging are: They, Kioue, Tha-B, Phobia, Budean, The A80s, The Damis, Mile09, F-Code, Joe Tribe and Anokayer.*¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 290.

⁹⁷ David Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley" (MA Dissertation, University of Malaya, 2011a). pp. 98-102.

⁹⁸ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley"; Teh, *Graffiti KL*.

⁹⁹ Novak, "Western Influences in Southeast Asian Paintings: Comparison of a Balinese Ink Painting and of Two Malaysian Graffiti Artworks." p. 108. Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". pp. 114-160.

¹⁰⁰ McGovern, "The Street Is Our Canvas: Graffiti Art in Kuala Lumpur." pp. 291-292.

This section seems to me unclear. I assume that ‘tagging’ equals in this context to ‘graffiti art’ with its four forms (tag, throw-up, piece, character) and not to the activity of tagging – the writing of tags – because we read in the above quoted section about the graffiti art styles ‘*bubble, blockbuster and wild style*’, which are commonly used in piecing, and further we read about characters representing ‘*pop culture images*’ stylized in ‘*unique graphic, surrealist and realist*’ styles. However, this does not correspond with the listed ‘*main figures that focus on tagging...They, Kioue, Tha-B, Phobia, Budean, The A80s, The Damis, Mile09, F-Code, Joe Tribe and Anokayer*’, as firstly not all of these artists create pieces and characters in these cited styles, secondly F-CODE stands rather for a former street art collective and not for a single graffiti artist, and thirdly Joe Tribe is based in Melaka and not in KL. The confusion continues:

*Image-based artists who do not focus on tagging include: Bibichun, Mistawhy, Burp, Katun, Kay, Medea, RN, Snozze, Escape, Violent and Suga52. Their stencilled and hand spray-painted works include characters and scenes that are cartoon-like, realist, surrealist, fairytale and sci-fi inspired.*¹⁰¹

In this quoted section, it seems that the statement ‘*do not focus on tagging*’ refers not to the activity of writing tags – signatures – as the majority, not all, of the listed graffiti artists indeed rather focus on characters. However, then it is not clear why McGovern listed, in the preceding citation, ANOKAYER and [the group] F-CODE as one of the ‘*main figures that focus on tagging*’ and not as ‘*[i]mage-based artists who do not focus on tagging*’, as F-CODE’s stencils focused on images and ANOKAYER nearly exceptionally focuses on figural paintings. ANOKAYER’s figural representations are very often accompanied with illusionistic three-dimensional letterforms by MEDEA (born 1975), who is listed by McGovern as an ‘*[i]mage-based*’ artist (for such collaborative productions between ANOKAYER and MEDEA see

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 292.

Figure 2.29, p. 107 and Figure 4.95, p. 330).¹⁰² This further highlights what was suggested and demonstrated in the Introduction chapter to this thesis (See p. 1) – graffiti art is to outsiders a complicated and confusing topic. This moreover indicates the complexity of this focused art form.

Beyond Malaysia, there are several very good researches on graffiti art. A valuable publication is Lisa Gottlieb's book *Graffiti Art Styles: A Classification System and Theoretical Analysis*. This work published in 2008 approaches graffiti art by using Panofsky's iconographical analysis.¹⁰³ Another extremely important research on graffiti art's aesthetics in New York City is Jack Stewart's PhD dissertation *Mass Transit Art Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978*.¹⁰⁴ As a final important study, I mention Lundy's PhD dissertation *Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers*.¹⁰⁵

Next, I discuss the historical dissemination of graffiti art from the East Coast of the USA to other parts of the world.

2.0.1 Historical Dissemination of Graffiti Art

At the outset of this study, it is of major importance to understand the cultural and historical roots of the graffiti art culture. The birth place of graffiti art is Philadelphia in the year 1967.¹⁰⁶ However, as was shown in full detail by the art historian Jack Stewart, the four forms representing graffiti art of today (tag, throw-up, piece, character) were fully developed on the sides of subway trains in New York City

¹⁰² Ibid. pp. 291-292.

¹⁰³ <<http://www.amazon.com/Graffiti-Art-Styles-Classification-Theoretical/dp/0786434368>>. Accessed: 19 February 2011.

¹⁰⁴ Stewart, Jack. *Subway Graffiti: An aesthetic study of graffiti on the subway system of New York City, 1970-1978*. New York University, N.Y. 1989. 604 p. b/w ill. Doctoral dissertation, Art History.

This dissertation was later published in 2009 as: Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

¹⁰⁵ Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers".

¹⁰⁶ Ley et al., "Urban Graffiti as Territorial Markers."; Reiss, "Bomb It."

of the 1970's.¹⁰⁷ In the first half of the 1980's graffiti art started expanding within the USA and graffiti art also started crossing continents to Western Europe and Oceania.¹⁰⁸

Graffiti art was introduced to the world, outside of New York City, through two main channels: cultural media¹⁰⁹ and gallery exhibitions. The Swedish art historian Staffan Jacobson (born 1948) created in the World Wide Web a freely accessible dictionary of graffiti, *The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art*, where he lists 12 graffiti art exhibitions of New Yorker graffiti artists in Western Europe, during the period 1979–1985.¹¹⁰ These gallery exhibitions had a noteworthy impact on the development of graffiti art in Western Europe.¹¹¹ Graffiti art gallery exhibitions in the USA and Western Europe were excellently examined in full detail by the art historian Margo Thompson in the book *American Graffiti*.¹¹² An even more significant impact on the diffusion of graffiti art on a worldwide level were the movies *Wild Style* (1982), *Beat Street* (1984) and the film documentary *Style Wars* (1983), which were broadcasted on television screens around the world. Another huge impact on the spread of graffiti art into the world was the book *Subway Art* (1984), which reproduced Martha Cooper's (born 1943) and Henry Chalfant's (born 1940) colour photographs of graffiti art works on subway trains from New York City. This publication was also accompanied with supplementary explanatory texts.¹¹³ The book has been available until the present day with over 500,000 copies sold.¹¹⁴ These four reflections of the graffiti art culture from New York City in the 1980's has had an everlasting impact on

¹⁰⁷ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

¹⁰⁸ Henry Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1987; reprint, 1999).

¹⁰⁹ Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005". pp. 93-118.

¹¹⁰ Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art." p. 53. On some of these gallery exhibitions see texts in: Andrew "Zephyr" Witten et al., *Dondi White: Style Master General: The Life of Graffiti Artist Dondi White* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001).

¹¹¹ Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*. pp. 7-8. *Writing in München 1983-1995: Graffiti Art #3*, (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1995). p. 4. Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*. p. 262.

¹¹² Thompson, *American Graffiti*.

¹¹³ Charlie Ahearn, "Wild Style," (USA1982); Henry Chalfant et al., "Style Wars," (1983); Stan Lathan, "Beatstreet," (USA1984); Martha Cooper et al., *Subway Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1984; reprint, 1999).

¹¹⁴ ———, *Subway Art* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2009).

certain, creative segments of the youth around the world.¹¹⁵ As a result adolescents around the globe started imitating the colourful graffiti art works they saw in the movies and the book. The three movies (*Wildstyle*, *Beat Street*, *Style Wars*) were especially attractive to younger audiences as they introduced graffiti art as a part of a wider hip-hop movement from New York City. Hip-hop is considered as a culture consisting of four forms: graffiti art, break dancing, disk jockeying and rapping. Graffiti art was also labelled as hip-hop graffiti, because of its close, rather manufactured connection to hip-hop.¹¹⁶ However, scholars have shown that this connection is not adequate as, besides other reasons, not all graffiti artists were and are favouring either the hip-hop culture or the rap (hip-hop) music.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, the hip-hop culture helped to transmit graffiti art around the globe.¹¹⁸

It is of interest to point out that in the 1980's the graffiti artists in the new territories also created graffiti art on trains as was originally the case in New York City.¹¹⁹ In 1987 the first worldwide publication *Spraycan Art* reported that trains were painted in Vienna, Düsseldorf, Munich, Copenhagen, Paris, London and Sydney.¹²⁰ However, it was not always on subway trains, but on all variations of public transportation trains that were available.¹²¹ To produce graffiti art works on the exteriors of trains became an orthodox tradition of the graffiti art culture until the present day.

¹¹⁵ Ivor Miller, "Creolizing for Survival in the City," *Cultural Critique* 27, no. Spring (1994). pp. 181-182; Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*. p. 8; "Munich S-Trains," *On the Run: The Ultimate Magazine*, May 1991. p. 11; Pit Schluttenhafner et al., *Graffiti Art: Deutschland - Germany* (Germany, Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1995). p. 8; *Writing in München 1983-1995: Graffiti Art #3*. p. 4; Markus Wiese, *Graffiti Dortmund: Die Kunst Der Sachbeschädigung [Graffiti Dortmund: The Art of Damage to Property]* (Noers: Edition Aragon, 1996). p. 13; Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*. pp. 262-263; Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*. p. 2; Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*. pp. 126-128.

¹¹⁶ Susan A. Phillips, "Graffiti," in *The Dictionary of Art. (13: Goodnough to Habsburg.)*, ed. Jane Turner, (New York: Grove, 1996); Ferrell, *Styles of Crime: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality*.

¹¹⁷ Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005". pp. 107-110; Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 26-30.

¹¹⁸ Ferrell, *Styles of Crime: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality*. p. 9.

¹¹⁹ Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*. pp. 8, 86; *On the Run: The Ultimate Magazine*, 1991-1992: 1-3; Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*. p. 4-9; Wiese, *Graffiti Dortmund: Die Kunst Der Sachbeschädigung [Graffiti Dortmund: The Art of Damage to Property]*. pp. 14-17.

¹²⁰ Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*. p. 8.

¹²¹ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*. p. 265.

Especially in the Western world graffiti art works produced on the exterior sides of trains are still highly prized by graffiti artists. This is an important point. The production of graffiti art works on trains took place, besides others, in Western Europe, Australia and in other countries in the 1980's and 1990's, as the graffiti art writers in new territories copied the behavioural patterns of their role models from New York City. This influenced the overall direction of the global graffiti art culture and anchored this urban activity on the edge between vandalism and art. Jeff Ferrell and Robert D. Weide defined in the *Spot theory*, the production of graffiti art works on trains in relation to 'liquid spots'.¹²² This implies that '*the spot at which graffiti [art] is written is not necessarily the spot at which it will be viewed*',¹²³ as the graffiti art works are produced on exteriors of trains in train yards, but the works are viewed, amongst others, in train stations.

From academic and popular literature it is possible to reconstruct an approximate historical timeline of some events relating to the diffusion of the graffiti art culture outside of the USA. In late 1982¹²⁴ graffiti art became established for example in Sydney, Australia, by 1983 in West Berlin, Dortmund, Hamburg and Munich in West Germany.¹²⁵ Further we can find out from publications that trains were painted in Amsterdam, Holland in 1983¹²⁶ and that graffiti art occurred in Denmark by 1983 and in Croatia, Canada and South Africa in 1984¹²⁷. This information is generally based on the oral history of the graffiti art culture. The usage of qualitative research methods for

¹²² Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory," pp. 56-59.

¹²³ Ibid. p. 57.

¹²⁴ Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*. p. 87.

¹²⁵ Schluttenhafner et al., *Graffiti Art: Deutschland - Germany*. pp. 8-10; *Writing in München 1983-1995: Graffiti Art #3*; Wiese, *Graffiti Dortmund: Die Kunst Der Sachbeschädigung [Graffiti Dortmund: The Art of Damage to Property]*. p. 13; Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*. p. 2; *Hamburgcitygraffiti*, (Aschaffenburg: Publikat KG, 2003). p. 19

¹²⁶ DELTA, "Amsterdam," *On the Run: The Ultimate Magazine*, July 1992.

¹²⁷ Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*. Denmark: p. 126; Canada: p. 18; Croatia: p. 128; South Africa: p. 328.

the gathering of such data is common in the graffiti art research field.¹²⁸ Susan Alice Lundy conducted research in Oakland and observed that oral history is very important to graffiti artists. Lundy stated that she was struck by her '*participant's commitment to the integrity of his or her stories*'.¹²⁹ This comes as no surprise, as the graffiti art culture is only loosely organised and oral history is one of the few ways to preserve historical events.¹³⁰ Photographic documentation is similarly important to graffiti artists. Photographs of graffiti art works from New York City were already used in the 1980's for establishing the first graffiti art fanzine called *International Graffiti Times* (later *International Get-Hip Times*),¹³¹ which in 1986 had already featured international graffiti art works from Venice and London.¹³² Many other magazines followed *International Graffiti Times*, including the international magazines from the late 1980s: *Bomber Magazine* (Holland), *14 K Magazine* (Switzerland), *Aerosol Art Magazine* (England) and *Hype Magazine* (Australia).¹³³ Such magazines featured interviews, articles and reprinted photographs of graffiti art works making these works accessible to a wider audience. Other modes of circulation of graffiti art works which started in 1989 include video magazines such as *VideoGraf* featured moving footage, including interviews and productions of graffiti art works.¹³⁴

These stated events provide only a partial overview of the events relating to the dissemination of the graffiti art culture from its place of origin in Philadelphia to other

¹²⁸ Craig Alfreed Castleman, "'Getting Up': Subway Graffiti in New York" (PhD: Doctor of Education Columbia University, 1980); Richard Lachmann, "Graffiti as Career and Ideology," *The American Journal of Sociology* 94, no. 2 (1988); Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978"; Ivor Lynn Miller, "Aerosol Kingdom: The Indigenous Culture of New York Subway Painters" (M.A. Yale University, 1992); Ferrell, *Styles of Crime: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality*; Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*; Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*; Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005".

¹²⁹ Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers". p. 67.

¹³⁰ Stories are according to Steven Powers one of the most interesting facets of graffiti art: 'What makes graffiti [art] so great and the attending graffiti [art] magazines so weak are the stories'. Powers, *The Art of Getting Over: Graffiti at the Millennium*. p. 82.

¹³¹ David Schmidlapp, "Igtime: The Official Web Site of the Original Inner-City, International, Aerosol Zine," Lappphoto, <http://lappphoto.com/igtime/>.

¹³² Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*. pp. 250; 263.

¹³³ Ferrell, *Styles of Crime: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality*. p. 10.

¹³⁴ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*. p. 257.

global areas. However, the accounts listed here demonstrate that graffiti art has gained since the late 1960's a specific dynamic that has enabled this urban phenomenon to spread from North America to parts of Oceania, Africa and Europe until the end of the 1980's. The dissemination was accompanied and promoted in the 1980's with the production of subcultural media (magazines) authored by graffiti artists. A brief diagram representing the Origins, Dissemination channels, Countries and Magazines produced in some of these countries is reproduced in Figure 2.1.

Central and Eastern Europe was largely untouched by the dissemination of graffiti art until late 1989. The ideology then within the Eastern Bloc prohibited all Western influences in these countries controlled by the Soviet Union (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Eastern Germany, Hungary, Poland and Romania), including the free flow of information and the free movement of people from the East to the West. Therefore, knowledge of a graffiti art culture among the Central and Eastern European youth was nearly zero. However, this rapidly changed after the overthrow of the former communist regimes and the subsequent democratization process within the Eastern Bloc. Graffiti art was quickly introduced to the subway system of former East Germany by West German graffiti artists in 1990.¹³⁵ Also other Central and Eastern European countries began to be confronted with graffiti art. Graffiti art entered these countries along with other Western influences¹³⁶ and Czechoslovakia can be used here as a case in point. The cities of Czechoslovakia were after four decades of communist rule dominated with various shades of grey.¹³⁷ Around 1990 several youngsters decided to change that and once they discovered graffiti art they knew that it was the right 'tool' to

¹³⁵ Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*. p. 9.

¹³⁶ Radek Wohlmuth, "Umění Vandalismu: Graffiti Mezi Ulicí a Galeríí [Art of Vandalism: Graffiti between Street and Galerie]," *Art + antiques* (October 2012), p. 10.

¹³⁷ Jan Snopek, "Kluci Potřebují Dobrodružství: Formování Identity Na Pražské Graffiti Scéně [Boys Need Adventure: Identity Formation on Prague's Graffiti Scene]" (M.A. thesis University of West Bohemia, April 2005), p. 16; Martina Overstreet, *In Graffiti We Trust* (Praha: Mladá Fronta, 2006), p. 222

bring color to the grey cities. They learned about graffiti art from magazines and also from trips to Western Europe (which, during the communist rule, was nearly impossible). These young Czechoslovaks encountered graffiti art in Western Europe for the first time in their lives.¹³⁸ In addition, a French graffiti artist, probably POPAY (born 1971), had visited Prague by 1990, and created tags and throw-ups in the capital.¹³⁹ As a result it comes as no big surprise that the scholar Jeff Ferrell reported that he photographed during the summer of 1991 ‘*scattered examples of hip hop graffiti in Prague*’.¹⁴⁰

At this point, I would like once more to turn attention back towards the dissemination channels of the graffiti art culture from New York to other territories around the world. *New York City: The global writing capital* is the name of a very interesting chapter in the book *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*, by the scholar Joe Austin.¹⁴¹ Austin describes in six pages the diffusion of graffiti art from New York City to other locations of the world as was discussed above. Austin also directed attention towards informal channels, represented in the circulation ‘*of young people and photographs*’ between New York and other cities in the USA in the 1980’s; in this way young people in other cities were introduced to graffiti art by citizens of New York, who moved out of the city or by photographs of graffiti art works from New York.¹⁴² As was highlighted above, informal channels were important also in the dissemination of graffiti art into former communist countries in Central Europe around 1990 (Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia).

¹³⁸ Snopek, "Kluci Potřebují Dobrodružství: Formování Identity Na Pražské Graffiti Scéně [Boys Need Adventure: Identity Formation on Prague's Graffiti Scene]". p. 16-17; Overstreet, *In Graffiti We Trust*. p. 222

¹³⁹ Snopek, "Kluci Potřebují Dobrodružství: Formování Identity Na Pražské Graffiti Scéně [Boys Need Adventure: Identity Formation on Prague's Graffiti Scene]". p. 17.

¹⁴⁰ Ferrell, *Styles of Crime: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality*. p. 17.

¹⁴¹ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*. pp. 261-266

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 262

After historically tracing the transmission of graffiti art in the first half of the 1980's to West Europe, Australia and in the late 1980's-early 1990's to Central and Eastern Europe the attention is now directed at the rest of the world. Austin reported in 2001 that graffiti art expanded to '*Latin America, eastern and southern Europe, and the Caribbean*' in the 1990's.¹⁴³ This also correlates with the information contained in the book *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*, published in 2004.¹⁴⁴ Finally, I would like to talk about two other sources, which represent graffiti art as a global phenomenon. Firstly, the documentary film *Bomb It* (2007) that introduced graffiti artists from the following cities: Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Tijuana, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Hamburg, Berlin, Cape Town, São Paulo and Tokyo.¹⁴⁵ Secondly, the scholar, Gregory J. Snyder, reported in 2009 the presence of graffiti artists in the cities of '*New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington D.C., Paris, Berlin, Stuttgart, Amsterdam, Tokyo, Sao Paulo, and Santiago*'.¹⁴⁶ The above highlighted reports, from the 2000's, did not draw much attention to the presence of graffiti art in Asia, besides Japan and Singapore.¹⁴⁷ At this point, I would like to mention Turkey, which is a cultural bridge between Europe and Asia. Graffiti art in Turkey had apparently already started developing in the 1980's,¹⁴⁸ even though it was more likely to be in the late 1990's or early 2000's. There are no direct indications for the transmission of graffiti art from Germany to Turkey, but I assume that the introduction of graffiti art into Turkey may strongly relate to Germany, as a significant number of the early German graffiti artists

¹⁴³ Ibid. p. 262.

¹⁴⁴ The book has three main chapters – Americas (107 pages), Europe (202 pages) and the Rest of the world (43 pages). Rest of the world is represented with: Japan (Hiroshima, Tokyo), Australia (Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Prospect and Sydney), South Africa (Cape Town, Johannesburg) and Singapore. In: Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*.

¹⁴⁵ Reiss, "Bomb It."

¹⁴⁶ Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 2.

¹⁴⁷ Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*.

¹⁴⁸ Tunç "Turbo" Dindaş, *Turkish Graffiti: Volume 1* (Istanbul: S2K Grafxxx, 2009). p. 5.

were of Turkish descent and they might have disseminated graffiti art into Turkey.¹⁴⁹ Nowadays, graffiti art is so widely spread that it can be also located in Arabic countries.¹⁵⁰

Finally, attention is drawn to the region of East and Southeast Asia. In Southeast Asia graffiti art was probably first present in the Philippines in 1990¹⁵¹ and then in Singapore in 1994.¹⁵² In Thailand graffiti art probably also started in the early 1990's¹⁵³ as there was already graffiti art in Chiang Mai by 1994. In South Korea graffiti art began to set in in the late 1990's,¹⁵⁴ as was the case in Taipei, Taiwan¹⁵⁵ and Indonesia¹⁵⁶. Graffiti art was introduced to the east coast of China through Hong Kong and appeared in 1998 in Guangzhou,¹⁵⁷ and in 2002 in Wuhan (however, graffiti art had already been introduced for the first time to Hong Kong in May 1982¹⁵⁸).

The historical development of the graffiti art culture in Malaysia dates back to the years 1999-2000. The initial two locations of origin were the cities of Batu Pahat and Kuala Lumpur on the Malaysian peninsula.¹⁵⁹

This section briefly demonstrated how and when graffiti art spread from its birthplace of Philadelphia and New York in the USA to other parts of the globe.

¹⁴⁹ For example the in the 1980s very active graffiti artist COWBOY69 is of Turkish descent. For COWBOY69's works see: *Writing in München 1983-1995: Graffiti Art #3*.

¹⁵⁰ David Novak et al., "Graffiti in Iraq: Focus on Sulaymaniyah," *Romano-Arabica* XV, no. Graffiti, Writing and Street Art in the Arab World (2015).

¹⁵¹ FLIP1 in: Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*. p. 69.

¹⁵² SCOPE in: *ibid.* p. 100.

¹⁵³ CIDER; POYD in: *ibid.* p. 86; 90.

¹⁵⁴ JINSBH in: *ibid.* p. 39.

¹⁵⁵ CHEK in: *ibid.* p. 62.

¹⁵⁶ DARBOTZ in *ibid.* p. 112.

¹⁵⁷ DEZIO in: *ibid.* p. 14.

¹⁵⁸ Witten et al., *Dondi White: Style Master General: The Life of Graffiti Artist Dondi White*. pp. 160-161.

¹⁵⁹ The Story of PHOBIA in: Teh, *Graffiti KL*. Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley".

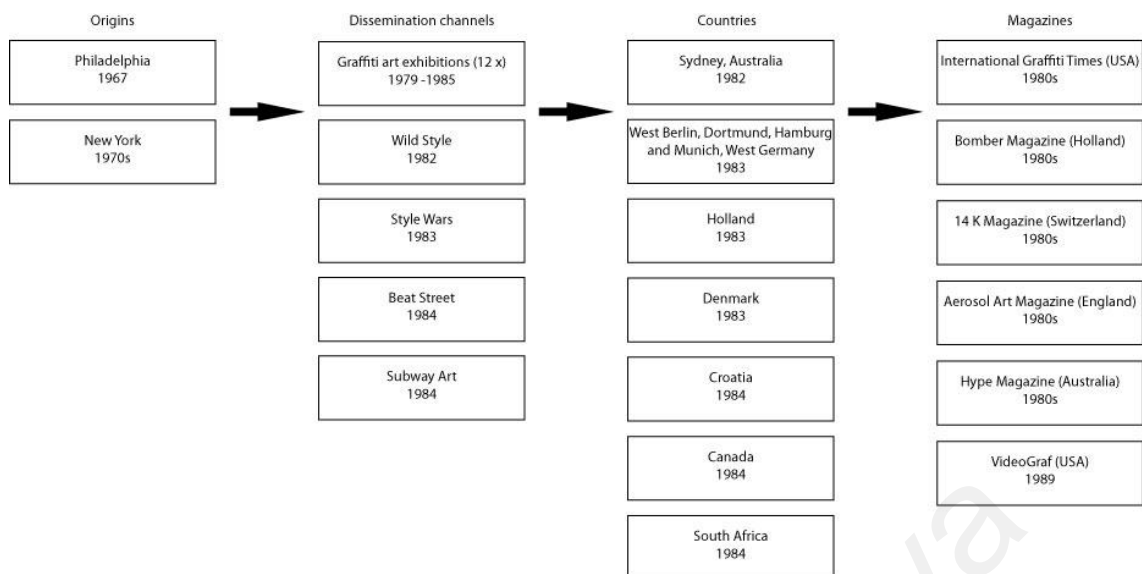


Figure 2.1 Some important time references in the history of graffiti art (until the end of the 1980s).

2.0.2 Graffiti art and Legality

Graffiti art, since the very early days, is closely associated with vandalism. The birthplace of graffiti art, New York City, fought several ‘wars’ on graffiti. These wars were only relatively successful. Joe Austin demonstrated, in detail, that these wars had not always the desired outcomes, as graffiti artists never surrendered and continued to produce graffiti art works.¹⁶⁰ Austin’s research was recently updated – and extended – by Ronald Kramer who investigated motivations of these anti-graffiti-wars in New York.¹⁶¹

Graffiti art was also identified as a reason for the decline of entire urban areas, as in the *Broken Windows* theory.¹⁶² Wilson & Kelling’s *Broken Windows* theory claims that graffiti alongside other minor crimes, such as begging and broken windows are the first indications of disorder in a territory leading to the rise of more violent crimes in the area. Snyder, Kramer and Ferrell & Weide – amongst others – showed that the broken windows theory is not particularly robust and that it could be said that they had refuted

¹⁶⁰ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*.

¹⁶¹ Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005". Ronald Kramer, "Painting with Permission: Legal Graffiti in New York City," *Ethnography* 11, no. 2 (2010).

¹⁶² Wilson et al., "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety."

the theory.¹⁶³ Ferrell and Weide's *Spot theory* is an outstanding framework on the relationship between graffiti art works and space.

Many studies approached graffiti art as an illegal activity, but Kramer also discussed – as one of a few scholars – graffiti art as a legal activity.¹⁶⁴ Kramer demonstrated that the core concepts of the graffiti art culture changed after the 1990's and many New Yorker graffiti artists started practicing graffiti art as a legal 'aesthetically oriented practice'.¹⁶⁵

In Southeast Asia, graffiti art is relatively new and the local governments do not fight it much. However, the Indonesian authority introduced in Jakarta a new anti-graffiti law in 2013, according to which the offender can be charged 'with a maximum of 60 days in prison and a Rp 20 million (US\$2,054) fine'.¹⁶⁶ This decision of the Indonesian government was questioned by the sociologist Johannes Frederik Warouw from the University of Indonesia, who suggested supporting this form of art, instead of confronting it.¹⁶⁷ On graffiti art from Jakarta, Indonesia see the book *Wall Street Arts: Jakarta Paris Graffiti Exhibition*.¹⁶⁸ Singapore as another example of a Southeast Asian country that is known for its strict law enforcement. There is nearly no graffiti in this country. However, occasionally there are some controversies relating to graffiti and graffiti art offences.¹⁶⁹ The last significant case of a graffiti art offence was in 2010. One Swiss and one British graffiti artist¹⁷⁰ produced in May 2010 two panel pieces¹⁷¹ on

¹⁶³ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory."; Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*; Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005".

¹⁶⁴ See especially the whole Chapter 3 (pp. 121-194): Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005".

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 193.

¹⁶⁶ Corry Elyda, "Ban on Graffiti Art Questioned," *The Jakarta Post*, 04 May 2013.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ "Wall Street Arts: Jakarta Paris Graffiti Exhibition." (Jakarta, Indonesia: Galeri Salihara, 2010), http://www.wallworks.fr/galerie_wallworks/media/graffiti_book.pdf.

¹⁶⁹ Syafiqah Omar, "Conform or Be Whitewashed," *New Nation*, <http://newnation.sg/2011/01/conform-or-be-whitewashed/>.

¹⁷⁰ "Singapore Sentences Swiss Man to Caning for Spraying Graffiti on Subway Car," *Fox News*, 25. June 2010; RTT Staff Writer, "Swiss Man Receives Prison Sentence, Canning in Singapore Graffiti Case," *RTTNews*, 25. June 2010.

the exterior of the Singaporean MRT subway train. This caused an enormous stir in the Singaporean media. One of the graffiti artists fled the country and a ‘*warrant of arrest was issued on June 8 [2010] and INTERPOL member countries were alerted*’.¹⁷² The other graffiti artist was arrested in Singapore and sentenced in June 2010.¹⁷³ This seems quite an extreme reaction to graffiti art vandalism, as the exteriors of trains are being painted in Western countries on a regular basis.¹⁷⁴ This of course does not pardon such an act as the one described in Singapore at all. However, it is quite unheard of to issue an Interpol warrant for graffiti art – even though it was produced on a train exterior. Especially if we take into account, that ‘*Singapore's subway operator, SMRT Corp., didn't report the incident to police for two days because staff thought the brightly colored graffiti [art work] was an advertisement*’.¹⁷⁵

In neighboring Malaysia the general discourse on graffiti art is actually relatively positive. Malaysian media reports on graffiti art are commonly reporting on its positive side, mentioning the artistic skills of the artists, the benefit of graffiti art as of a form of public art, however the media reports also often contrast this positive side against a reminder that graffiti art can also easily be a simple form of vandalism.¹⁷⁶ In general, graffiti art in Malaysia is convincingly supported and tolerated.¹⁷⁷ For further

¹⁷¹ ongyouyuan1907, "[Exclusive Vandalized] Smrt C151 047-048 Graffiti Drawing - Departing Kembangan (Westbound).", (YouTube, 18 May 2010).

¹⁷² Idayu Suparto, "Swiss Man in Mrt Graffiti Case Set to Enter Plea," 21 June 2010.

¹⁷³ "Singapore Sentences Swiss Man to Caning for Spraying Graffiti on Subway Car."; Writer, "Swiss Man Receives Prison Sentence, Canning in Singapore Graffiti Case."

¹⁷⁴ TOPxGRAFFITI, "Graffiti 'Vandals' - Exhibition (Nils Müller)," (YouTube, 16 June 2013); "Art Crimes: Trains," Art Crimes: The Writing on the Wall, <http://www.graffiti.org/trains/index.trains.html>.

¹⁷⁵ "Singapore Sentences Swiss Man to Caning for Spraying Graffiti on Subway Car."

¹⁷⁶ "Youth Jam 2011 - Penang Largest Youth Event ", *The Star* 2011; Niki Cheong, "Artist Honours Yasmin with Mural," *The Star*, 28. July 2009; Susan Tam, "Street Art and Graffiti Celebrated in Annual Kul Sign Festival," *The Star*, 17 April 2012; Zukri Valentino, "Provide Space for Graffiti," *The Star*, 21 October 2008; Oleh Riadz Radzi, "Kontengan Kreatif," *Harian Metro*, 31. August 2005b; Eva McGovern, "Anti-Heroes," *Off The Edge*, October 2008; Ali Haswari, "Graffiti Jadi Seni Lukis Moden," 08. May 2004; Grace Chen, "Gallery Offers a Place for Struggling Artists to Express Themselves," *The Star*, 09. May 2008a; Grace Chen, "There's Beauty in Graffiti," *The Star*, 22 February 2008c; "Vandal or Art?," in *Edisi Siasat*, (Malaysia: TV7, 01 November 2008).

¹⁷⁷ Venugopal, "Taking Graffiti Art to a Higher Level."; "Youth Express with Dell & Microsoft: Dell Spreads Positivity through Art Movement in the Society," *Malaysian Today* 15 August 2011; "Opening Speech by Mayor of KL: Launch of Kulsign Festival 2012 & Graffiti Art Book "Hembusan Seni Kuala Lumpur."; Yam Phui Yee, "Urban Art Form," *The Star*, 01 October 2008; "Loads of Fun Activities at Flip Flop Beach Carnival," *The Star*, 17. April 2011; Andrea Filmer et al., "Delay in Graffiti Park Project," *The Star*, 26. January 2012; Filmer, "A Park for Graffiti Artists."; Jayagandi Jayaraj, "Close Watch on Tree

information on the stance of the Malaysian public and the Malaysian art world on graffiti art see the conference proceedings *Graffiti Art as Public Art and the City Image: A Comparison of Prague and Kuala Lumpur*.¹⁷⁸

2.1 Evaluation of Graffiti Art Works

Evaluation of graffiti art works by graffiti artists developed predominantly based on art criticism from within the graffiti art culture. The art historian Margo Thompson stated that the influential graffiti artists of the 1970's, and early 1980's – Donald J. White (1961–1998) aka DONDI¹⁷⁹, Steven Ogburn (born 1958) aka BLADE¹⁸⁰ and Melvin Samuels (born 1961) aka NOC167¹⁸¹ – understood graffiti art '*as an historical phenomenon independent of fine art, with a past to be mined and a future to be shaped*.'¹⁸² It is of interest to point out that two of BLADE's and one of DONDI's graffiti art derived canvas paintings from the first half of the 1980s were sold in a French auction at *Artcurial* in the year 2008 for €37,200; €35,900 and €19,800 respectively.¹⁸³

Contractors," *The Star*, 03. December 2010; "Beautiful Works of Art on Walls."; Rodrigues, "Talking Walls: We Talk Tags, Style & Vandalism with Some of the World's Most Respected Graffiti Writers."; Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley"; Novak, "Western Influences in Southeast Asian Paintings: Comparison of a Balinese Ink Painting and of Two Malaysian Graffiti Artworks."; "Graffiti Batik Kontemporari: Malaysia Pavilion Shanghai Expo 2010," *Senikini: Malaysian Art Now #06* 2010. "Dbkl Anjur Festival Kul Sign 2012."

¹⁷⁸ Novak, "Graffiti Art as Public Art and the City Image: A Comparison of Prague and Kuala Lumpur".

¹⁷⁹ Witten et al., *Dondi White: Style Master General: The Life of Graffiti Artist Dondi White*.

¹⁸⁰ Powers, *The Art of Getting Over: Graffiti at the Millennium*; Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

¹⁸¹ Thompson, *American Graffiti*.

¹⁸² Ibid. p.46.

¹⁸³ "Writing on the Wall: Fresh Success for Graffiti Art at Artcurial," (18 February 2008), http://www.artcurial.com/pdf/presse/2008/r1469_en.pdf.

Jennifer Lutz also realized that graffiti art evolved beyond vandalism and stated that: '*It has become a sophisticated visual repertory, a controlled system.*'¹⁸⁴ Evaluation of graffiti art works by graffiti artists follows specific criteria. Some of the specific historical preconditions and approaches are briefly highlighted in this section.

Graffiti artists in New York City of the 1970's used to meet at certain subway stations to watch and evaluate, criticize, graffiti art works painted on the sides of subway trains. These stations are known as 'writers' corners' or 'writers' benches'. Writers' corners were meeting points with an aim to socialize and appreciate works of other graffiti artists and criticize these works. Such writers' benches were located at the West 168th Street station, the West 96th Street IRT station, the 180th Street station, Atlantic Avenue station, Astor Place station, and the 149th Street and Grand Concourse stations in New York City.¹⁸⁵ The 149th Street and Grand Concourse stations in New York City of the 1970s are considered as one of the most important places with regards to the establishment of graffiti art's internal art criticism. Graffiti artists of the 1970's (and 1980's) would gather at the subway platform and watch trains go by. '*The main activity was watching art on the passing trains (known as benching). The writers would admire and criticize the latest paintings.*'¹⁸⁶ '*So you just watched, listened, and learned. In the old school, the bench was the master classroom, where every student was disruptive.*'¹⁸⁷ Graffiti artists also evaluated graffiti art works with a strong emphasis on proliferation of individual tag names and on an instantly recognizable individual style. As early as the beginning of the 1970's graffiti artists '*realized the importance of having an identifiable style. If you couldn't name a style, you couldn't claim it, and*

¹⁸⁴ Jennifer Lutz, "Taking up Space: An Interview with Bio of Tats Cru, Inc.," *Dance Research Journal* 33, no. 2 (Winter 2001). p. 106.

¹⁸⁵ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 28.

¹⁸⁶ "149th Street Grand Concourse: The Writer's Bench," @149st The Cyber Bench: Documenting New York City Graffiti, <http://www.at149st.com/bench.html>.

¹⁸⁷ Powers, *The Art of Getting Over: Graffiti at the Millennium*. p. 136.

*staking a claim was essential to achieving fame.*¹⁸⁸ Further, in the mid-1970's, the throw-up form appeared and with it an even stronger emphasis on the proliferation of one's tag name became essential in the evaluation of one's graffiti art works. Jack Stewart wrote about one of the most prolific graffiti artists of the mid-1970's, IN, that: *'In was the writer who reminded the rest of the graffiti [art] world that getting your name around was still the most important thing.'*¹⁸⁹ However, with regards to the writer's benches, in the 1980's police repression brought about a sudden end to the writer's benches.¹⁹⁰ This ended such art critics graffiti art gatherings, but decades later the internet replaced the writer's benches and much of the critical graffiti art discourse is nowadays being done online.

As early as 1974, the geographers David Ley (PhD,1972) and Roman Cybriwsky analyzed tags from Philadelphia *'in terms of their style, motivation, and preferred setting.'*¹⁹¹ Ley and Cybriwsky observed that the tag is distinctive, created with a spray paint can and *'is highly accentuated, embellished with elegant curves and generous serifs.'*¹⁹² Graffiti artists since the 1970's were highly concerned with their letterform designs. In the book *Subway Art* we read that young graffiti artists *'work hard at perfecting their tags before making them public.'*¹⁹³ Other graffiti artists then evaluate the attributes of graffiti art works. According to the art historian Staffan Jacobson graffiti art has *'a very special art criticism of its own'*.¹⁹⁴ Jacobson suggested that graffiti artists evaluate other graffiti art works based on the consideration of the

¹⁸⁸ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 71.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. pp. 171; 174.

¹⁹⁰ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*.

¹⁹¹ Ley et al., "Urban Graffiti as Territorial Markers." p. 491.

¹⁹² Ibid. p. 494.

¹⁹³ Cooper et al., *Subway Art*. p. 68.

¹⁹⁴ Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art." p. 220.

following criteria: '1) *technique*, 2) *fantasy and originality*, 3) *style* 4) *colours*, 5) *size*, 6) *physical difficulty and effort*, 7) *location*, 8) *risk*, 9) *time*, 10) *total impression*.'¹⁹⁵

In the subsequent paragraph, I very briefly elaborate on these criteria. Technique refers to the ability of mastering the medium, which is traditionally the spray paint can as the main tool of graffiti artists. The graffiti artists use specific brands that enable them to achieve the best possible results. The paint should for example never drip – unintentionally – as it would hint at the graffiti artist's inability to use his tool.¹⁹⁶ All works should suggest some fantasy of the artist, or originality in approaching a particular artistic problem. Style is to graffiti artists of major concern and there are unique, distinct graffiti art styles as was shown by Lisa Gottlieb.¹⁹⁷ Colors are a very significant feature of graffiti art works, especially of pieces, and the selection of color combinations can tell much about a graffiti artist's experience. Size of a graffiti art work can provide some indications to other graffiti artists about the self-esteem of a graffiti artist. Works on a large scale are considered courageous and small-scale works rather unsympathetically. Physical difficulty and effort can refer to diverse features of a work. Physical difficulty and effort can show the artist's energy invested in the production of his work and it can refer to the complexity of a work for example in relation to the chosen style. Location is a very significant factor as graffiti art is a very ephemeral site-specific art form. The location is of major importance. A graffiti art work in public space has far higher prestige than a work produced on the walls of your own home. Risk relates to the previous criteria of location. Risk and location significantly contribute to the prestige of a work and of a graffiti artist. The greater the risk is, the higher the possibility for the appreciative evaluation of a work. The time of production can

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 221.

¹⁹⁶ Thompson, *American Graffiti*. p.46.

¹⁹⁷ Lisa Gottlieb, *Graffiti Art Styles: A Classification System and Theoretical Analysis* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2008).

significantly vary. Legal graffiti art works will most probably be produced in a much longer time span than those of the illegal variety. Total impression of a work is the summary and final conclusion about a graffiti art work.¹⁹⁸

This section briefly pointed out some of the specifics in the evaluation process of graffiti art works.

2.2 Legibility

As highlighted throughout this thesis the graffiti art's main subject matter is the letterforms of the Latin alphabet. If that is common knowledge to the observer of a graffiti art work, the graffiti art work can already be approached accordingly and the search for letterforms in the work can be initiated. However, the artists alter the Latin letterforms in such a way, that it is often difficult for an untrained eye to decipher the graffiti art works. *'In some cases, even identifying the shapes as letters poses challenges for uninitiated viewers.'*¹⁹⁹ Due to these alterations of Latin letterforms it can easily happen that the letterform 'C' is interpreted by an viewer as a 'G', 'D', 'O' or even as another letterform. Historical analysis of developmental stages of stylization of graffiti art letterforms can help to understand the development of the letter forming process. Especially if the early graffiti art works on the subway in New York are studied.²⁰⁰ Graffiti artists participating in the graffiti art culture possess the necessary information to decipher graffiti art works with more ease. Graffiti artists tend to study this subject matter long term. Graffiti artists also study the history of graffiti art works as part of their active engagement with the graffiti art culture. Graffiti artists start reviewing

¹⁹⁸ I used already Staffan Jacobson's 10 criteria for the evaluation of 8 Malaysian graffiti art works in: Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". pp. 69; 118-134; 141-160.

¹⁹⁹ Gottlieb, *Graffiti Art Styles: A Classification System and Theoretical Analysis*. p. 6.

²⁰⁰ To gain the knowledge about the earliest graffiti art works from New York City see the study: Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. Another very good visual resource on the early historical days of the graffiti art see: David Schmidlapp et al., *Style: Writing from the Underground: (R)Evolution of Aerosol Linguistics* (Italy, Viterbo: Stampa Alternativa in Association with IGTimes, 1996; reprint, (3rd) 1998).

graffiti art letterforms after they enter the graffiti art culture and they become cognoscenti.

Legibility, especially with regards to pieces, has been of high importance since the early days of the graffiti art culture. Various graffiti art styles were used in the authorship of pieces ‘*ranging from “wildstyle” to “straight letter[s]”*’.²⁰¹ The stylized letterforms used for the Wild Style of graffiti art works were not legible at first sight contrary to simple, straight letters, which are generally legible. Jack Stewart discusses the ‘Origins of Wild Style’ in connection with the legendary graffiti artists Michael Tracy aka TRACY168 (born 1958), BLADE and a handful of others. Stewart noted that the development of Wild Style (Figure 2.2) made the legibility of letterforms nearly impossible:

*Along with many other writers, TRACY and BLADE would continue to deconstruct letters in the Wild Style, and some names grew all but indecipherable to outsiders.*²⁰²

Susan Stewart mentioned in her article also the Wild Style lettering style. Susan Stewart notes that the term is used for ‘*letters that cannot be read*’:

*In fact, the term “wild style” is used for letters that cannot be read as anything except as the mark of an individual’s (now past) presence at the scene.*²⁰³

In one of the most influential popular graffiti art books, *Subway Art*, we read that many graffiti artists ‘*dislike wildstyle lettering because it is difficult to read*’ and further that other graffiti artists think that ‘*the illegibility reinforces ...[the]sense of having a secret society, inaccessible to outsiders.*’²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005". p. 38.

²⁰² Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 116-117.

²⁰³ Stewart, "Ceci Tuera Cela: Graffiti as Crime and Art." p. 164.

²⁰⁴ Cooper et al., *Subway Art*. p. 70.

The wildstyle lettering has remained since the 1970's until the present day, one of the most typical and popular graffiti art styles.²⁰⁵ And to the present day, the wildstyle lettering is synonymous with 'unreadability'.²⁰⁶

However, in the early days of the graffiti art culture there were also other illegible styles. Jack Stewart for example refers to the SILVER TIPS piece 'STIPS', and to OG's and BOT's pieces from 1974, graffiti art works created only for the 'cognoscenti':

*Many of the writers couldn't even figure out who did this one. One really had to be familiar with the styles of the various writers to decipher work like this.*²⁰⁷

As cited above, graffiti art works since the early days were already often meant and directed at the peers of the graffiti artists – at the cognoscenti, representing real life graffiti art experts. This realization indirectly implies that the skill to decipher graffiti art works can be acquired.



Figure 2.2 A 'BLADE' piece in the 'Wild Style' on the side of a subway train in 1977 New York.
Source of image: Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 117: Figure: 138.

2.2.1 Letterforms and Calligraphy

A letterform represents the unique style of every single letter of the alphabet. Each letter needs to maintain its form so it stays readable and decipherable to the reader.

Graffiti artists need to communicate their tag names to other graffiti artists in the most appealing visual way. To do so, the graffiti artists transform and distort in an

²⁰⁵ Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art." p. 149 (Wildstyle, the history of).

²⁰⁶ Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 34.

²⁰⁷ Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978". p. 430.
Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 151.

artistic manner the letterforms of the alphabet, but they have to pay attention to maintain the legibility. Graffiti artists continuously develop new styles of the Latin alphabet.²⁰⁸ Graffiti art could therefore be considered an artistic extension of calligraphy and lettering, because the main subject matter of graffiti art works are the hand written and stylized 26 letters of the Latin alphabet.²⁰⁹ Ferrell and Weide also suggested in the *Spot theory* that graffiti art ‘can be deconstructed as a form of folk calligraphy’.²¹⁰

Calligraphy means ‘literally beautiful writing’.²¹¹ Calligraphy was – and remains – an important part of many cultures. Old manuscripts were executed in calligraphy in the cultures of the West, Asia and Arabia, to give the written text a special, unique feel.²¹² Not by chance is calligraphy also included in the title of the graffiti art lettering oriented book: *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*.²¹³

The final project in graphic design submitted by the Malaysian Mohd Faiz bin Omar aka NENOK is a very interesting work on graffiti art lettering rules.²¹⁴ In this diploma work richly illustrated with photographs, it is possible to encounter many great examples of graffiti art typography executed by one of Malaysia’s most experienced and talented graffiti artists.²¹⁵ See NENOK’s letterforms oriented sketches in Figure 2.3. NENOK illustrated his work with his own drawings.²¹⁶ Further, he gives suggestions how graffiti art letterforms should look like and how they are constructed. NENOK,

²⁰⁸ For many examples see: Claudia Walde, *Street Fonts: Graffiti Alphabets Form around the World* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011).

²⁰⁹ Robin Landa, *Graphic Design Solutions*, 2nd ed. (OnWord Press, 2001). pp. 58-59.

²¹⁰ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 50.

²¹¹ Landa, *Graphic Design Solutions*. pp. 58-59.

²¹² Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art." pp. 28-29 (Calligraphy).

²¹³ Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*.

²¹⁴ Omar, Mohd Faiz bin. *Ilustrasi Informasi Terhadap Rekataip Graffiti*. Diploma in Design. Pusat Teknologi Pengurusan Lanjutan, Shah Alam. October 2007.

²¹⁵ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". Justin Chew, "Artistic Expressions of the Young Mind," *The Star*, 28 June 2014; Wan Asmanizan Wan Ahmad Najib, "Petron Malaysia Launches Art and Photography Contest for Students," *BERNAMA* 2014.

²¹⁶ Omar, Mohd Faiz bin. *Ilustrasi Informasi Terhadap Rekataip Graffiti*. Diploma in Design. Pusat Teknologi Pengurusan Lanjutan, Shah Alam. October 2007.

amongst others, gives examples of some of the most ‘Favorite Letters’ in graffiti art: ‘S, E, C, K, G, P, Z, T, L, B, R.’²¹⁷

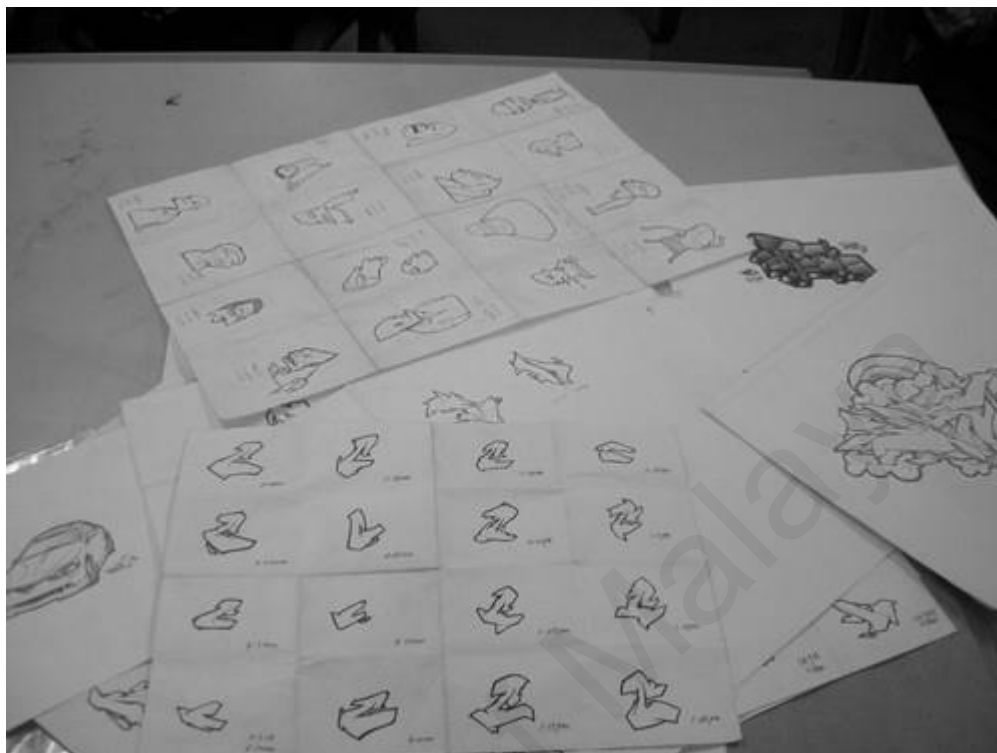


Figure 2.3 Various characters (above) and various ‘C’s (below) by Mohd Faiz bin Omar aka NENOK. 18 September 2008. At: MSU Management Science University, Shah Alam, GKL.

2.2.1.1 Letterform ‘J’: First Historical Letterform Competition

The roots of graffiti art letterform designs are engrained in pieces from New York City of the 1970’s. In late 1971, early 1972, the first [master]pieces appeared on the sides of the subway trains and with these pieces graffiti art letterform designs also started evolving. According to Jack Stewart’s research, graffiti artists started first designing the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet one by one.²¹⁸ One of the first letterforms to get a lot of attention of the graffiti artists was the letter ‘J’. The new letter shapes started to become slowly encrypted and the legibility started to be more and more difficult as the letter designing competition among the graffiti artists started to intensify. The letterform designs started becoming more and more abstract. Stewart noted that

²¹⁷ Omar, Mohd Faiz bin. *Ilustrasi Informasi Terhadap Rekataip Graffiti*. Diploma in Design. Pusat Teknologi Pengurusan Lanjutan, Shah Alam. October 2007. p. 61.

²¹⁸ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 64.

JAP I.'s letterform 'J' 'could easily be confused with a W, but insiders knew the style was JAP I's invention' and Stewart further states, that JESTER I. and JACE 2 'made their Js look like reserved lowercase n's with a dash over the top'.²¹⁹ For examples of the earliest stylized letterforms 'J' see the abstract and deviated forms of the J in the pieces of JAP I., JESTER I., J[ACE]2 and JUNIOR in Figure 2.4.



Figure 2.4 JAP I; JESTER I; JACE 2; JUNIOR 125.

Source of image: Stewart, Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s. p. 64: Figures: 69-72.

2.2.1.2 Letter Capital 'E': Constructing a Graffiti Art Letterform

In this section, I am providing a brief, historical, innovative visual review of the evolution of the letterform E, based on previously published sources. For current examples of the graffiti art letterform E see pages 609-621. Further, for samples of the letterform E used in typography see APPENDIX B: Typography, pages 605-606 in this present study.

Another letterform, which was distorted early on by graffiti artists and has deviated from its original letterform shape, was the letterform capital 'E'. Jack Stewart did not pay attention to this letterform in his research, even though there is a clear deviation of

²¹⁹ Ibid. p. 64.

the letterform E from its original shape, among the earliest pieces ever created. On the other hand, it is also necessary to admit, that the letterform 'E', contrary to the previously discussed 'J' was still legible.

The earliest capital 'Es' from late 1971 and 1972 resample the mirror image of the numeral '3' or to the Greek letter symbol 'Σ' (see Figure 2.5).

The design 'competition' for original letterform shapes amongst graffiti artists in the first half of the 1970s in New York led to the evolution of the letterform style. Ever since then the portfolio of traditional graffiti art letterforms year on year has been enriched with new shapes. This evolution is very briefly illustrated below on the various examples of versions of the letterform E.

There is a need for a deeper examination into the letterform styles as this is a sort of iconographic analysis.

*The iconographic argument always depends upon assembling historical evidence to reconstruct these things. ... Any iconographic analysis must explain as many visual elements in a work as possible.*²²⁰

Therefore I am discussing below the evolution of the letter E in more detail in accordance with historical evidence based on previously published photos in literature (for an additional reason to discuss this specific letterform see also p. 223).

The famous New York artist, former graffiti artist George Lee Quiñones (born 1960) aka LEE developed and significantly extended the letter 'E' by 1978. The two overlapping 'Es' in Figure 2.6 are already more evolved than the first Es from 1971-1972 depicted in Figure 2.5 and each of LEE's two Es differs from one another. There are already 'arrow'²²¹ extensions accommodated in the letterform shapes and a 'bit'²²² is

²²⁰ Munsterberg, "Writing About Art." (no page numbering: Iconographic Analysis)

²²¹ For indication of an arrow see explanatory diagram in: Steve Grody, *Graffiti L.A.: Street Styles and Art* (Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2007). The arrow shape was also discussed as a component of the wild style by: Gottlieb, *Graffiti Art Styles: A Classification System and Theoretical Analysis*; Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". Further on the usage of the arrow see: Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". p 121. According to Stewart was the arrow form

expanding the first E in the left bottom part (see diagram in Figure 2.7). Both letterform Es were also enriched with a horizontal block 3-D²²³ effect to give the piece depth and to lend the letterforms dimensional illusion (for the block 3-D see explanatory diagram in Figure 2.8). Besides the block 3-D, LEE also included into his Es more elaborate designs – fill-in.²²⁴ Fill-in is represented in the letterform by the designs filling in the space in between the letterform contours – outlines. There is a wide spectrum – nearly endless – of fill-in designs. LEE in this currently discussed example used sparks, bubbles, blocks and drips (see diagram in Figure 2.8).²²⁵

The development of lettering styles further continued in New York City throughout the 1980's. In the globally influential book *Subway Art* many examples of this development are provided.²²⁶ For further analysis of the evolving design of the letterform 'E', I selected the 'E' from a WAYNE piece (Figure 2.9). In the WAYNE piece all five letterforms are connected with small connections to each other²²⁷ and the first and the last letterforms, 'W' and the 'E' have extensions and arrows. The letterforms are outlined in black in a continuous stroke. The fill-in design is rich in detail and the fill-in is 'shining'. To add impact to the presentation of the WAYNE letterforms the graffiti artist added a drop shadow effect – pointing to the left side. To understand

already used by the earliest taggers (COOL EARL) in Philadelphia in 1966: Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. pp. 58-59.

²²² For the US American graffiti artist Richard Mirando aka SEEN (born 1961) publically coining the term 'bits' see: Chalfant et al., "Style Wars." 16:55min. Further see also explanatory diagram in: Grody, *Graffiti L.A.: Street Styles and Art*.

NOTE: SEEN is not the inventor of the term bit, but it is probably the first time this term was publically used on record.

²²³ For indication of the block 3-D ("3-D effect") see explanatory diagram in: Grody, *Graffiti L.A.: Street Styles and Art*. Also Gottlieb shows the block 3-D in a diagram: Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p.260. According to Stewart is the 3-D lettering technique known and used by graffiti artists since 1973: Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 119. Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978". pp. 389-406. See also: Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005". p. 38.

²²⁴ For the US American graffiti artist SEEN saying: "The first outline is needed. Always needed. This way you know where you filling-in." see: Chalfant et al., "Style Wars." 16:20min. Further see also explanatory diagram in: Grody, *Graffiti L.A.: Street Styles and Art*. See also Gottlieb's diagram featuring fill-in: Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p.260.

²²⁵ Kramer lists the following fill-ins, "design elements – such as carefully drawn drips, bubbles/dots, stars, geometrical shapes...".

Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005". p. 38.

²²⁶ Cooper et al., *Subway Art*.

²²⁷ For the US American graffiti artist SEEN talking about and painting a 'connection' see the video: Chalfant et al., "Style Wars." 16:47min. Also the US American graffiti artist EAZ ONE talks about connections: 'Connections are cool, but they are not completely necessary and not as important as the overall flow and look of your letter.' EAZ, "The Future of Graffiti Dvd: Letter Style and Painting Techniques," in *The Future of Graffiti DVD*, (USA2005). 11:28min - 11:38min.

the construction of the letterform 'E' see the explanatory diagram in Figure 2.10, starting from a simplified letterform 'E' and then see the evolving construction of the additional extensions leading up to the final letterform 'E'.

A decade later, graffiti art became part of urban spaces through the whole of Europe. In the popular book *Graffiti Art: Deutschland – Germany*, published in 1994, there are extensive examples of graffiti art works from across Germany – see for example the simply colored [master]piece by ODEM from Berlin in Figure 2.11. ODEM's piece forms a compact unit. There is very little negative space in this graffiti art style. All four letterforms follow the same – individual – letterform style. In ODEM's case, the 'E' is enclosed by the 'D' and the 'E' fluently connects to the subsequent letter 'M'. The extended lower arm of the 'E' is creating the flow and elegance of ODEM's 'E' letterform, but this 'E's' extended lower arm is forming at the same time the stem of the letterform 'M' (see Figure 2.11). For the construction of this more sophisticated 'E' letterform see the explanatory diagram in Figure 2.12.

In the book *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*, published 2003 there are, besides others, many excellent illustrative samples of different letterforms including whole alphabet sets in graffiti art style.²²⁸ There is also one section of text, concerning letterforms: *'The letter is not only a stylised image depicting emotions, but it is also raised to the level of a personality.'*²²⁹ According to this citation it is possible to determine in a letterform not only emotions, but also the personality of a graffiti artist. Something similar was suggested by the graffiti artist AROE: *'I want my letters to look like they're dancing together or pushing each other over.'*²³⁰ Nevertheless, in Figure 2.13 are depicted nine samples of the letter 'E' from five different, Berlin-based, graffiti

²²⁸ Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*. pp. 30-31; 56; 58-71.

²²⁹ Ibid. p. 55.

²³⁰ Rodrigues, "Talking Walls: We Talk Tags, Style & Vandalism with Some of the World's Most Respected Graffiti Writers." p. 73.

artists. What is of interest apart from the shapes of the letterforms is the anthropomorphic/zoomorphic nature of four of the nine examples represented. In these anthropomorphic/zoomorphic 'Es' it is possible to see eyes and teeth, which adds a certain lively quality and dimensionality to the letterforms.

The New York graffiti artist EAZ ONE published in 2005, on DVD, – *Letter Style and Painting Techniques* – the first part of his trilogy *The Future of Graffiti DVD*, which is dedicated to the production of graffiti art works.²³¹ EAZ ONE in this video is introducing the basics of graffiti art, in terms of letterform – style – construction. Additionally, the viewer is also practically taught – through demonstrations on a permitted wall – how to master the spray paint techniques. EAZ ONE further sketches on paper, in front of the viewer, the letterform 'E' from a simplified version (see Figure 2.14) to a fully elaborated wildstyle graffiti art letterform (Figure 2.17). As can be seen in Figure 2.14, the letterform 'E's' stem is folded.²³² At this point, it is of interest to highlight the production process of extensions. Extensions and connections are a significant part of the letterform design in many different graffiti art styles. One of the most common extensions is the 'arrow' form, which is especially closely associated with the wildstyle²³³ letterform lettering style (Figure 2.15). In the presently discussed example, EAZ ONE enhances his 'E' letterform in the subsequent step (Figure 2.16) with additional arrows, and adds also a 'bit' (for other examples of 'extensions' and 'bits' see Figure 2.21; Figure 2.7; Figure 2.10; Figure 2.12).²³⁴ Another element used by EAZ ONE in his demonstrational sketch are the simple supplementary letters 'ONE', see Figure 2.16. These supplementary letters can represent on other occasions the

²³¹ EAZ, "The Future of Graffiti Dvd: Letter Style and Painting Techniques."

²³² Ibid. 10:34min.

²³³ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p. 252.

²³⁴ Various types of extensions are also introduced in the 'Style elements' section of the book Chris Ganter, *Graffiti School: Student Guide* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013). pp. 68-73.

monographs of a graffiti art crew the author that a graffiti art work belongs to (see for example the pieces in Figure E.2-Figure E.3, pp. 634-635; Figure E.6-Figure E.7, pp. 638-639). In addition EAZ ONE elaborated on the importance of the letterform extensions as he states:

*Start to see how you develop your extensions, things that come off, for example the arrow comes off and underlines the "O", "N", "E". "Simple "E" turns into something that's a lot more stylized and flared out and nice looking. The 3-D is very important as well. Shading. I think the extensions are probably one of the most important parts of any good letter style.*²³⁵

EAZ ONE further explains that each letterform forming a [master]piece should be able to stand by itself: *'Any other letter that you put next to this [E] should be able to stand up on its own.'*²³⁶ EAZ ONE's final version of the letterform 'E' is presented in Figure 2.17.

Lastly I review the letterform 'E', produced by one of the most senior graffiti artists from the Southeast Asian region – Mazlan Ahmad (born 1976) aka SCOPE [SKOPE] from Singapore (Figure 2.18). SCOPE's letterform 'E' is connected, in this case, to the preceding letterform 'P' with an upper connection, making the letterforms fluently flow into each other. Besides this, SCOPE also made use of extensions and a cut – or overlap – in the lower arm of the 'E'.²³⁷ Further, the letterform 'E' is extended with a 3-D block, pointing to the center of his piece (see diagram in Figure 2.19).

In the present section, it was demonstrated that graffiti art works have a specific subject matter – letterforms. These letterforms are constructed based upon specific rules. The graffiti art letterforms constantly develop year on year, but some older stylistic approaches are used repeatedly.

²³⁵ EAZ, "The Future of Graffiti Dvd: Letter Style and Painting Techniques." 15:18min-15:45min.

²³⁶ Ibid. 16:02min

²³⁷ For indication of a 'cut' see explanatory diagram in: Grody, *Graffiti L.A.: Street Styles and Art*.



Figure 2.5 a-g Letterform 'E' by: EL MARKO; SUPER KOOL223; JESTER I; SNAKE123; PIPER I; PHASE2.
Source: (Stewart, 2009) pp. 60-70: Figures (Extract) 61; 68; 70; 76-77; 81; 85.

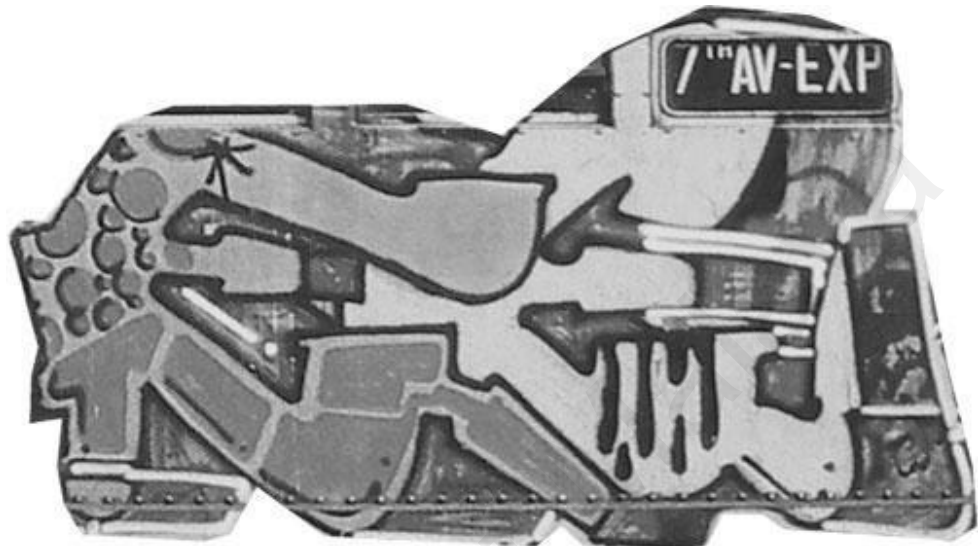


Figure 2.6 Double 'Es' produced in 1978 by the famous graffiti artist LEE.
Source: (Stewart, 2009) pp. 284-285: Figure (Extract) 211.

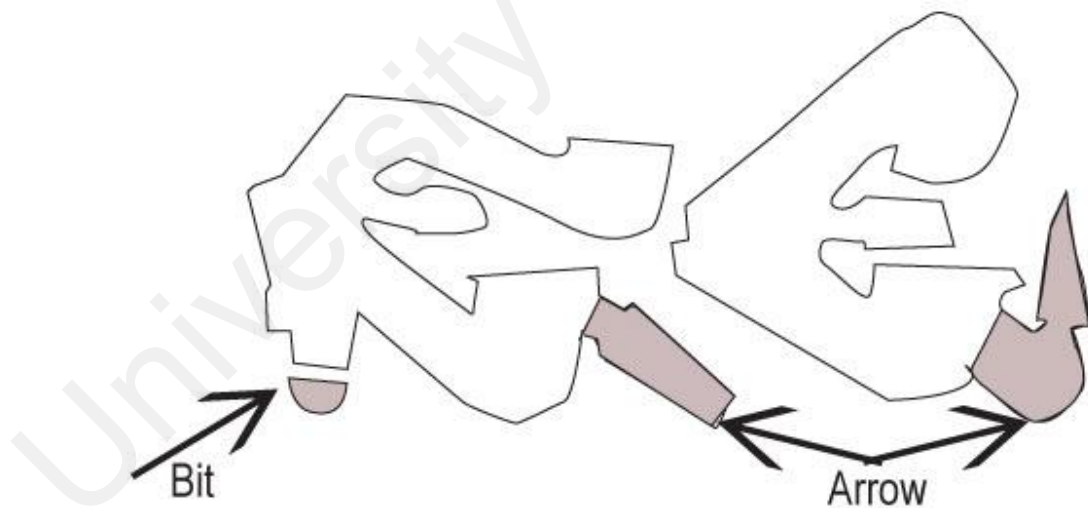


Figure 2.7 Diagram of LEE's double 'Es' from Figure 2.6 (separated) with its bit and arrow extensions.

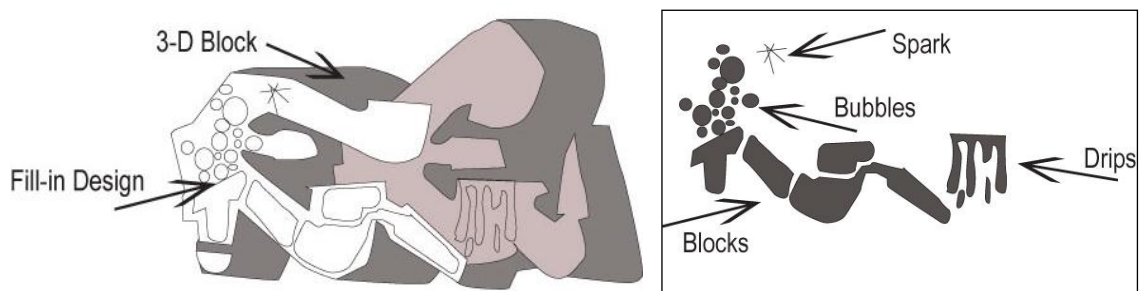


Figure 2.8 a, b Diagram of LEE's double "Es" from Figure 2.6 showing the 3-D block and the fill-in design.



Figure 2.9 Panel piece by WAYNE on the New York City subway.
Source: (Cooper and Chalfant, 1984) Extracted from p. 31.

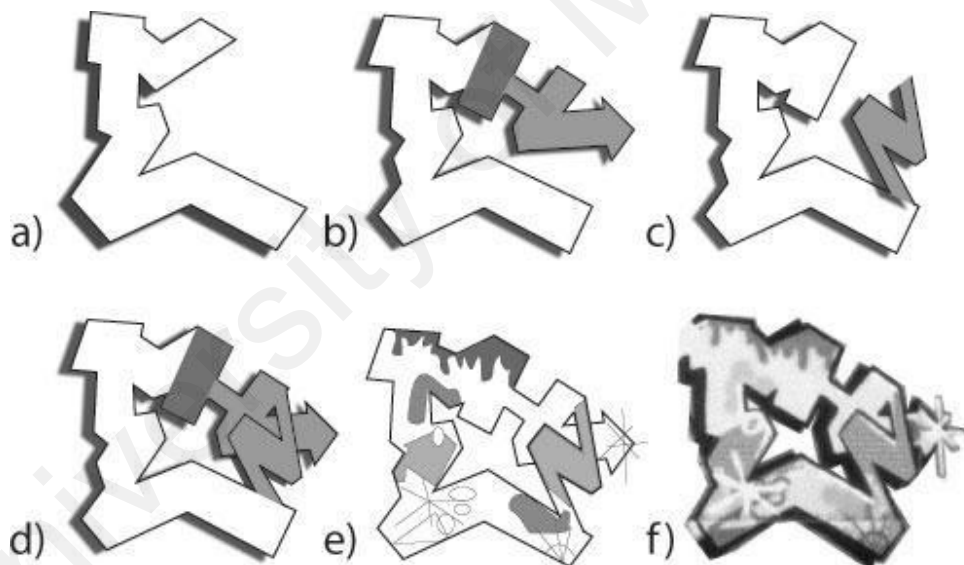


Figure 2.10 Diagram of the letter E with a drop shadow effect by WAYNE: **a)** The simplified E; **b)** The extended E letterform shape including an arrow connection; **c)** The extended E letterform shape including another connection; **d)** The extended E letterform shape including an arrow and a connection; **e)** The letterform Es fill-in design; **f)** Letterform E as in Figure 2.9 above.



Figure 2.11 Legal piece on a wall in Berlin in 1994. Author: ODEM.
Source: (Schlutenhafner and Klaußenborg, 1995) Extracted from p. 99.

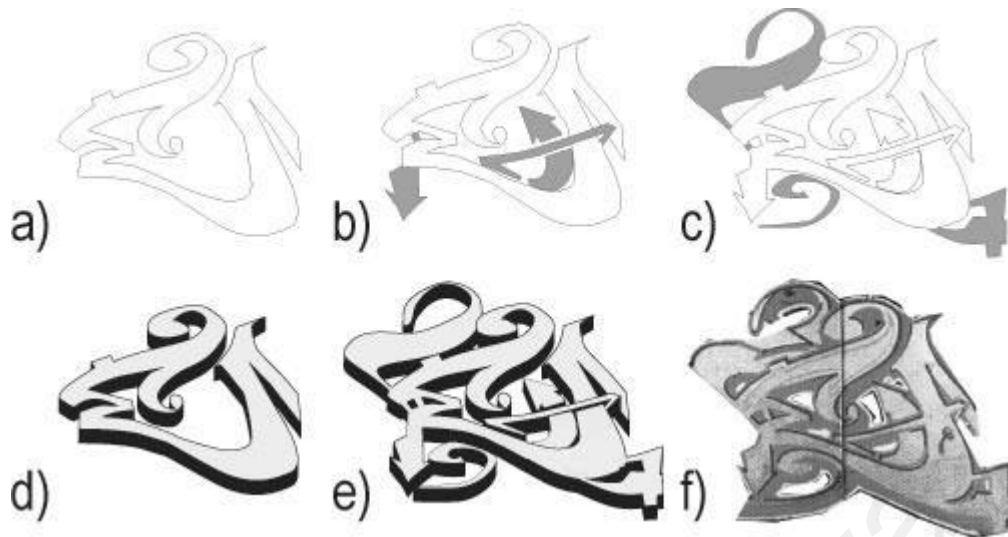


Figure 2.12 Diagram of the letterform E with a 3-D block effect by ODEM: a) The simplified E; b) The extended E letter shape including two arrows and two connections; c) The extended E letterform shape including two arrows and five connections; d) The simplified E with 3-D block effect; e) The fully extended letterform E with 3-D block effect f) Letter E as in Figure 2.11 above.

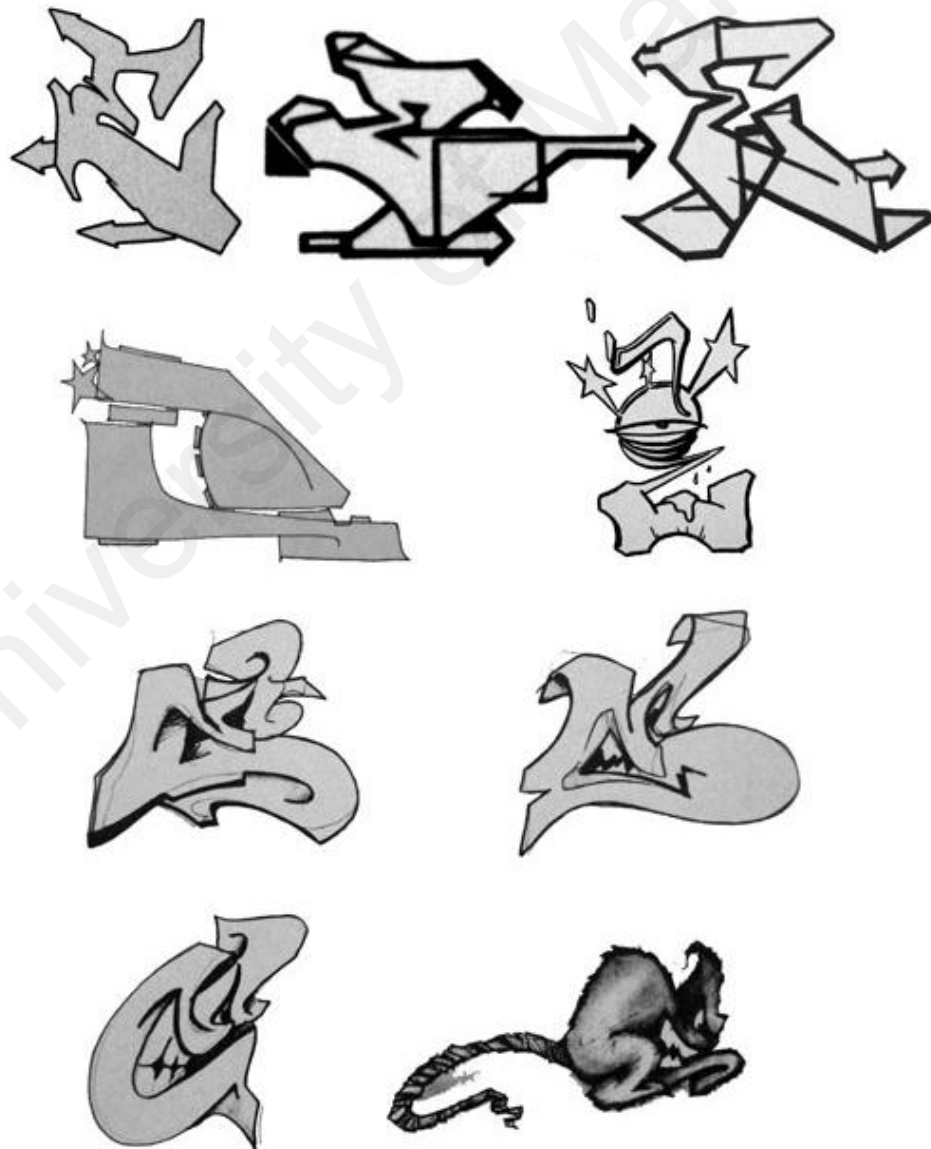


Figure 2.13 a-k Sketches of the letterform E from Berlin. Year 2002-2003: PHOS 4; TRY ONE (2x); DEZ 78; TAGNOE; MILK (4x).

Source: (Mai and Remke, 2003) Extracted from pp. 56; 58; 60; 66; 76.



Figure 2.14 The sketching buildup of the letterform 'E' by EAZ ONE: the basic letter.
Source: (EAZ, 2005) 10:30min.

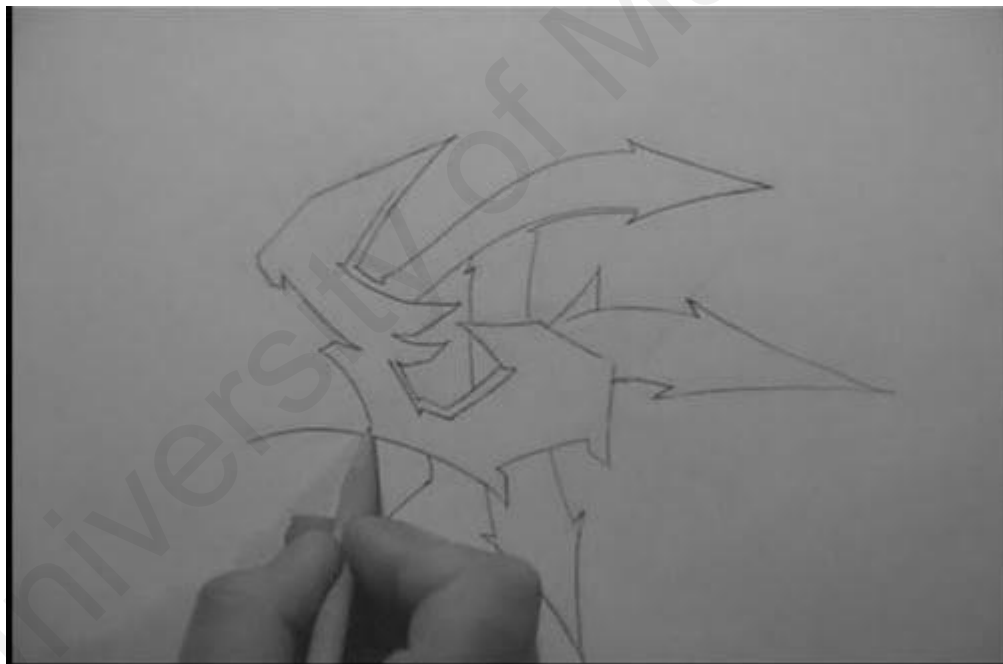


Figure 2.15 The sketching buildup of the letterform 'E' by EAZ ONE: extensions and connections.
Source: (EAZ, 2005) 11::35min



Figure 2.16 The sketching buildup of the letterform 'E' by EAZ ONE: supplementary letters.
Source: (EAZ, 2005) 13:16min.

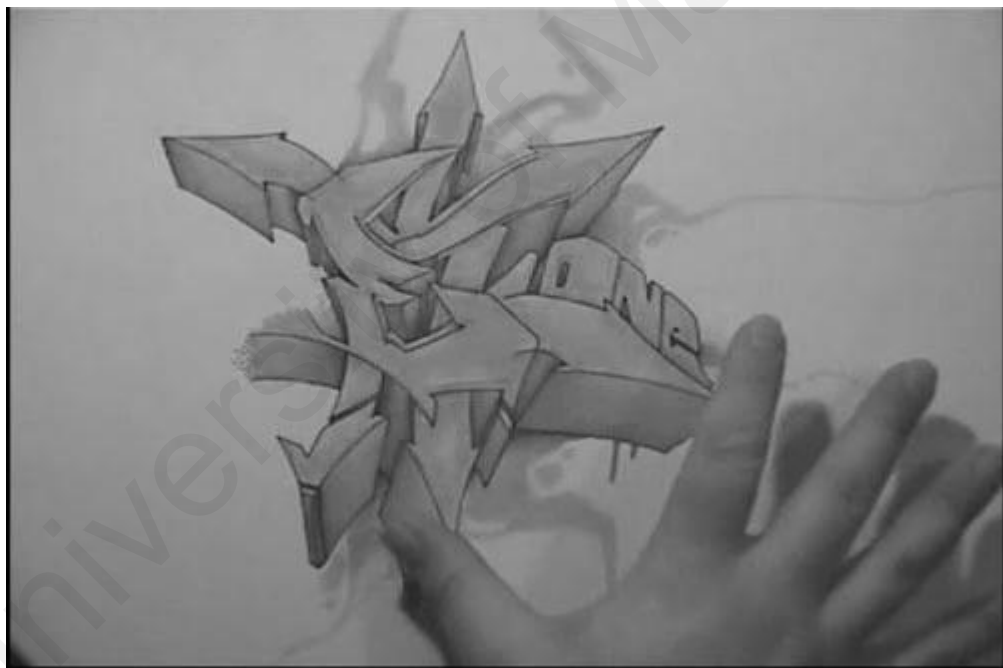


Figure 2.17 The sketching buildup of the letterform 'E' by EAZ ONE: color and background design.
Source: (EAZ, 2005) 15:48min.



Figure 2.18 SCOPE in front of his 'SCOPE' piece. Singapore, 2009.
Source: (Sanada and Hassan, 2010) Extracted from p. 100.

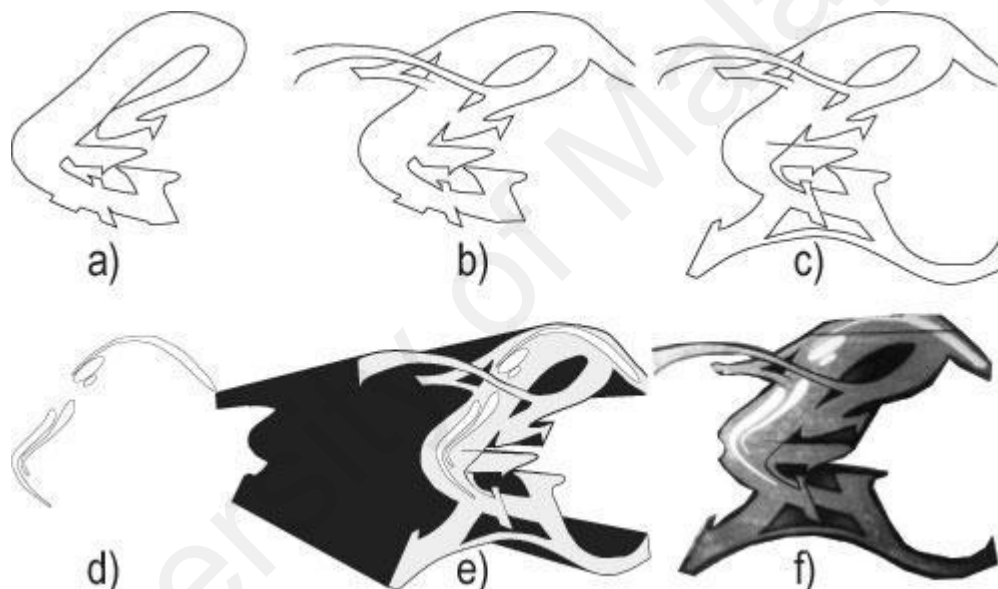


Figure 2.19 Diagram of the letterform 'E' with a 3-D block effect by SCOPE: **a)** The simplified 'E'; **b)** The extended 'E' letterform shape including two connections and one extension; **c)** The extended 'E' letterform shape including three connections, two extension and one cut; **d)** The fill-in of the letterform 'E'; **e)** The fully extended letterform 'E' with 3-D block effect **f)** The letterform 'E' as in Figure 2.18.

2.2.1.3 Importance of Tradition in Graffiti Art

As the last sections summarized, graffiti art has a long lasting tradition with regards to its visual forms (tag, throw-up, piece, character – this tradition goes beyond its visual forms and also relates to the behavioral codes established in New York City of the 1970's, as it was illustrated in sections 2.0.1 and in section 2.0.2 of this present thesis). This had already been observed by Lisa Gottlieb, who built her graffiti art styles classification system around the *'idea that graffiti art falls within an iconographic*

tradition'.²³⁸ This idea inherits in itself the presumption that graffiti art follows established visual norms from within the graffiti art culture established in the 1970s in New York City,²³⁹ and since the 1980's²⁴⁰ on a global scale. However, graffiti art in Southeast Asian Malaysia only started developing in 1999.²⁴¹ The graffiti artists in Malaysia profit from the historical inventions made in other earlier periods and global locations. I already argued about this possibility briefly in my previous research,²⁴² as artists always learned from their predecessors. This process already started with the cave paintings, continued throughout classical Greek and Renaissance periods and continues until the present day. The representational objects of art got better and changed later in other periods, as was illustrated by Ernst H. Gombrich (1909–2001), who stated:

*Thus Pliny told the history of sculpture and painting as the history of inventions, assigning definite achievements in the rendering of nature to individual artists: the painter Polygnotus was the first to represent people with open mouths and with teeth, the sculptor Pythagoras was the first to render nerves and veins, the painter Nicias was concerned with light and shade.*²⁴³

With graffiti art, it is the same story. TAKI183 placed his tags all over New York City's public spaces in late 1960's and early 1970's and spawned many imitators.²⁴⁴ SUPER KOOL223 painted the first masterpiece and Lonny Wood (born 1957) aka

²³⁸ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p. 35.

²³⁹ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*; Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970–1978"; Cooper et al., *Subway Art*; Chalfant et al., "Style Wars."; Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*; Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*; Ahearn, "Wild Style." David Villoriente et al., *Mascots & Mugs: The Characters and Cartoons of Subway Graffiti* (New York: Testify Books, 2007). Norman Mailer, "The Great Art of the 70's: The Faith of Graffiti," *Esquire* 1974 May. Schmidlapp et al., *Style: Writing from the Underground: (R)Evolution of Aerosol Linguistics*.

²⁴⁰ Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art."; Wiese, *Graffiti Dortmund: Die Kunst Der Sachbeschädigung [Graffiti Dortmund: The Art of Damage to Property]*; Schluttenhafner et al., *Graffiti Art: Deutschland - Germany*; Overstreet, *In Graffiti We Trust*; Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*; Staffan Jacobson, "Den Spraymalade Bilden. Graffitimaleriet Som Bildform, Kontroselse Och Laroprocess." (PhD PhD. Thesis, Lund University, 1996); Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*; Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art; Writing in München 1983–1995: Graffiti Art #3*. Marianne Brentzel et al., *Da Kukse Wa: Dortmunder Graffiti* (Dortmund: Tapir, 1987); *Hamburgcitygraffiti*.

²⁴¹ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". Novak, "Western Influences in Southeast Asian Paintings: Comparison of a Balinese Ink Painting and of Two Malaysian Graffiti Artworks."

²⁴² Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". pp. 121; 182–183.

²⁴³ E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Phaidon Press, 1960; reprint, 1984). p. 9.

²⁴⁴ "Taki 183' Spawn Pen Pals."

PHASE2 invented and introduced the first influential styles and forms.²⁴⁵ LEE introduced graffiti art to Europe, through gallery exhibitions in Europe and then graffiti artists in Denmark, Sweden, Italy, Great Britain, France, Holland and Germany invented new graffiti art styles in their countries.²⁴⁶ This evolution of graffiti art continued on a global level and graffiti artists in different countries produced some unique styles and approaches to graffiti art.²⁴⁷ Graffiti artists often draw their inspiration from other graffiti artists, as they depend on the previously established artistic principals.

The inspiration, the idols, heroes of the graffiti artists are of importance, because they usually come from within the graffiti art culture itself. This was no different in Malaysia, where the Malaysian graffiti artist KIOUE named as his idols the internationally well-known graffiti artists from the MC'LAIM crew, BRUSK (born 1976) or Mirko Reisser (born 1971) aka DAIM. However, KIOUE also named his Malaysian friend and graffiti artist PHOBIA as his influence. PHOBIA in turn named the international graffiti artists from the 123KLAN crew, BRUSK and DARE (1968–2010) as his influences.²⁴⁸ In the graffiti art culture there is certainly also the inclination towards inherited behavioral roles and techniques employed. At the end of this section, I would like to quote Ernst Kris (1900–1957) in Gombrich's work as he stated that:

*We have long come to realize that art is not produced in an empty space, that no artist is independent of predecessors and models, that he no less than the scientist and the philosopher is part of a specific tradition and works in a structured area of problems.*²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*; Castleman, "'Getting Up': Subway Graffiti in New York"; Schmidlapp et al., *Style: Writing from the Underground: (R)Evolution of Aerosol Linguistics*; Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978"; Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

²⁴⁶ Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*; Schluttenhafner et al., *Graffiti Art: Deutschland - Germany*.

²⁴⁷ Dindaş, *Turkish Graffiti: Volume 1*; Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*; Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*; Teh, *Graffiti KL*; Walde, *Street Fonts: Graffiti Alphabets Form around the World*.

²⁴⁸ Osman et al., "Graffiti: Proses Penghasilan Karya Mural Aliran Baru [Graffiti: The Production Process of New Age Mural]". p. 37; 47.

²⁴⁹ Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. p. 23.

To summarize, graffiti art is dynamically developing, but mainly based on its own representational heritage, which is then secondarily transformed into new, innovative forms.

2.2.2 Structure of a Piece

A piece is the most complex graffiti art form.²⁵⁰ A piece is multicolored and represents the graffiti artist's name in the most attractive way possible, while following graffiti art's principles. A graffiti artist '*works within specific, aesthetic ground rules. In the first place, these serve to create the optimal presentation of one's own [tag] name.*'²⁵¹ A piece is generally, not always, accompanied, enhanced, with other forms of graffiti art as tags or characters (Figure 2.20). However, the piece is letterform oriented and as Gregory Snyder pointed out the importance of letterforms to graffiti artists, when he stated that '*Graffiti art is first and foremost about letter form[s].*'²⁵² Single letterform designs started developing already in the early 1970's, as discussed in section 2.2.1.1, on page 66.²⁵³ Since the 1970's, many different graffiti art styles²⁵⁴ and letterform designs established and became part of graffiti art's letterform canon.

The graffiti art form piece has a certain structure. Various scholars and authors referred to the piece and its structure with different terms as indicated in Table 2.1 below.

²⁵⁰ Phillips, Susan A. Graffiti. In: The Dictionary of Art. (13: Goodnough to Habsburg.) Edited by Jane Turner. New York: Grove, 1996. p. 270.

²⁵¹ Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*. p. 55.

²⁵² Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 108.

²⁵³ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 95.

²⁵⁴ For detailed style description see: Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art".

Table 2.1 Structure of a piece: elements and other parts of a piece by various scholars and authors.

<i>Author</i>	<i>Terminology used in connection with the structure of a 'piece'</i>
Stewart [PHASE2] ²⁵⁵	large scale, outline letters, and decoration within the outline letters
Jacobson ²⁵⁶	background in any form, a letter-picture (name), characters, title or titlebox, signature(s) and name of the crew
Snyder ²⁵⁷	complex letter construction, characters, designs
Gottlieb ²⁵⁸	word, background, character(s), dedication
Lundy ²⁵⁹	the central piece/word, shout outs, phrase, crew members, quotes, diss, dedication, [sometimes also] political commentary, character, copyright, play on acronym...[of a crew]
Novak ²⁶⁰	background, border, arrow extension of letter, letter extension, dedication tags, letter outlines, fill-in, connection between the letters and 3-D space
Schluttenhafner ²⁶¹	fill-in, fading, 3-D effect block, background, designs, outlines, style, 2nd Outline [border line]
Grody ²⁶²	arrow form, transparent overlap, bit, shine, cut, fill, outline, border, background, 3-D, letter blend

Based on Table 2.1, the composition of a piece can be simplified into the following two main categories:

- (I) Central letterform-composition.
- (II) The background around the letterform-composition.

All visual elements around the central letterforms, representing the subject matter of a piece, are optional. The indicator dashed line in Figure 2.20 highlights these central letterforms. Everything outside of the dashed, highlighted area in Figure 2.20 is optional – background, character and the other elements of a piece.

²⁵⁵ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 62.

²⁵⁶ Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art." p. 112-113 (Piece).

²⁵⁷ Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 34.

²⁵⁸ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p. 261.

²⁵⁹ Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers". pp. 17-18.

²⁶⁰ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". p. 70.

²⁶¹ Schluttenhafner et al., *Graffiti Art: Deutschland - Germany*. pp.102-103.

²⁶² Grody, *Graffiti L.A.: Street Styles and Art*.

Graffiti artists also paint, besides letterforms, characters. Characters were added to pieces by the early graffiti artists in the 1970's, in order to make the strictly name oriented works visually more attractive.²⁶³ Pieces – and added characters – are then often surrounded, unified by a background design. In the piece, or in the surrounding background, are eventually accommodated elements such as the signature of the author – a tag, dedications to friends or to other graffiti artists, monograms of the graffiti art group the graffiti artist belongs to, the year of production and other statements, if applicable.²⁶⁴ In the 1970's the letterforms representing a piece were very quickly enhanced with illusionistic effects indicating depth of space,²⁶⁵ as with the block 3-D²⁶⁶ (Figure 2.8 on page 73), the cast shadow effect²⁶⁷ (Figure 2.10 on page 74) or with an overall dimensional 3-D style²⁶⁸. With the growing competition amongst graffiti artists, with regards to letterform designs, other design elements also started developing in the 1970's, as *'details and design elements – such as carefully drawn drips, bubbles/dots, stars, [and] geometric shapes.'*²⁶⁹ These design elements represent the fill-in within the plains inside the letterforms (see for example Figure 2.6 and its diagram in Figure 2.8 on page 73). In addition to central letterforms in a piece, the background 'cloud' also developed in the early years of graffiti in New York City.²⁷⁰ The background cloud developed as a sort of cover-up for underlying graffiti art works. The design of the first original background clouds was probably derived from comic books iconography. Today backgrounds represent graphical designs around the piece and sometimes really elaborate illusionistic sceneries.

²⁶³ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*, pp. 70-71.

²⁶⁴ Lundy adds, that there are sometimes also political commentaries, lists of other crew members, quotes, disses and shout outs. Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers". p.18.

²⁶⁵ Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005". p. 38.

²⁶⁶ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*, pp. 119-120.

²⁶⁷ Ibid. pp. 186-189.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. pp 120-124.

²⁶⁹ Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005". p. 38.

²⁷⁰ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*, p. 96-97.

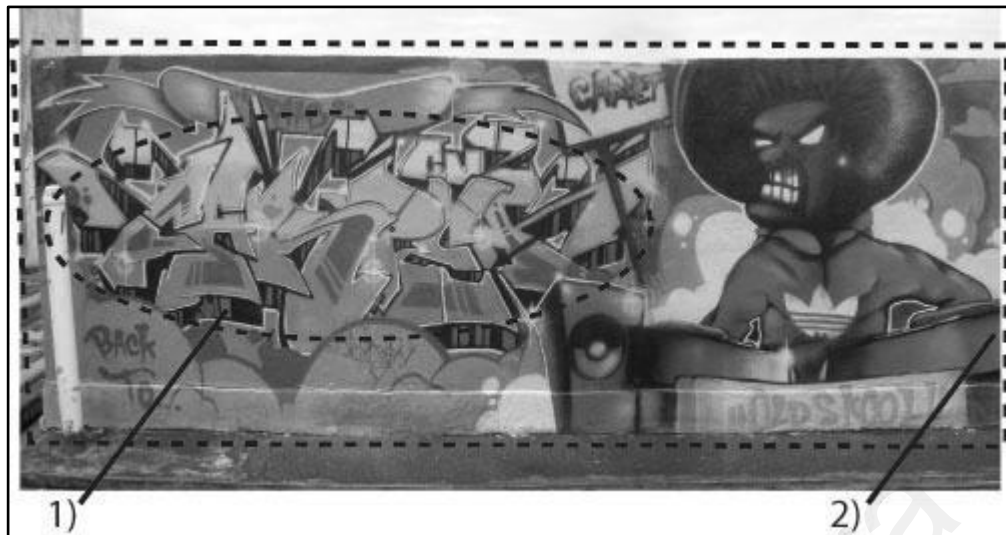


Figure 2.20 Structure of a piece: 1) Letterforms and its elements; 2) Optional elements.
Original photo: 07. September 2008. Undisclosed location, GKL.

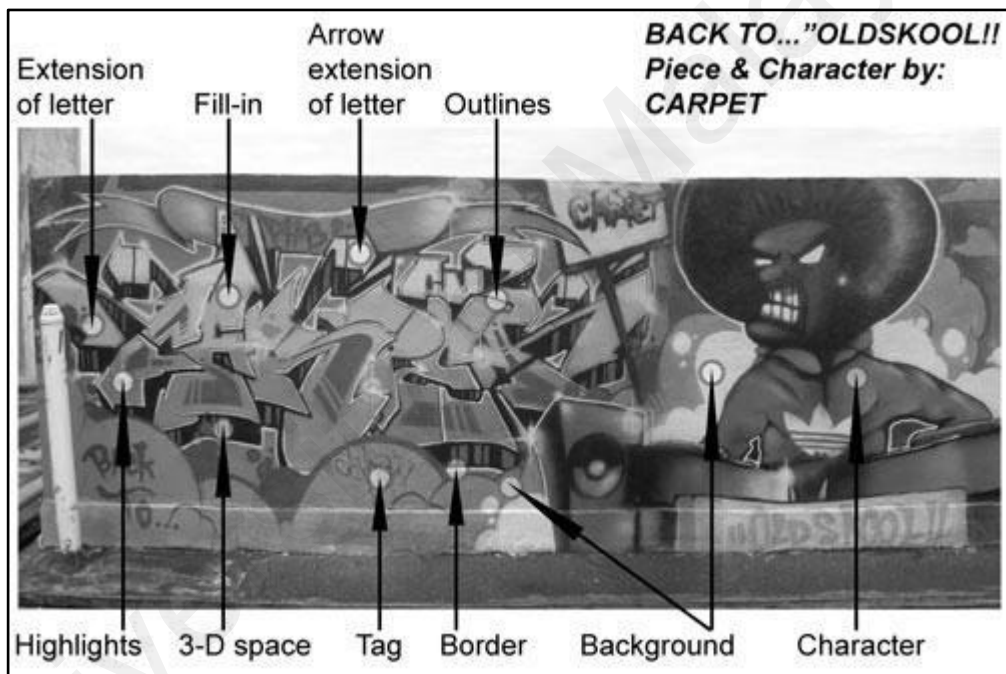


Figure 2.21 Some elements enhancing and expanding the piece and its structure.
Original photo: 07. September 2008. Undisclosed location, GKL.

2.2.2.1 Style

Style is the resemblance of certain, repeated visual elements and rules in a larger sample of paintings. These characteristic visual elements must be seen and recognized by many people so that they form proprietary 'style group'.²⁷¹ In this sense, Gottlieb developed a graffiti art style classification system '*designed to enable non-experts to*

²⁷¹ Munsterberg, "Writing About Art." (no page numbering: Stylistic Analysis)

*identify the style of a graffiti art piece by distinguishing certain visual characteristics’.*²⁷²

To identify a graffiti art style in pieces, it is necessary to analyze the elements and letterform shapes in a piece. The visual characteristics contained in the studied graffiti art work are examined and some unique features are determined – as a high occurrence of arrows would indicate that the observer sees, most probably, but not necessarily, a piece in ‘wildstyle’. To identify a unique style group, one has to search for the same unique visual elements, same visual characteristics in a wider range of graffiti art works. If the visual characteristics ‘*are strong enough to set a group of objects apart from others, they can be said to define a “style.”*’²⁷³ It can be said, that certain style groups can be also produced in the manner of a ‘school’ following the style of a certain person.²⁷⁴ This is quite common in Malaysia, amongst graffiti artists from the PW crew, where members of the PW crew follow NENOK’s/ NUKE’s style. The PW ‘school’ has focused lately on European styles, with legible letterforms. Also individual graffiti art styles, distinctive for a graffiti artist, are very important within the graffiti art culture. Graffiti artists strongly desire to achieve an individual graffiti art style, which will easily reveal the author of a particular graffiti art work, just by looking at it. In addition, the graffiti art researcher and art historian Staffan Jacobson attributed in his *International Dictionary of Aerosol Art* ‘individual style’ to the general entry *Style*.²⁷⁵ An individual graffiti art style was highlighted in my previous work, with the example of the Malaysian graffiti artist PHOBIA.²⁷⁶ Personal and period styles can be distinguished by their production time. This can be well observed in the development of

²⁷² Gottlieb, *Graffiti Art Styles: A Classification System and Theoretical Analysis*. p. 6.

²⁷³ Munsterberg, "Writing About Art." (no page numbering: Formal, Stylistic, Personal Analysis; Period Style)

²⁷⁴ Ibid. (no page numbering: Formal, Stylistic, Personal Analysis; Period Style)

²⁷⁵ Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art." p. 134.

²⁷⁶ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". p. 160; 199.

pieces by Mohd Iskandar Firdaus Ismail (born 1984) aka SIEK, CARPET (born 1986), KIOUE and NUKE (born 1985), on pages 622-632. The best examples of a style are in its mature – classic – period compared to a style's early or late period.

The library scientist Lisa Gottlieb researched the possibility of the classification of graffiti art styles. Gottlieb developed a classification system with 13 facets to distinguish 14 graffiti art styles.²⁷⁷ These 14 graffiti art styles (see Justification, p. 27) were identified by graffiti art experts '*who possessed knowledge of graffiti art styles and the aesthetic components that define these styles.*'²⁷⁸ These 13 documented '*facets are visual components of graffiti art [pieces]*.'²⁷⁹ Facets have their own characteristics and they are represented in this classification system by 41 foci, which are distributed among these 13 facets.²⁸⁰ The 14 identified graffiti art styles are based on the expertise of US American graffiti art experts as is clear from Gottlieb's sample selection.²⁸¹ Interestingly, the 14 styles also include four non-American styles: the *CTK* (Crime Time Kings) style originating in Europe²⁸², the Brazilian tag derived lettering *Pichador* (Pichação) style²⁸³, the *Swedish Train* style²⁸⁴ and the *Dortmund* style, named after the German city of Dortmund²⁸⁵. However, in relation to this present study, about graffiti art from the area of Greater Kuala Lumpur, not all of the previously mentioned 14

²⁷⁷ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". pp. 267-279.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 37.

²⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 41.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 284.

²⁸¹ Ibid. p. 39.

²⁸² Ibid. p. 247. For examples of some graffiti art works of the CTK crew see: Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*. pp. 70-77.

²⁸³ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". pp. 247. On further information about graffiti art from Brazil see besides others the film documentary: Reiss, "Bomb It."

²⁸⁴ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p. 249. Swedish graffiti art was studied in detail by: Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art."; Staffan Jacobsons, "Aerosol Art Archives: Spraykonst Arkivet."; Jacobson, "Den Spraymalade Bilden. Graffitimaleriet Som Bildform, Kontroselse Och Laroprocess."

²⁸⁵ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p. 252. On Dortmund graffiti art see: Wiese, *Graffiti Dortmund: Die Kunst Der Sachbeschädigung [Graffiti Dortmund: The Art of Damage to Property]*; Schluttenhafner et al., *Graffiti Art: Deutschland - Germany*; Brentzel et al., *Da Kukse Wa: Dortmunder Graffiti*.

graffiti art styles can be found in Malaysian graffiti art works. This is due in part to the personal preferences of the local, Malaysian graffiti artists and due in part to the Malaysian cultural settings, which are unique. To quote Gombrich: *'The psychology of representation alone cannot solve the riddle of style. There are the unexplored pressures of fashions and the mysteries of taste.'*²⁸⁶ In the area of Greater Kuala Lumpur, as is the case elsewhere, local graffiti artists established their own taste and therefore Malaysian graffiti artists create pieces in styles they personally perceive as appealing. The same applies to Turkey, or especially to the Czech Republic, where graffiti artists use very different styles to create pieces.

In the subsequent sections I would like to highlight another, more abstract, facet of graffiti art works, represented in the non-letterforms oriented content of graffiti art works.

2.3 Content

The subject matter of graffiti art works are mainly the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet. Nevertheless, some graffiti art works contain other subject matter besides stylized Latin letterforms, as other underlying meanings or themes expressed mainly through characters.

The scholars Jack Stewart, Lisa Gottlieb and Susan Alice Lundy studied the iconography of graffiti art works.²⁸⁷ Stewart researched the first development stages of all four graffiti art forms – tag, piece, throw-up, character – on the New York City subway trains of the 1970's. His work from the historical perspective is probably the most important work on graffiti art ever written. A specialist of the Archives of

²⁸⁶ Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. p. 23.

²⁸⁷ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*; Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978"; Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers"; Gottlieb, *Graffiti Art Styles: A Classification System and Theoretical Analysis*; Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art".

American Art, Charles H. Duncan, highlighted in the article *Graffiti's Vasari: Jack Stewart and Mass Transit Art* Stewart's the contribution of Jack Stewart to the graffiti art research.²⁸⁸ Stewart documented and analyzed in all detail the development stages of the evolving graffiti art forms. Gottlieb developed a refined classification system for 14 graffiti art styles. Her work is important, because it partly shows graffiti art's richness of styles. All the 14 styles are bound to an iconographical tradition. I see one of the limitations of Gottlieb's study is in the territorial limitations caused by her choice of informants, which were confined to North America. Nevertheless, this does not change the utmost importance of Gottlieb's excellent research. Lundy's work contributed to the understanding of politically and culturally oriented graffiti art works produced by graffiti artists in Oakland, USA. Her work is a unique examination of cultural and political content of selected graffiti art works.

Three interesting popular books on the content of graffiti art works are *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*, *Street Fonts: Graffiti Alphabets Form around the World* and *Mascots & Mugs: The Characters and Cartoons of Subway Graffiti*.²⁸⁹ The first of these three books generously introduces the reader to tags, throw-ups and pieces. The book is a great visual guide to the world of letterforms and styles. European graffiti art celebrities, from Berlin, such as PHOS4, ZASD, TAGNOE, AKIM, TRY ONE (See Figure 2.13, p. 75) and many others direct the reader's attention to graffiti art letterforms. The second book is strictly speaking an introduction to graffiti art letterforms. This publication contains full Latin alphabet sets by over 150 graffiti artists including some of the participants of this present study, Didier Mathieu (born 1974) aka JABA or Andrea Sergio (born 1978) aka MR.WANY. The book *Mascots & Mugs* is

²⁸⁸ Charles H. Duncan, "Graffiti's Vasari: Jack Stewart and Mass Transit Art," *Archives of American Art Journal* 49 no. 3-4 (2010).

²⁸⁹ Villorente et al., *Mascots & Mugs: The Characters and Cartoons of Subway Graffiti*; Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*. Walde, *Street Fonts: Graffiti Alphabets Form around the World*.

dedicated to the historical development of characters on the New Yorker subway trains, but also includes characters produced on walls, canvases and on paper. The book traces back through the history of characters. The authors interviewed various graffiti artists and examined their influences on their representations of certain characters.

In addition to these three books, the publishing house Thames & Hudson printed on 21 October 2013 a new book titled *Graffiti School: Student Guide* by the German graffiti artist Chris Ganter aka JEROO.²⁹⁰ This publication is outstanding and adds very good visual and theoretical information to this present thesis. It is the first really well done ‘teaching’ book on graffiti art,²⁹¹ a must have textbook for all educators, who would like to introduce graffiti art into the school or university curriculum.

2.3.1 Themes and Motifs in Graffiti Art Works

As was highlighted on the preceding pages of this study, graffiti art is especially connected to New York City of the 1970’s, where the forms tag, [master]piece, character and throw-up chronologically evolved on the sides of subway trains. Graffiti art was never specially close to political ideology – until today. Jack Stewart noted that politics ‘*and current events rarely touched*’ the works of graffiti artists.²⁹² However, Stewart further notes that ‘*movies, TV shows, magazines, and comic books*’ had some impact on the early graffiti artists.²⁹³ Later in the 1970’s, comic books and comic newspaper strips had a bigger impact on the graffiti art works and on the graffiti art culture, as graffiti artists such as CLIFF159 started painting images of popular culturale icons such as Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Dick Tracy, Blondie or Beetle Bailey on the sides

²⁹⁰ Ganter, *Graffiti School: Student Guide*.

²⁹¹ For one of several other bad examples see the publication: John Lee, *Street Scene: How to Draw Graffiti-Style* (Cincinnati: Impact Books, 2007).

²⁹² Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p.140.

²⁹³ Ibid. p.140.

of subway trains.²⁹⁴ The influence of comic books on the early graffiti art works was introduced in detail in the popular book *Mascots & Mugs*.²⁹⁵ Comic books and cartoon influences remained associated with the graffiti art culture in the subsequent years of the 1980's, as can be observed in the books *Subway Art* (1984) and *Spraycan Art* (1987).²⁹⁶ Another great collection of modern graffiti art works also showing different themes and motifs of graffiti art works is the publication *Graffiti World* (2004).²⁹⁷

Lundy categorized graffiti art works, in Chapter 5 of her PhD study *Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers*, into 'two themes: commemorative holidays and political statements'.²⁹⁸ Lundy stated about these works that: 'They were created to educate, protest, release stress, challenge mainstream concepts of private property, and connect with a higher power.'²⁹⁹ Lundy reported the presence of critical, anti-mainstream themes in the examined graffiti art works. The participants in Lundy's study reacted, amongst others, very critically to the American commemorative holiday of 'Thanksgiving'. The graffiti artist KUFU and REFA painted on Thanksgiving in the year 2006 a graffiti art work featuring an 'Indian in Native-style clothing' and the work as a whole was critical to 'the idea that this date [of Thanksgiving] should be celebrated as a national holiday.'³⁰⁰ Lundy highlighted in Chapter 6 the reflections of cultural identity of her participants, which shed light on the various themes discussed in her study.³⁰¹

Another researcher studying graffiti art works reported a summary of some motifs contained in graffiti art works. The Swedish art historian and graffiti art researcher

²⁹⁴ Ibid. p.154.

²⁹⁵ Villorente et al., *Mascots & Mugs: The Characters and Cartoons of Subway Graffiti*.

²⁹⁶ Cooper et al., *Subway Art*; Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*.

²⁹⁷ Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*.

²⁹⁸ Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers". p. 222.

²⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 222.

³⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 227.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

Staffan Jacobson summarized 14 motifs in graffiti art works – pieces – as presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Motifs of graffiti art works according to Staffan Jacobson.

<i>“Motifs in piecing” according to the art historian Staffan Jacobson³⁰²</i>	
<i>1. Letters</i>	<i>8[a]. Monsters, fairy-tale animals and supernatural beings</i>
<i>2. Numbers</i>	<i>8[b]. Plants</i>
<i>3. Symbols and ideograms</i>	<i>9. Organic and non-organic natural objects and Artifacts</i>
<i>4. Human figures</i>	<i>10. Cloth- and fashion details</i>
<i>5. Anthropomorphic animals</i>	<i>11. Anthropomorphic machines</i>
<i>6. Other anthropomorphic beings and objects</i>	<i>12. Space- and environment shaping</i>
<i>7. Animals, mostly wild and dangerous</i>	<i>13. Graphic elements from the iconography of comics</i>

In summary it can be stated that the themes and motifs contained in graffiti art works were not intensively studied. However, one very significant research was conducted by Susan A. Lundy in 2008. Nonetheless, no other study was undertaken in this area. In the subsequent subsections, I highlight some interesting and recurring themes and motifs in graffiti art works.

2.3.1.1 Passivity and No Politics in Graffiti Art

Graffiti artists generally avoid political statements and political motifs in their works, as graffiti artists are often rather apathetic to politics. There are some hints in literature indicating that graffiti art since its beginnings, in the late 1960's, is a pacifistic and apolitical youth culture trend. From the historical perspective, graffiti art evolved in the late 1960's and in the 1970's as a non-violent, alternative youth culture to inner city gang violence of Philadelphia and New York City.³⁰³ Ronald Kramer briefly discussed in his recent PhD dissertation *A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City*,

³⁰² Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art." p. 104 (Motifs in piecing).

³⁰³ Graffiti art was represented as an alternative to gang violence by: Craig Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*; Emily Currier, "The Writing on the Wall." Philadelphia Citypaper, June 08, 2010, <http://archives.citypaper.net/articles/2010/06/10/darryl-cornbread-mccray-graffiti>; Ley and Cybriwsky, "Urban Graffiti as Territorial Markers"; Stewart "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978."

1990-2005 the still present and relatively common rejection of violence among graffiti artists in New York City.³⁰⁴ In their recent ethnographic research from southern Mexico City, *Participation in the Figured World of Graffiti*, Imuris Valle & Eduardo Weiss also pointed out that ‘*Fighting with symbols and words instead of fists or knives connotes a group attitude that is different from gangs.*’³⁰⁵ Further, it is worth mentioning that in the year 2012 one of the largest global professional graffiti art spray paint producers, Montana Colors,³⁰⁶ introduced a new spray paint product – *MNT T.N.T.* The company provided along with the product a manifesto against war, *Can You Imagine the Day When All Bombs Are Made of Paint?*, stating that the company is giving ‘*a donation of 7% of this product to humanitarian and environmental causes.*’³⁰⁷ The aim of the first part of this section was to suggest that graffiti art is more of a pacifist than a militant movement, even though the official authorities’ rhetoric often uses the phrase ‘*War on Graffiti*’³⁰⁸ and labels graffiti artists as terrorists.

As was highlighted previously, graffiti art works communicate, in the majority of cases, only one message – the identity of a graffiti artist.³⁰⁹ Therefore graffiti artists since the early 1970’s were more concerned with letterform compositions of their tag names than with any political subject matter.³¹⁰ According to Jack Stewart ‘*[P]olitics and current events rarely touched*’ the works of graffiti artists in the 1970’s.³¹¹ Susan Alice Lundy conducted research in the political side of graffiti art works. Lundy noted that in preceding graffiti art researches ‘*the politicized side of*’ graffiti art was

³⁰⁴ Ronald Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005," 158-161.

³⁰⁵ Imuris Valle, and Eduardo Weiss. "Participation in the Figured World of Graffiti," 132.

³⁰⁶ "Montana Colors", <http://www.montanacolors.com/webapp/>.

³⁰⁷ Information obtained from website: "Can You Imagine the Day When All Bombs Are Made of Paint?," Montana Colors, accessed February 11, 2014, <http://www.montanacolors.com/tnt/en#manifesto>.

³⁰⁸ Kurt Iveson, "The Wars on Graffiti and the New Military Urbanism."

³⁰⁹ Lisa Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art," 31.

³¹⁰ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 140.

neglected.³¹² However, Lundy also noted in her dissertation, while justifying her small sample selection (8 participants), that she did not include into her research sample graffiti artists ‘*who made no dedicated social, political, or cultural connections to their work.*’³¹³ Based on my own long term research of graffiti art I would like to add that the majority of graffiti artists’ avoid political statements in their graffiti art works.

2.3.1.2 National Flags

A quite typical motif used in graffiti art works from the USA is the American National flag. Craig Castleman, Jack Stewart and Joe Austin reported in their research the ‘*Freedom Train*’ production, which was painted by CAINE, MAD103 and FLAME ONE on the Independence Day of 4 July 1976. This theme was painted on the exterior sides of 11 subway train car carriages.³¹⁴ The *Freedom Train* featured, besides others, different versions of the American flag, but it contained also a Puerto Rican flag. This collaborative work was never publicly seen, because of the New York City authorities’ actions, as the MTA buffed the train before it could ever leave the train yard. Austin reported that:

*There are no known photographs..., although it has been reported that the Transit Police photographed it before it was destroyed. Those photographs, if they exist, have never been made available to the public.*³¹⁵

In addition, Stewart discussed the *Freedom Train* based on Castleman’s published PhD dissertation,³¹⁶ and mentions that: ‘*So far as is known there were no pictures taken of it as a complete decorated train.*’³¹⁷

³¹² Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers," 28.

³¹³ Ibid., 49.

³¹⁴ Castleman, "'Getting Up': Subway Graffiti in New York". pp. 42; 44-45; 441; Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*. pp. 1-2; Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978". p. 470. Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*. p. 36.

³¹⁵ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*. p. 2.

³¹⁶ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*.

³¹⁷ Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978". p. 470.

However, I discovered at least three photographs (three carriages of the eleven) of 'The Freedom Train' in Castleman's original PhD dissertation, depicting three cars, each painted by one of the three authors of the work.³¹⁸

Other early graffiti art works from New York City, including the US American flag, are the works by PASSION, featuring a skull wearing an American flag hat³¹⁹ or the CAINE1 memorial train titled 'FREE FOR ETERNITY'³²⁰. The Puerto Rican flag was also mentioned by Stewart in the context of the early graffiti artist MICO, who often incorporated the Puerto Rican flag into his works.³²¹ In Malaysia, a news article from 2005 reports a story about the graffiti art crew PHOBIA KLIK (PHB KLIK), which painted together with other graffiti artists a graffiti art production dedicated to the *Malaysian Independence Day* and featured the Malaysian flag (*Jalur Gemilang* [*Stripes of Glory*]).³²² In the popular book *Turkish Graffiti* we see reflections of Turkish nationalism and identity in the form of a Turkish flag and of the crescent and star which are strong national symbols of Turkey and the Turkish identity.³²³ In the Philippines, the graffiti artist FLIP1 (born 1978) painted a graffiti art work titled *Philippines Independence Day* featuring the Philippines national flag.³²⁴ All the above listed examples under score the individual graffiti artists' awareness of national and cultural identity acquired during their lives in different countries.

2.3.1.3 Christmas

Christmas, based on the Western cultural heritage, is a theme, which has since the early historical days of graffiti art occurred many times in graffiti art works. One of the

³¹⁸ Castleman, "'Getting Up': Subway Graffiti in New York". p. 45. Jack Stewart probably knew about these photographs, as he refers to the complete train. However, I am still reporting my discovery as it might be of interest to some other researchers.

³¹⁹ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*. p. 34.

³²⁰ Cooper et al., *Subway Art*. p. 3.

³²¹ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. pp. 140-141.

³²² Oleh Riadz Radzi, "Contengan Kreatif," *Berita Utama*, 31. August 2005a.

³²³ Dindaş, *Turkish Graffiti: Volume 1*. Turkish Flag: p. 64; Star & Moon: p. 77.

³²⁴ Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*. p. 69.

most often discussed graffiti art works, linked to Christmas, was *The Christmas Train*, which was painted by LEE, MONO I., SLUG I. and DOC109 in New York City in December 1977.³²⁵ ‘*The ten-car train was dubbed “The Christmas Train” and featured a two-car holiday scene that contained reindeer, Santa Claus, a snowman, falling snowflakes and the words “Merry Christmas to New York.”*’³²⁶

Further, in 1977 the graffiti artists Michael Martin (1958–2009) aka IZ THE WIZ and MONO produced huge graffiti art works referring to Merry Christmas.³²⁷ There were many other graffiti art works painted with reference to Christmas on the New York City trains, like BLADE’s ‘*Merry Christmas To All You Writers.*’³²⁸ Another example can be seen on the first page in the book *Subway Art*. It reads ‘*MERRY CHRISTMAS*’ and was painted in 1980 by LYNDAAH and P JAY on the whole side of a subway car (car no. 7752). It also features the figure of the Smurfette Smurf, scenery with snow and a Christmas tree.³²⁹ Another example of a Christmas inspired graffiti art work would be the ‘*HAPPY HOLIDAY*’ train by (SEEN aka) RICHIE and JASON painted in 1982. This particular work features a Santa Claus with his sack, snow and the blue sky as a background.³³⁰ All the examples listed above, of graffiti art works celebrating Christmas relate to the Western culture. It will be demonstrated later, that the cultural heritage in Greater Kuala Lumpur is based on different values, and that graffiti art works dedicated to local, Muslim, commemorative holidays are common (see page 326).

³²⁵ Castleman, “‘Getting Up’: Subway Graffiti in New York”. pp. 44; 434-441; Stewart, “Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978”. pp. 470-477. Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. pp.182-183. Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*. pp. 2-16; 36; 40.

³²⁶ Castleman, “‘Getting Up’: Subway Graffiti in New York”. p. 44. For the photograph see: Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p.182-183.

³²⁷ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. pp. 186-187.

³²⁸ Castleman, “‘Getting Up’: Subway Graffiti in New York”. p. 53: Figure 26.

³²⁹ Cooper et al., *Subway Art*. p. 1.

³³⁰ Ibid. p. 98-99.

2.3.1.4 Urban Landscapes

Many graffiti art works contain references to urban landscapes. The graffiti art works logically then depict skylines, buildings, streets or other urban landscape related imagery.

The graffiti artist MIDG depicted in 1983 his tag name MIDG on a background scenery featuring the World Trade Center on the New York City skyline, on the left side of the work, while the right side featured a classical landscape genre with a tree.³³¹ One year earlier SKEME (born 1964) and PHASE2 also painted a city related graffiti art work depicting the lettering 'TUFF CITY' as subject matter and a gangster on an expressive background formed by three skyscrapers.³³² A very good example of an urban landscape is the 'SKY'S THE LIMIT' graffiti art work produced by William Cordero (born 1964) aka BILL BLAST in 1982 featuring, among others, the New York City landmarks Statue of Liberty, the World Trade Centre towers and the Manhattan Bridge.³³³ Further, the Czech, Prague based graffiti artist Jan Kaláb (born 1978) aka POINT [CAKES] depicted Prague's famous Charles Bridge (Figure 3.63, p. 175), as represented in the book *Graffiti World*.³³⁴ In another graffiti art work from the Czech Republic, in the popular book *In Graffiti We Trust*, we see an expressive landscape skyline produced in 1993 by the graffiti artist RICH, from the CSA crew.³³⁵ Another expressive city landscape also produced by the CSA crew³³⁶ represents probably an expressive version of the church of Saint Anthony of Padua [Kostel sv. Antonína z

³³¹ Ibid. pp. 12-13.

³³² See page 316 for an interesting remark about the representation of violence in graffiti art works by the New York City graffiti artist Julius Caverio (born 1961) aka T-KID, who was very active in the late 1970s and 1980s

³³³ Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*. pp. 20-21.

³³⁴ Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*. p. 320.

³³⁵ Overstreet, *In Graffiti We Trust*. p. 14.

³³⁶ This work might have been produced by the graffiti artist MUST.

Padovy], which is situated on the east side of the Strossmayerovo Square,³³⁷ in Prague.³³⁸ Contrary to a church depicted in a graffiti art work from the Czech Republic, in the book *Turkish Graffiti*, it is possible to find graffiti art works featuring the architectonical Ottoman mosques style,³³⁹ which is typical for Turkey.³⁴⁰

To sum up, graffiti artists often express their close connection to the urban landscape through their works and in doing so, they usually refer to their known cultural and urban environment.

2.3.1.5 The Spray Paint Can/Nozzle and the Graffiti Artist

Probably the most prolific graffiti art motif, often occurring in graffiti art works, is the motif of the spray paint can, the spray paint nozzle and of the graffiti artist. These motifs are repeated in graffiti art on quite a constant basis.³⁴¹ As Jacobson stated: '*[T]he all time symbol in ...[graffiti art]... is of course the spray can itself.*'³⁴² The representation of the spray paint can has often anthropomorphic features.³⁴³ In relation to this anthropomorphic, '*living spray can*', the popular authors Villorente and James noted that: '*This type of logo or mascot was often used in American advertising to humanize a product, and was a fun way of making inanimate objects more familiar to the public.*'³⁴⁴ There is an abundance of examples of motifs of a spray can, caps and a graffiti artist.³⁴⁵ A famous graffiti art work representing a graffiti artist, could be

³³⁷ Strossmayerovo náměstí <http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strossmayerovo_n%C3%A1m%C4%Bst%C3%AD> Accessed: 27. February 2013.

³³⁸ Overstreet, *In Graffiti We Trust*. p. 29.

³³⁹ Amjad Bohumil Prochazka, *Mosques*, vol. 2a, Architecture of the Islamic Cultural Sphere (Zürich: MARP, 1986). p. 5; 105-108; *Islam - Art and Architecture*, ed. Markus Hattstein and Peter Delius (Königswinter: Könemann, 2004). p. 544-565.

³⁴⁰ Dindaş, *Turkish Graffiti: Volume 1*. See Ottoman Mosques: pp. 22, 27, 44, 66, 77.

³⁴¹ Ferrell, *Styles of Crime: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality*. See Figure 3-4. (Between pp. 100-101.); Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*. p. 90; Mirko "DAIM" Reisser, *Daim: Daring to Push the Boundaries*, Second ed. (Mainaschaff: Publikat, 2004; reprint, 2006). p. 64-65.

³⁴² Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art." p. 138 (Symbols in TTP).

³⁴³ Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*. See the work by SHADOW: p. 51.

³⁴⁴ Villorente et al., *Mascots & Mugs: The Characters and Cartoons of Subway Graffiti*. p. 29.

³⁴⁵ Dindaş, *Turkish Graffiti: Volume 1*. For the spray paint and cap see: pp. 9, 36, 38, 45, 50, 51, 57, 62; Paint Roller: p. 9, 32, 54; Graffiti Artists: pp. 10, 11, 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, 43, 46, 47, 55, 62-66, 77, 79. Schluttenhafner et al., *Graffiti Art: Deutschland -*

considered the work by MODE2 (born 1967), which is on the cover of the book *Spraycan Art* (Figure 2.22).³⁴⁶ On another book cover of the book *Ma'claim* we see a graffiti art work by TASSO (born 1966). In this particular graffiti art work we see a hand using a spray paint can.³⁴⁷ The list is long, but I would like to highlight at least Chris Pape (born 1960) aka FREEDOM, who in 1982 produced a 'Self-portrait' spray paint can clad in a jacket; this work has a strong expressive energy.³⁴⁸ FREEDOM's spray paint can is a little bit similar to the graffiti art by KATUN, which is depicted in Figure 1.16 (page 26). An interesting graffiti art work, from 1996, was produced by the graffiti artist SPLESH [POINT/CAKES] from Prague. The work is a representation of a fleeing graffiti artist, who is being chased, after painting graffiti art on train exteriors. In the background of this particular work is the skyline of the city of Prague.³⁴⁹ On an abstract level, these works highlight the risks of the graffiti artists painting on the sides of trains.

Motifs of the spray paint can and of the spray paint cap (nozzle) are almost as often present, as motifs representing graffiti artists. These motifs are probably the most recurring and present motifs in graffiti art works. This common motif is easily explained, as the main media for the production of graffiti art is the spray paint can and its cap. The graffiti artists also like to depict themselves as 'graffiti artists', to express their identity as graffiti artists.

Germany. For the spray paint and cap see: pp. 88, 94, 97, 116, 141; Graffiti Artists: pp. 1, 2, 38, 39, 67, 71, 75, 78, 80, 84, 90, 91, 94; 96, 102, 103, 123, 138, 139.

³⁴⁶ Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*. (for the same work see also pp. 73-74)

³⁴⁷ Falk Lehmann et al., *Ma'claim: Finest Photorealistic Graffiti* (Mainaschaff: Publikat, 2006).

³⁴⁸ Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*. p. 13.

³⁴⁹ Overstreet, *In Graffiti We Trust*. p. 83.



Figure 2.22 Cover photo of the book *Spraycan Art* representing a graffiti artist by MODE2.

Source: https://567king.com/media/catalog/product/cache/1/image/9df78eab33525d08d6e5fb8d27136e95/s/p/spraycan_art.jpg.

2.3.1.6 Dark Themes: Skulls, Bones, Skeletons, Monsters etc.

As early as the 1970's, 'devils, demons, and skulls' had already been represented in various graffiti art works.³⁵⁰ See for example the early, dominant graffiti art work titled 'WELCOME TO HELL', which was produced on the side of a New York City subway train by CAINE. The work features a skeleton, which is radiating mystical powers.³⁵¹ Also in Jeff Ferrell's study *Crimes of Style* we see a photograph of VOODOO's graffiti art work featuring a skull.³⁵² For a realistic rendering of a devil holding in his left hand Neptune's trident weapon see the photograph in 'PLATE 14' in Austin's study *Taking the Train*.³⁵³ Another devil, this time in cartoon style, was painted by the Korean graffiti artist ARTIME JOE. This devil is represented in the book

³⁵⁰ Villorente et al., *Mascots & Mugs: The Characters and Cartoons of Subway Graffiti*. p. 47.

³⁵¹ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*. p. 39.

³⁵² Ferrell, *Styles of Crime: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality*. See Figure 24. (Between pp. 100-101.)

³⁵³ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*.

Graffiti Asia, while swinging a spray paint can.³⁵⁴ For a further representation of a skull see for example the work by the Thai graffiti artist POYD, who produced a graffiti art work with a human face with a wide open mouth, which devours a skull, but at the same time the skin of the human face is removed from the skull underneath.³⁵⁵ For a work representing a monstrous *Incredible Hulk* by the Malaysian graffiti artist KATUN see also the book *Graffiti Asia*.³⁵⁶

The inclination of graffiti artists to dark themes/motifs can also be seen on the title page of the popular book *Writing in München 1983-1995*, which is featuring a graffiti art work painted in 1988 by the German graffiti artist WON (born 1967), showing an army of skeletons and other monsters.³⁵⁷

These dark themes/motifs represent the graffiti art culture well, as graffiti artists were often in history labeled as outlaws and such motifs as skulls, bones and monsters are strongly associated with outlaws.

2.3.2 Malaysian News Articles Reporting on Content of Graffiti Art

Journalistic news articles provide for the current research additional data along scholarly works. News article are useful to illustrate the approach of Malaysian journalists towards this neglected art form and to highlight the public perception of this art form in Malaysia.

The meaning of graffiti art and content has many times been a topic in Malaysian news. The largest Malaysian newspaper *The Star*, publishing its periodical in the English language, has published over the years dozens of articles, which have reported on topics relating to graffiti art. Journalists have on many occasions formally described

³⁵⁴ Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*, p. 43.

³⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 91.

³⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 95.

³⁵⁷ *Writing in München 1983-1995: Graffiti Art #3*.

graffiti art works, as a part of their reports. Grace Chen reported in 2008 on THA-B's 'life-size depiction of [the] Transformer character 'Optimus Prime' ' in a graffiti art work and also on the representation of 'Kuala Lumpur's skyline and the LRT [train] system', which were produced in the city center of Kuala Lumpur (Figure 2.23-Figure 2.24).³⁵⁸

On another occasion, Yam Phui Yee reported on the 'Selamat Hari Raya' graffiti art work produced in the Central Market area of Kuala Lumpur (Figure 2.25), which featured a graffiti art work produced in relation to the local commemorative Muslim holiday taking place at the end of the fasting month of *Ramadhan*. The graffiti art work was celebrating the festival of *Hari Raya*.³⁵⁹

Yee also reported on the late graffiti artist Champ Teh (1985–2010) aka JENG, who reflected everyday life in Malaysia in his painting of *burger stalls* and on his portrayal of the late Malaysian film director Yasmin Ahmad (1958–2009).³⁶⁰

Further, in 2012 Chen reported again on graffiti art from the Central Market area. This time, Chen did not focus much on the graffiti art works, but yet again Chen mentioned an art work – 'Muslim Biker Girl' – actually created by a muralist 'Sarah Joan Mokhtar, 28, an illustrator and mother of two...' (Figure 2.26).³⁶¹

Malaysian graffiti artists were quite often invited to create commissioned graffiti art works for particular events or they were invited to compete in graffiti art competitions (see Table 2.3). The graffiti artists were then given a certain theme or motif, as for example to create graffiti art works on the theme of *Green Kuala Lumpur* during the Kulsign Festival 2010 (Figure 2.27).³⁶² The reporter Anu Venugopal

³⁵⁸ Chen, "There's Beauty in Graffiti."

³⁵⁹ Yee, "Urban Art Form."

³⁶⁰ Ian Yee, "From the Bronx to Malaysia " *The Star*, 23. September 2009.

³⁶¹ Chen, "Brighter Banks for Klang River." – I feature this work more for reference, but it can be just with difficulties considered to have been created by a graffiti artist.

³⁶² Y.P. Sivam, "15,000 Gather for 5-on-5 Finals," *The Star*, 09. July 2010.

mentioned in his article for example the *AirAsia Youth Design Challenge* competition, which was organized during the first KulSign Festival in the year 2010. The theme of the competition was related to the Air Asia destinations China, India and ASEAN.³⁶³

Another theme was *Greater Kuala Lumpur*, as it was the theme for the international competition during the Kulsign Festival 2012, with the sub-themes: Klang River or the Greater Kuala Lumpur MRT project (Figure 2.28-Figure 2.29).³⁶⁴

Table 2.3 Graffiti Art Motifs and Themes Reported in Malaysian News Articles.

MOTIFS AND THEMES	
a) Local and Popular Culture, Malaysia	b) Commission and Competition Themes
1 Transformer (Optimus Prime)	8 KUL green (Kuala Lumpur green)
2 <i>Selamat Hari Raya</i>	9 Locations in Malaysia
3 Kuala Lumpur skyline	10 China
4 LRT system	11 India
5 Burger stalls	12 ASEAN
6 Yasmin Ahmad	13 Greater KL
7 Muslim biker girl	14 Hip hop
	15 Healthy Active Lifestyle

An especially content oriented news article about an organized graffiti art competition was written by Priscilla Dielenberg. We can read in it about a ‘*wanted poster of a robot that was into hip-hop dancing*’ and also about another art work containing words ‘*respect hip hop*’ produced together with a hip-hop figure showing a ‘*peace*’ sign. Dielenberg is additionally writing about an artwork created in Chinese characters ‘*xi ha*’, standing for hip-hop.³⁶⁵ This particular article reflects the over emphasis of hip-hop in the works created at that particular event, but it also shows the interest of the reporter in describing the works’ content.

Jayaraj, "Close Watch on Tree Contractors."

³⁶³ Venugopal, "Taking Graffiti Art to a Higher Level."

³⁶⁴ Aziz, "Graffiti Artists Given a Place to Work On." The theme definition is also additionally based on my own personal observation at the opening speech of the KULSIGN Festival 2012 on the 25th of February 2012, in Central Market, Kuala Lumpur.

³⁶⁵ Dielenberg, "Hip-Hop Touch to Graffiti Art."

Graffiti art is usually attractive especially to the younger generations and graffiti art is commonly practiced by young people. Malaysian organizers of the graffiti art competitions try to introduce positive messages for the young generations of Malaysians, such as during another graffiti art competition in Penang, where the theme of the competition was '*healthy active lifestyle*'.³⁶⁶

The Malaysian *Star* newspaper also published a report on graffiti art in Brazil, reporting on the occurrence of holy symbols including the Hindu God Lord Ganesha, the crucifix, dragon, snake and other holy signs.³⁶⁷

Sometimes Malaysian graffiti artists were given a voice in the news reports. KIOUE expressed for example the opinion, that the content of graffiti art should be propaganda free. KIOUE also suggested that the graffiti art work should be a '*beautification project*'.³⁶⁸ Graffiti artists often understand their graffiti art works as contributions to the overall improvement of the surface on which the graffiti art work was sprayed. This attitude has already been reported from New York City of the 1970's, as Jack Stewart observed that the graffiti artists: '*...really think they are beautifying the subway system*'.³⁶⁹

The news articles repeatedly remind the readers, that graffiti art could be perceived as vandalism, but the reporters focus at the same time on the positive side of graffiti art.³⁷⁰ The articles also reported on the produced graffiti art works and do not omit these entirely, as was demonstrated above.

It can be concluded that the positive reporting style of Malaysian news coverage on the graffiti art phenomenon, especially at the end of the first decade and the beginning

³⁶⁶ "Graffiti Art Contest and Battle of the Bands Draw Crowds."

³⁶⁷ T. Selva, "Charm of Brazil," *The Star*, 08. May 2011.

³⁶⁸ Chen, "There's Beauty in Graffiti."

³⁶⁹ Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978". p. 458.

³⁷⁰ This is very different in comparison to the news article analysis performed by Kramer in New York: Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005".

of the second decade of the 21st century, established graffiti art as a fairly acceptable and harmless activity in Malaysia. The journalist reporting on motifs or themes of graffiti art works usually selected subject matter, which related in some way to Malaysia or were socially acceptable.



Figure 2.23 In the left center of the wall is a 'Optimus Prime' character by THA-B.
29 January 2008. Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 2.24 In the center of the wall is the skyline of Kuala Lumpur with its Petronas Twin Towers.
29 January 2008. Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 2.25 *Selamat Hari Raya* by NAS-EL. MILE09 and THA-B painting their pieces in the background. 26 September 2008. Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 2.26 'Muslim Biker Girl' mural by Sarah Joan Mokhtar, as reported by Grace Chen. 26 February 2012. Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 2.27 Piece by CARPET and islands by KATUN. Elaboration on the theme of Green Kuala Lumpur. 02 February 2011. Pasar Seni, KL.³⁷¹



Figure 2.28 RASH elaborating in the piece 'GREATER KL' on the theme 'Greater Kuala Lumpur'. Width: 538 cm; height: 300 cm. 25 February 2012. Pasar Seni, KL.

³⁷¹ A segment of this graffiti art work by CARPET was also used as part of the official promotion campaign of the KULSIGN FESTIVAL 2012 – see the DBKL advertisement in: "Dbkl Anjur Festival Kul Sign 2012."



Figure 2.29 MEDEA and ANOKAYER elaborated on the theme Greater Kuala Lumpur.
26 February 2012. Pasar Seni, KL.

2.3.2.1 Commercial Usage

The previous section illustrated how Malaysian news reports reported on some themes and motifs in graffiti art works. In these articles, there was a tendency to lead and steer graffiti art participants, and their audiences onto a ‘morally safe’ ground, especially through the choice of general, commercial and social themes introduced in various official graffiti art competitions. That is a good sign, in terms of educating a healthy society and in the sense of creating a tolerant coexistence between graffiti art and the local Malaysian society.

Graffiti art was/is also used in Malaysia for commercial goals, for marketing purposes. The practice began quite early in the evolution of graffiti art in Malaysia. One important step for graffiti art in the public arena was the commissioning of the pioneer graffiti artist PHOBIA in 2004, for the decoration of the very visible shopping complex Sungai Wang Plaza in the Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur (see Figure 3.34, p. 152).

PHOBIA's graffiti art works were supposed to attract young consumers onto the sixth floor of this shopping mall.³⁷²

Graffiti art works in the area of GKL were often used commercially as backdrops for various events. This was the case during events in the years 2003–2004. One such event was the *Rapfest 2003*, with a graffiti art demonstration by AEROSOL ADDICTS³⁷³ or in 2004 the concert of the popular group *Black Eyed Peas* in GKL, where a board of the band and its name was created by the PHB KKL crew and by Mikael Adam Rafae (born 1988) aka SONA (Figure 2.30).³⁷⁴ Further, NENOK from the PW crew painted graffiti art backdrops at the *Nike Freestyle Face-Off* on 24 October 2004 (Figure 2.31),³⁷⁵ or again PHOBIA, SIXTHIE, VDS (born 1985), SONA and Andrew Yeoh aka DREW (born 1983) created another backdrop board for the 18th December 2004 event *Joe Flizzow & Friends Concert* (Figure 2.32).³⁷⁶

Graffiti art was marketed in Malaysia as a dynamic, progressive art form, attractive to younger audiences.³⁷⁷ Therefore, many international companies have also used the services of graffiti artists for their campaigns.³⁷⁸ The 'commissioned' graffiti art works, were then either created as demonstrations, or as part of competitions (see Table 2.3, p. 102). Some themes of the Malaysian graffiti art competitions are also listed in my previous research on the development of graffiti art in Malaysia.³⁷⁹ Here are some

³⁷² Haswari, "Graffiti Jadi Seni Lukis Moden."

³⁷³ Adlin Rosli, "Put Your Hands up in the Air! Anyone?," *KLue* 2004.

³⁷⁴ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". p. 109.

³⁷⁵ The author of this particular magazine article – Selina A. Aziz, "Style Aplenty," *KLue* 2004. reported on the connection of 'freestyle' with the street culture and hip-hop (MCs, breakdancers and DJs). However, the reporter omitted to include for this event created graffiti art works, which are visible in the background of one of the reproduced photograph. From my previous research – Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". I know that this graffiti art work was created by NENOK, as I lead with NENOK a discussion about this event (see Figure 2.31).

³⁷⁶ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". p. 109.

³⁷⁷ Joyce Chan, "The Writing on the Wall," *KLue* 2004.

³⁷⁸ "Youth Express with Dell & Microsoft: Dell Spreads Positivity through Art Movement in the Society.," AirAsia Blog Team, "Airasia Youth Design Challenge : The Winning Artworks," AirAsia, <http://blog.airasia.com/index.php/graffiti-to-merchandise-airasia-youth-de>; "Airasia + Graffiti = Kul Sign Festival 2010," Facebook: AirAsia, <http://www.facebook.com/notes/airasia/airasia-graffiti-kul-sign-festival-2010/464574308741>; Sivam, "15,000 Gather for 5-on-5 Finals."

³⁷⁹ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". pp. 189-191.

examples of other themes or motifs for graffiti art competitions: Transformers,³⁸⁰ Merdeka (Malaysian Independence Day), Rakan Muda, TRIBE (TRIBE is a graffiti artist and a brand name at the same time), Summit's 10th anniversary, Stop violence against woman, Safe sex, Celebrating a woman's role & her significance in society (Figure 2.33) and Shopping lifestyle (Figure 2.34).

This commercial usage of graffiti art in Malaysia contributed to the development of artistic skills of the majority of Malaysian graffiti artists, as higher artistic skills lead to potential job opportunities and to monetary rewards.³⁸¹ Some graffiti artists in Malaysia even started to pursue careers as professional graffiti artists. The graffiti artist DAMIS suggested that this career opportunity offers potentially a monthly income between RM4,000 to RM5,000 (ca. 1,000€ to 1,250€).³⁸² This underlines that graffiti art can even lead to career opportunities and partially supports Gregory Snyder's similar research results from New York City,³⁸³ which were also very briefly recalled at the outset of Ferrell and Weide's *Spot Theory*.³⁸⁴

Commercial usage of graffiti art works and the performance offered by the spectacular production of these graffiti art works, at public events, created a career opportunity for Malaysian graffiti artists. These opportunities lead also to specific properties of the graffiti art culture in GKL. In the early evolutionary stages of graffiti art in New York no such opportunities existed, as was concluded by Lachmann³⁸⁵, but Snyder³⁸⁶ showed in his study, in the 2000's, that similar career opportunities had then been created, even for graffiti artists in New York.

³⁸⁰ "Transformers Budding Artists Stand Tall," *Weekend Mail*, 28-29 July 2007.

³⁸¹ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". p. 184.

³⁸² Bernama, "Graffiti for Positivity " *Malaysian Digest*, 04 July 2011.

³⁸³ Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*.

³⁸⁴ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." pp. 48-49.

³⁸⁵ Lachmann, "Graffiti as Carrer and Ideology."

³⁸⁶ Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*.



Figure 2.30 A backdrop for the Black Eyed Peas concert by PHB KLK and SONA. Year: 2004.
Source: Courtesy SONA (05 March 2009).



Figure 2.31 A backdrop for the Nike Freestyle Face-Off event by NENOK. Year: 2004.
Source: Courtesy NENOK; reproduction of his photograph (25 October 2008).



Figure 2.32 A backdrop for the Joe Flizzow & Friends Concert by PHOBIA, SIXTHIE, VDS and SONA. Year: 2004.
Source: Courtesy SONA (05 March 2009).



Figure 2.33 A graffiti art competition at the Taylor's University College.
24 September 2008. Taylor's University College, Sunway, GKL.



Figure 2.34 The *Graffiti Mania Challenge* graffiti art competition at the South City Plaza. 29 November 2008. Serdang, GKL.

2.3.2.2 Restricted content in Malaysian Graffiti Art

There is an unwritten, unspoken rule among the Malaysian graffiti artists, advising the artists, not to represent sexually, politically and racially offensive images. This social contract is known amongst Malaysian graffiti artists. This attitude – or imperative – was reflected in several news articles:

*...no-nos to political messages and profanity [in Malaysian graffiti art].*³⁸⁷

*Participants [-graffiti artists-] would be free to express themselves as long as their motives did not exploit religious, race or political sensitivities.*³⁸⁸

The two quotes above reflect the attitude, that Malaysian graffiti art works cannot be ‘uncensored’.

Another example of public control is from the second largest Malaysian city Penang. Official authorities in Penang would also like to have an (indirect) influence on the content of graffiti art works. With regards to a proposed graffiti art park project in

³⁸⁷ Grace Chen, "Spray No More?," *The Star*, 24 May 2008b.

³⁸⁸ Valentino, "Provide Space for Graffiti."

Penang, which was under construction in 2011, Andrea Filmer reported that once the park is open, the authorities would evaluate the graffiti artists' proposed sketches in the planning stage of the art work.³⁸⁹

2.4 Sizes of Graffiti Art Works

It was observed that academic and popular literature commonly agrees, in terms of the dimensions of graffiti art works, that the graffiti art forms throw-up and character are in terms of sizes in between the tag, as the smallest graffiti art form and the piece, as the largest graffiti art form. The term 'large' is commonly used in publications in relation to sizes of graffiti art works. I see this as a problem, because an exact measurement should be provided, along with photographs, to researchers not familiar with graffiti art and even to those familiar with this phenomenon.

2.4.1 Pieces are Large and Big

The piece is the most attractive form of graffiti art. Academic and popular literature refers to pieces as to large-scale or big murals. The artist and researcher Tracey Bowen studied, in Toronto, the attitudes of six graffiti artists, who had formal art education.³⁹⁰ Bowen used in her study many times the term large, in relation to pieces, and Bowen compared pieces to murals, as do also other researchers. Bowen explained that pieces are covering whole wall spaces and are large and colorful. In another case, Steven Powers quoted in the 'Afterword' section of his book *The Art of Getting Over* an instructional graffiti art text, where it is suggested, that aspiring graffiti artists should create their names '*bigger every time*' they '*go out*' to create their names.³⁹¹ The researchers Kim Dovey, Simon Wollan and Ian Woodcock studied graffiti art as an

³⁸⁹ Filmer, "A Park for Graffiti Artists."

³⁹⁰ Tracey E. Bowen, "Graffiti Art: A Contemporary Study of Toronto Artists," *Studies in Art Education* 41, no. 1 (Autumn, 1999).

³⁹¹ Powers, *The Art of Getting Over: Graffiti at the Millennium*. p. 154.

urban spatial practice.³⁹² In their research paper we read about large pieces and we learn that the ‘ “piece” is a large-scale, complex and time-consuming work’.³⁹³ There are more such examples regarding the sizes of pieces. Jeff Ferrell specified the piece as a ‘large, illegal’ mural³⁹⁴ and on another occasion stated that it could take hours to finish such an elaborate work³⁹⁵. Further, Gregory Snyder referred to the quality of a piece and said that a piece is ‘big and beautiful’.³⁹⁶ In the publication *Writing* we learn that ‘[t]he amplification of the tag is the throw-up’.³⁹⁷ An interesting inconsistency was encountered in Lachlan MacDowall’s article, where we read at one point about ‘tagging and large spraypaint[ed] murals’,³⁹⁸ but further in the text MacDowall describes also a ‘large-scale’ tag created with paint and rollers.³⁹⁹ Tags created with rollers and emulsion paint are indeed significant in size, as is clear in the photographs from New York City published in Snyder’s study *Graffiti Lives*,⁴⁰⁰ or as clearly seen in Figure 2.35. However, Snyder also states that ‘[t]he tag is small’.⁴⁰¹ These are only some instances of the general usage of the words large, scale and big in relation to the sizes of graffiti art works. This probably relates back to the formative era of graffiti art, because in the period 1970–1976 the dimensions of graffiti art works constantly grew in size. This is due to the evolving history of graffiti art forms, which is briefly recalled in relation to the sizes of graffiti art works below.

³⁹² Dovey et al., "Placing Graffiti: Creating and Contesting Character in Inner-City Melbourne."

³⁹³ Ibid. p. 25.

³⁹⁴ Ferrell, *Styles of Crime: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality*. p. 76.

³⁹⁵ Ferrell, "Hiding in the Light: Graffiti and the Visual."

³⁹⁶ Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 34.

³⁹⁷ Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*. p. 17.

³⁹⁸ MacDowall, "In Praise of 70k: Cultural Heritage and Graffiti Style." p. 474.

³⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 481.

⁴⁰⁰ Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 36.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid. p. 41.



Figure 2.35 KIMES using a roller to produce a huge tag with emulsion paint.
27 February 2012. Pasar Seni, KL.

2.4.1.1 Historical Evolution of Sizes of Graffiti Art Works

From an historical perspective, the tag emerged as the first graffiti art form, followed closely by the emergence of the piece, character and finally the throw-up (Figure 2.36). Tags are stylistically executed signatures. These tags started to appear in the interiors of New York City subway cars in the late 1960's and early 1970's.⁴⁰² The insides of subway trains quickly became saturated with tags and graffiti artists started to 'write larger' tags in order to stand out in the crowd.⁴⁰³ In 1971, the graffiti artists started to conquer, in addition to the insides of the subway cars, the outsides of the trains. The exteriors of trains quickly turned out to be crowded with tags too, and this led to the evolution of the piece, which was significantly larger than the tag.

⁴⁰² Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*; Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

⁴⁰³ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 43.

The reason for the evolution of the tag form into the piece form was the need for more visibility. The piece was more visible on the exterior sides of the New York City subway cars, thanks to its larger dimensions (Figure 2.37); this suited the purpose of graffiti artists – the attraction of more attention towards a particular graffiti. The piece evolved due to a technical innovation discovered by the graffiti artist SUPER KOOL223, who replaced the standard spray paint nozzle with a nozzle from a foam spray. The new nozzle made a much thicker line than did the standard spray paint nozzle, prior to this innovation.⁴⁰⁴ This innovation resulted in the creation of the first piece in 1971-1972. The pioneer graffiti artist PHASE2 from New York City defined the first pieces, ever painted, as possessing ‘*three qualities: a large scale, outline letters, and decorations within the outline letters*’.⁴⁰⁵ The reference to pieces by PHASE2, indicates, once again, the large size of a piece. In 1972 the aspiration for size changed definitely from small tags to pieces as ‘*every graffiti writer with ambition was attempting to create large-scale graffiti [art works] on the outsides of the subway cars*’.⁴⁰⁶ Graffiti artists became aware of the fact that size matters as ‘*they became conscious of the strong impact of writing on a large scale*’.⁴⁰⁷ Since then the size of graffiti art pieces constantly grew. This trend for the production of larger scale works can be very clearly observed as Castleman described seven forms of graffiti art works on the sides of New York City subway cars and stated regarding these seven forms that they ‘*can be distinguished generally by their size*’.⁴⁰⁸ These seven forms were: tags, throw-ups, pieces, top-to-bottoms, end-to-ends, whole cars, and whole trains.⁴⁰⁹ However, the last four of these seven forms refer only to larger dimensions of the piece,

⁴⁰⁴ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*.

⁴⁰⁵ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 62.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 55.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 57.

⁴⁰⁸ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*. p. 26.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

in relation to the surface of a subway car. Top-to-bottom pieces were works ranging vertically from the top to the bottom of a subway car. End-to-ends ranged horizontally from one side of the subway car to the other side. Whole cars covered the entire vertical and horizontal exterior side of a subway car (ca. 1,500 cm x 200 cm), and were created the first time in 1974.⁴¹⁰ The largest graffiti art work created on 11 connected subway cars in New York City was the whole-train. The first whole-train was painted as a bicentennial train ‘*on the night of July 4, 1976*’ (see page 93).⁴¹¹ However, the era of graffiti art works on the sides of New York City subway cars definitely ended in 1989, when the New York City Transit Authority ‘*began refusing to put painted trains into service*’.⁴¹² Since the 1980s, more and more graffiti art works started to appear on New York City walls⁴¹³ and since the 2000’s, graffiti art has appeared on different urban surfaces on a global scale⁴¹⁴.

To sum up, there is neither a theory nor written evidence in literature that exactly references the sizes of graffiti art works. Contrarily the graffiti art research refers to sizes of graffiti art pieces in general terms such as large or big – this shows what little attention has been paid to exact sizes of graffiti art works in the 45 years of the history of graffiti art.



Figure 2.36 Evolutional timeline of graffiti art forms.

⁴¹⁰ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

⁴¹¹ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*. p. 36.

⁴¹² Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 31.

⁴¹³ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*.

⁴¹⁴ Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*.

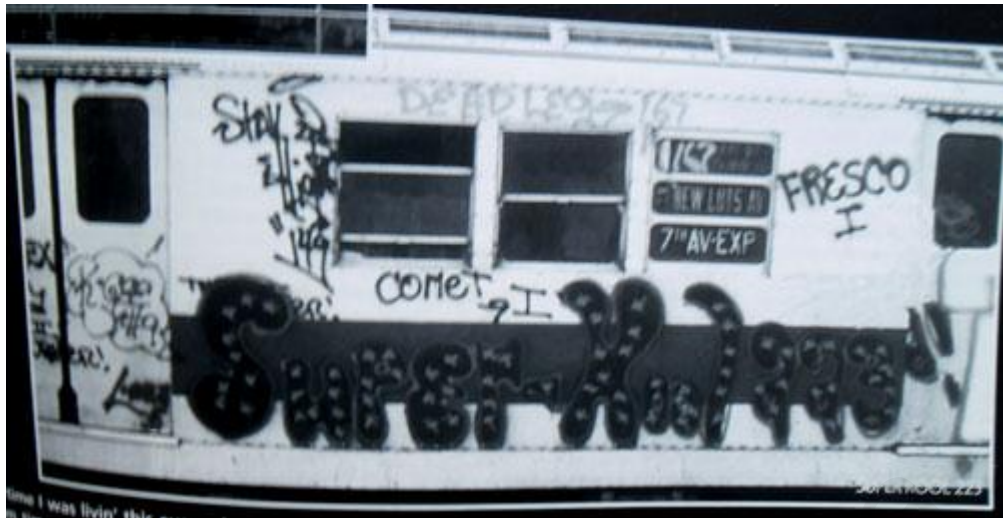


Figure 2.37 Tags by STAY HIGH149, COMET I, FRESCO I, DEAD LEG 167 and other tags in comparison to one of the first pieces by SUPER KOOL223.
Source: (Schmidlapp and PHASE2, 1996) p. 39.

2.5 Summary

Graffiti art evolved on the exteriors of subway cars in the 1960's and 1970's New York City; graffiti art was 'fought' by the local authorities, as it was not a legal activity and represented 'vandalism'. However, despite this, graffiti art became a constant feature of New York City and furthermore it spread in the 1980's beyond the USA to many different countries. By the end of the first decade of the 2000's graffiti art became a reasonably tolerated and recognized art form in Malaysia.

Graffiti art is a form of artistic expression oriented mainly on the stylization of letterforms. Therefore, the main subject matter are the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet. The main artistic objective of graffiti artists is to achieve a unique stylization of these Latin letterforms, based on graffiti art's unique, aesthetical heritage. Through original, individual style, graffiti artists promote their own tag names in public spaces. The stylistic modification of the Latin letterforms leads to distinct problems in the legibility of the letterforms. Stylized letterforms are especially illegible to the outsiders' or uninitiated in graffiti art.

Graffiti art works also contain, besides stylistically 'altered' Latin letterforms characters, which represent certain motifs and themes. A theme is not a necessity of every graffiti art work. However, if a theme (or motif) is part of a graffiti art work, it

often tends to be a theme based on the representation of the motif of a spray can or of a graffiti artist. Other common themes and motifs in graffiti art works feature scenes of urban landscapes, dark themes (such as monsters and skulls), national flags representing the need of the graffiti artists to express their national identity or other forms of cultural identity expressed through motifs and themes oriented at commemorative holidays. The literature review also showed that Malaysian news reports often included in their reports formal descriptions of graffiti art works. It was also illustrated that there is a need for research into the sizes of graffiti art works', as this exact property of graffiti art works has been omitted for over 45 years.

3 CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Methodology

This present study is using mixed methods of research to investigate the contemporary graffiti art culture and its visual products. Qualitative, ethnographic, research tools such as interview, photo elicitation and observations form the basis for this study. Primary data were collected from fieldwork. The main data collection methods encompassed face-to-face interviews and visual methods – photography. The combination of interview and photographic documentation merged in the photo elicitation method.⁴¹⁵ As a part of the personal interviews, I also included a research experiment focused on the legibility of graffiti art works. In addition to face-to-face interviews, data were also obtained through email, surveys and distributed questionnaires. Participants consisted of Malaysian and international graffiti artists. Special focus was on graffiti artists related to the research location of GKL. The ethnographical participant observation method was already implemented into my fieldwork in 2008, during my previous research,⁴¹⁶ and I continued using this method for this study too. Quantitative research methods were used for determining average sizes of graffiti art works (see p. 225) and to investigate the content of graffiti art works in GKL.

⁴¹⁵ During such an interview, the participants are shown photographs and they are asked to describe and evaluate the image according to some established criteria. Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 196. Karen O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, Second ed. (New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁴¹⁶ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley".

3.1 Research Location

This study is mainly based on visual data gathered on the Malaysian Peninsular, in the urban area of Greater Kuala Lumpur (GKL), locally known as the Klang Valley (*Lembah Klang*).

The population of Malaysia in 2008 exceeded 25 million people.⁴¹⁷ The main ethnic groups in Malaysia are Malay, Chinese, Indian and others.⁴¹⁸ The official religion of the country is Islam, a very important building stone in the Malaysian cultural policy. The presence of Islam can easily be perceived in everyday life in Malaysia.⁴¹⁹ The official language in Malaysia is Malay (*Bahasa Malaysia*), but one could say that the second unofficial language – *lingua franca* – is English.

The capital city of Malaysia is Kuala Lumpur. The history of the city of Kuala Lumpur began in the middle of the 19th century. In the year 1857, a member of Selangor's royal family, Raja Abdullah, decided to open up the area of the so-called Klang Valley to the tin industry. A group of Chinese miners, who were sent there to prospect for tin, began to refer to the place of their settlement as Kuala Lumpur, which translates into English as the '*Muddy Confluence*'. The name derived from the fact that the city was established at the confluence of the Klang and Gombak rivers in the area of Masjid Jamek (Figure 3.1). However, settlements were already present in this geographical area earlier and in one source, it is said '*that by 1824, Kuala Lumpur (then known as Sungei Lumpur) was already a trading centre*'.⁴²⁰ The importance of Kuala

⁴¹⁷ "The World Factbook – Malaysia". Central Intelligence Agency. 4 Nov. 2008.
<<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>>.

⁴¹⁸ "Population (8.1.3:Pdf File Download)," ed. Department of Statistics Malaysia Population and Demography Statistics Division, (MysIDC (Malaysia Informative Data Centre), 2012).

⁴¹⁹ Joseph Chinyong Liow, "Political Islam in Malaysia: Problematising Discourse and Practice in the Umno-Pas 'Islamisation Race'," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 42, no. 2 (2004); Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman, "Reviving the Caliphate in Malaysia," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 7 (2009); Osman Bakar, "The Impact of the American War on Terror on Malaysian Islam," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 16, no. 2 (2005); Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Politically Engaged Muslims in Malaysia in the Era of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (2003-2009)," *Asian Journal of Political Science* 18, no. 2 (2010); Vincent J. H. Houben, "Southeast Asia and Islam," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588: Islam: Enduring Myths and Changing Realities(Jul., 2003).

⁴²⁰ Lam Seng Fatt, *Insider's Kuala Lumpur* (Singapore: Times Editions, 2000; reprint, 2004). p. 17.

Lumpur increased in the year 1957, when the Malaysian (then known as Malaya) independence from the British was announced and declared in Kuala Lumpur.

This present thesis is focusing on graffiti art works from the area of GKL. The urban area of GKL is located in two Malaysian federal states: *Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur* and in *Selangor* with its capital Shah Alam.

*Greater KL/KV extends beyond the boundaries of Kuala Lumpur. It is defined as the area covered by 10 municipalities, each governed by local authorities: Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL), Perbadanan Putrajaya, MB Shah Alam (MBSA), MB Petaling Jaya (MBPJ), MP Klang (MPK), MP Kajang, MP Subang Jaya (MPSJ), MP Selayang, MP Ampang Jaya (MPAJ) and MP Sepang.*⁴²¹

Greater Kuala Lumpur is the most populated area within Malaysia and the area of GKL is steadily expanding.⁴²² The estimated population of GKL was in the year 2010 around 6 million people (see Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.1 Confluence of the rivers Gombak and Klang at the Masjid Jamek area. (Unusually high water levels).
13 April 2012. Masjid Jamek, KL.

⁴²¹ "Official Website of Greater Kuala Lumpur / Klang Valley."

⁴²² Patrick Lee, "Klang Valley: A Ticking Time Bomb," 12. August 2011b.

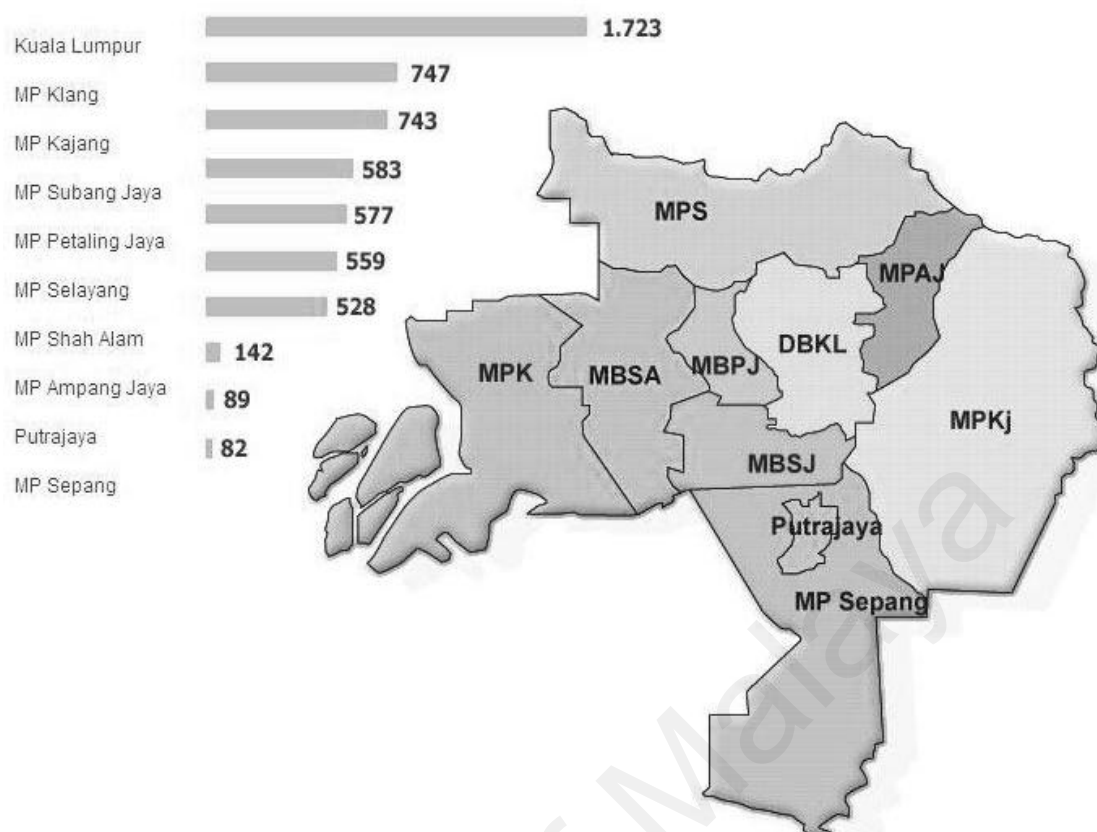


Figure 3.2 Greater Kuala Lumpur and its 10 municipalities including population numbers in thousands.
Source: <http://app.kwpkb.gov.my/greaterklkv/uploads/home-overview.gif>

3.1.1 Graffiti Art Locations in Greater Kuala Lumpur

Ethnographic observations and photographs of graffiti art works were collected from fieldwork in graffiti art locations in GKL. Popular locations for the production of graffiti art works were repeatedly visited on a regular basis, to document the ever-changing graffiti art works (for exact coordinates of location's see p. 769). Some of the graffiti art locations in GKL were more exposed to 'public eyes' and others were less exposed (Table 3.1). The *Spot theory* highlights that graffiti art works need to be produced, legally or illicitly, in visible locations to be perceived by the other participants of the graffiti art culture as worthy graffiti art works: '*In fact, greater status is earned by those [graffiti] writers who can paint their graffiti [art works] in bold, dangerous and publicly visible spots.*'⁴²³ On non-visible locations, graffiti artists created

⁴²³ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 51.

graffiti art works more or less for their peer audiences; '*demonstrating their best styles and artistic capabilities for other [graffiti] writers*'.⁴²⁴ Visible locations were of importance for self-publicising of the graffiti artists, as graffiti artists presented themselves to the public on such spots.⁴²⁵ Therefore, the content of graffiti art works also varied in relation to 'visible' or 'non-visible' locations (for content of graffiti art works in GKL see pages 322-426). Graffiti art works are directed at two different audiences: '*other graffiti writers first and the general public second*'.⁴²⁶

Table 3.1 Visible locations and non-visible graffiti art locations in GKL.

Visible locations	Non-visible locations
a) Pasar Seni	a) Jelatek wall
b) Masjid Jamek	b) Dato' Keramat
c) 'Blue' wall	c) Damai wall
d) Las Vegas/Chocolate wall	d) Abandoned building Imbi
e) The Imbi shop house wall	e) Melawati tennis wall
f) Lorong Pudu 14 (KIOUE & THA-B's faces.)	f) Shah Alam 'Old' skate park
g) Parking place wall (Jalan Bukit Bintang and Jalan Tong Shin opposite the Royale Bintang Hotel)	g) The Secret spot
h) The high above ground spot (REVOK, KIOUE, THA-B...)	h) KTM Batu Tiga tunnel walls
i) Shah Alam tunnel walls	
j) Shah Alam tennis wall	
k) Wangsa Maju (Carrefour)	
l) Tennis Wall LRT Jelatek	
m) Kajang KTM Train Bridge walls: River Chua	
n) LRT Setiawangsa wall	
o) Pudu-Chinatown wall	
p) Maharajalela Monorail wall	

⁴²⁴ Ibid. p. 51.

⁴²⁵ The concept of presentation of self is derived from Erving Goffman's (born 1922–1982) dramaturgy theory of self-presentation: Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1956).

⁴²⁶ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 51.

q) Bukit Kiara – Rakan Muda Sport Complex	
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It was observed that the three main graffiti art crews in GKL – PHOBIA KLIK (PHB KLIK), PHIBER WRYTE (PW) and THE SUPER SUNDAY (TSS) – acquired and ‘protected’ through the period of 2008–2009 certain graffiti art locations, or territories, for their own purposes of producing graffiti art works. Such territorial claims of graffiti art crews, in relation to certain locations, were quite substantial in the mentioned period. This was due to little availability of alternative graffiti art spots in GKL. The *Spot theory* states in relation to similar circumstances:

*Given that these sorts of legal spots are rare and greatly valued, graffiti writers tend to be very protective of them; they will not allow other writers to paint there without permission, defacing anything painted without approval and, on occasion, assaulting intruding writers.*⁴²⁷

These observations are – where appropriate – discussed in the following subsections. It is also important to remember that graffiti artists participating in the graffiti art culture need to have the ‘*knowledge of the city in which the [graffiti] writer paints*’.⁴²⁸ Such knowledge allows a graffiti artist to navigate the desired locations for the production of graffiti art works.

⁴²⁷ Ibid. p. 51.

⁴²⁸ Ibid. p. 49.



Figure 3.3 The KLCC Twin Towers and a section of Greater Kuala Lumpur as seen from a secret spot in 2008. 21 December 2008. Undisclosed location, GKL.

3.1.1.1 GKL, Ampang Jaya: The Melawati Wall

The Melawati wall is probably one of – or the – most important location responsible for the development of graffiti art in the whole of Malaysia.

The first Malaysian graffiti artists – from the DRAKE Crew⁴²⁹ – had already acquired this wall as a practice ground for graffiti artists in Malaysia around 2002–2003.

Since 2005, this wall has been the only ‘legal’, ‘tolerated’ graffiti art location for graffiti artists in Greater Kuala Lumpur. Nevertheless, until today this wall has never been officially sanctioned for the creation of graffiti art works.⁴³⁰ During 2004 Malaysian graffiti artists were still coming at night – during darkness – to paint this wall. The graffiti artists did not feel confident enough to paint this location during

⁴²⁹ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". p. 108.

⁴³⁰ There is a whole report about a PHOBIA KLIK graffiti art production from the Melawati wall in: Radzi, "Contengan Kreatif."

daylight. This changed in 2005, when it became common to paint graffiti art works at this location in broad daylight.⁴³¹

The graffiti artist VDS, from the graffiti art crews DRAKE (DC) and SEMBUR WITH STYLE (SWS), discovered this wall, thanks to a family member who was staying in a housing estate in the area. VDS and SHIEKO [SUGA52] recalled during an interview:

DN: *You told me that you somehow discovered the [Melawati] wall? Or?*

VDS: *Well, for the wall has been always there [laughing]. But one time my friends and I, back when we were in DRAKE crew we were looking for a wall [to paint on] and I remembered "Eyy, there is a wall in Melawati, let's go there!" So, we painted there. So, I kept going back there. I painted some, you know, war issues [related graffiti art works there], because at that time there was war going on in Iraq or something. And then, you know, when we formed SWS [in 2004] we kept going back here, lah.*

SHIEKO: *Was the safest place to paint.*⁴³²

One very early piece, painted by VDS and the DRAKE crew on the Melawati wall, can be viewed online on the web pages of the best-known worldwide graffiti art server *Art Crimes* <www.graffiti.org> (Figure 3.4).⁴³³ The Melawati wall was originally a tennis practice wall and was part of a tennis court. In Figure 3.4 it is possible to recognise that this wall used to be a tennis wall – see the leftovers of the line used as the indicator of the net's height on the left (Figure 3.4).

This wall is located in a housing estate, in Taman Melawati. The wall is enclosed by the streets Jalan H 1, Jalan H 12 and Jalan H 15 (Figure 3.5).⁴³⁴ The wall has very good parameters for graffiti art productions with a width of 3,160 cm and height of 235 cm.⁴³⁵ Therefore, it comes as no surprise, that this wall was heavily used for hundreds

⁴³¹ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". pp. 151; 199.

⁴³² SHIEKO et al., Audio-recorded Interview (3/11), 14. February 2009. [00:10min]

⁴³³ Drew1, "Art Crimes: Malaysia 2," http://www.graffiti.org/malaysia/malaysia_2.html.

Gottlieb used the discussed web for her recruitment: Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p.38.

⁴³⁴ For a picture of this wall see also: Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*. p. 94-95.

⁴³⁵ According to my own measurements.

of graffiti art productions produced by Malaysian graffiti artists, especially through the years 2005–2009. In the years 2010–2012, I realized that the graffiti artists in GKL had not been coming back to this wall, because no new graffiti art works occurred. The *Spot theory* authors stated that:

*Over time, as pieces come and go, a once-hallowed spot may lose its subcultural luster by attracting a new breed of less experienced writers who burn the spot with their aesthetically underdeveloped...[graffiti art works] ...disregard existing pieces of greater stylistic mastery.*⁴³⁶

The Melawati wall had served its purpose in the development of graffiti art in Malaysia and had already started declining by around 2009–2010. The reason for this decline was the acquisition of new and more attractive graffiti art locations with higher public visibility (Wangsa Maju, Pasar Seni), which were larger and easier to access (Jelatek–Damai). The description of these locations follows in subsequent sections. As I observed, the Melawati wall became the preferred ‘practice ground’ for the ‘graffiti’ artist ESCAPE and for his friends.



Figure 3.4 Early pieces on the Melawati wall. ‘DR’ on the left standing for “DRAKE” crew.

Source: http://www.graffiti.org/malaysia/sws_vds1.jpg

⁴³⁶ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 50.



Figure 3.5 Melawati Tennis wall.
29 August 2008. Melawati, GKL.

3.1.1.2 KL: The Klang Riverbank Walls at Pasar Seni LRT Station

The Klang riverbank walls at the Pasar Seni LRT station in the Central Market are probably the most popular graffiti art locations in GKL, among the general public and the graffiti artists alike. This graffiti art spot is exposed to thousands of people every day, because this graffiti art wall can be sighted by passengers traveling within the LRT trains in between the stations KL Sentral–Masjid Jamek on the Kelana Jaya line. The LRT trains pass this location high above the ground, as is visible in Figure 3.6–Figure 3.8.

The riverbank wall can also be seen from the Pasar Seni LRT station's facilities, which are above the street level, on the first floor of the Pasar Seni LRT station (Figure 3.9) and also from the upper LRT train platforms on the 2nd floor (Figure 3.10). On the first floor of the Pasar Seni LRT station, many people would often wait to meet others or sometimes simply to wait for the sudden heavy tropical rain to stop. The waiting people often leant on to the railing and looked at the colorful graffiti art 'pictures' on the wall on the other side of the Klang river as in Figure 3.9. The Pasar Seni LRT station is

also a very important bus hub within GKL. From this bus station, many Rapid KL and Intercity buses depart to various areas of KL and GKL, as for example to: Bukit Bintang, Mid Valley, Bangsar, Kerinchi, Putrajaya, Klang and Shah Alam. Further, many locals and tourists come to the area of Pasar Seni (Central Market) to visit Chinatown in the Petaling Street, to see the craft market in Central Market, to visit the Chinese *Guan Di Temple* [God of War Temple] (Figure 3.11-Figure 3.12), the Indian *Sri Mahamariamman Temple* (Figure 3.13), the *Lake Gardens* (Figure 3.14), the *National Mosque* (Figure 3.15) and the *Islamic Art Museum* (Figure 3.16). One has to understand that such a location, where tens of thousands of people pass by everyday is a very attractive location for graffiti artists. It also seems that tourists like the graffiti art works at Pasar Seni, as it was reported for example in a news article by Wong Pek Mei.⁴³⁷

The Klang riverbank walls are positioned opposite and underneath the LRT train station Pasar Seni (Figure 3.7; Figure 3.10) in the Central Market area, near Chinatown. These walls themselves were built along the roads Jalan Tun Sambanthan and Jalan Sultan Mohammed as part of the widening project for the Klang river.

First graffiti art works occurred on these walls in the year 2005.⁴³⁸ By the end of 2006 and into 2007, this location became increasingly interesting for graffiti artists and more and more graffiti art works started appearing on these walls.⁴³⁹ Twice in 2008 the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) whitewashed the whole Klang riverbank wall to stop the recurring graffiti art works (Figure 3.17).⁴⁴⁰ However, the graffiti artists kept coming back and new graffiti art works appeared on the Pasar Seni riverbank walls

⁴³⁷ Wong Pek Mei, "Stench Linked to Discharge Pipe at Klang River," *The Star Online*, 21 February 2014.

⁴³⁸ Personal interviews with SWS graffiti artists in 2009.

⁴³⁹ See for example: <<http://gmsabreesalleh.fotopages.com/?entry=951356>> or YouTube, *Kuala Lumpur Meeting Style*. (killallpresident, 12 August 2007).

⁴⁴⁰ Chen, "Spray No More?."

(Figure 3.10).⁴⁴¹ Finally, in December 2010, DBKL legalized⁴⁴² the painting of graffiti art works at this location, under certain controlled conditions, at the event 'KULSIGN FESTIVAL 2010'.⁴⁴³ In February 2012, a subsequent edition of this event took place under the name 'KULSIGN FESTIVAL 2012'.⁴⁴⁴

Another location popular with graffiti artists and closely related to the riverbank wall at LRT Pasar Seni was the wall next to the LRT station Masjid Jamek (Figure 3.1).⁴⁴⁵ However, since 2009 this location is not frequented by graffiti artists.

The Klang riverbank wall in the LRT Pasar Seni/Central Market area had, and still has, a central role in the history of the graffiti art culture in Kuala Lumpur. This location is well known to the public, as a graffiti art hot spot, and I myself have been 'advised' many times, by the public, to go there and see '*the graffiti*' there. This graffiti art location must be understood as to have the most visible location in GKL. Here the graffiti artists present themselves and their artworks to the public.

⁴⁴¹ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". p. 173; 175.

See the large image in: Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*. p. 96.

⁴⁴² Jayaraj, "Close Watch on Tree Contractors."

⁴⁴³ YouTube, *Kul Sign Festival 2010* (mahsyar2369, 07. December 2010).

⁴⁴⁴ ———, *Kul Sign Festival 2012* (1Geckoscope, 08 March 2012).

See also news article: Aziz, "Graffiti Artists Given a Place to Work On."

⁴⁴⁵ YouTubePresstvIran, *Graffiti in Kuala Lumpur* (juzypants, 27. April 2008).

Or: <http://tha-bhe.fotopages.com/?entry=1353240&back=http://tha-bhe.fotopages.com/?page=0>
<http://tha-bhe.fotopages.com/?entry=1004622&back=http://tha-bhe.fotopages.com/?page=1>



Figure 3.6 Klang riverbank walls at Pasar Seni. See the LRT train on the left above.
26 February 2012. Klang riverbank, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 3.7 Klang riverbank walls at Pasar Seni. See the LRT train on the right above.
26 February 2012. Klang riverbank, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 3.8 Klang riverbank walls at Pasar Seni as seen from the LRT train.
20 August 2008. Inside of a LRT train at Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 3.9 Klang riverbank walls as seen from the 1st floor of the LRT station Pasar Seni.
31 August 2008. LRT station Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 3.10 Klang riverbank walls at Pasar Seni as seen from the LRT train platform.
27 April 2010. LRT train platform at Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 3.11 The Chinese *Guan Di Temple* in Chinatown, close to the LRT station Pasar Seni.
15 April 2012. Chinatown, KL.



Figure 3.12 The Chinese *Guan Di Temple* in Chinatown, close to the LRT station Pasar Seni.
24 January 2013. Chinatown, KL. (Credit: H. A. Khan)



Figure 3.13 a-b The Indian *Sri Mahamariamman Temple* in Chinatown, close to the LRT station Pasar Seni.
02 April 2012. Chinatown, KL; 24 January 2013. Chinatown, KL.



Figure 3.14 The *Lake Gardens*, quite close to the LRT station Pasar Seni.
The Lake Gardens, KL.



Figure 3.15 The *National Mosque*, close to the LRT station Pasar Seni.
01 April 2012. National Mosque, KL.



Figure 3.16 The Islamic Art Museum, quite close to the LRT station Pasar Seni.
01 April 2012. Islamic Art Museum, KL.



Figure 3.17 The second time the Klang riverbank walls at Pasar Seni were whitewashed in 2008 by DBKL.
12 October 2008. Klang riverbank, Pasar Seni, KL.

3.1.1.3 KL: The Klang Riverbank Walls at the LRT Stations Jelatek, Dato' Keramat and Damai

The Klang riverbank walls in the area underneath the three LRT stations Jelatek, Dato' Keramat and Damai are several hundreds of meters long. They are very popular amongst Malaysian graffiti artists – and visiting foreign graffiti artists. However, these walls are far less visible to the public compared to the Klang riverbank walls in the Pasar Seni area. Nevertheless, a certain portion of this long stretch of wall is visible from the within the LRT trains. These walls at Jelatek–Damai are important as both a practice and retreat ground for the graffiti artists in GKL. Here the graffiti artists very often create the best letterforms oriented pieces. The graffiti artists are not disturbed here by the public. Therefore, this location can be considered as a back stage area for the graffiti artists in GKL. The walls are located underneath the Bertingkat Ampang–Kuala Lumpur Highway (road E12) and *vice versa*. The walls on both sides of the Klang river are separated in the middle by the river itself. (Figure 3.18-Figure 3.20) These walls have been painted since approximately 2007.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁶ This information is derived from photographic documentation of various Malaysian graffiti artists.



Figure 3.18 Klang Riverbank walls near the LRT station Jelatek.
29 August 2008. Jelatek, KL.



Figure 3.19 Klang riverbank walls opposite the LRT station Damai.
29 August 2008. Damai LRT station, KL.



Figure 3.20 Klang Riverbank walls near the LRT station Jelatek (opposite side of Figure 3.18).
18 February 2013. Jelatek, KL.

3.1.1.4 KL: The Bukit Bintang Area

Kuala Lumpur's main shopping, night life and entertainment district is the Bukit Bintang area. The literary translation from Malay into English is *Star Hill*. Every day tens of thousands of people come to visit this area of the city. Many offices, shopping malls, hotels, stores, restaurants, cafes, clubs and fast food stalls are located in the area of Bukit Bintang. This is the reason why this area is very popular among tourists, locals and graffiti artists. As the *Spot theory* states: '*Most attractive are areas of the city where heavy and diverse human traffic provides the largest potential audience for a writer's graffiti.*'⁴⁴⁷

The most well-known shopping malls in the area are Lot 10, Star Hill, Pavilion, Times Square, Plaza Imbi, Plaza Low Yat and Sungei Wang Plaza (Figure 3.21-Figure 3.23). In addition, two graffiti art stores are located in this area. These two stores are

⁴⁴⁷ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 53.

owned by two graffiti art crews PHB KLK⁴⁴⁸ and TSS⁴⁴⁹ who happen to be great rivals. The Bukit Bintang area was also featured and mentioned in a four page short ‘Malaysia’ section of the book *Graffiti Asia*, which stated that most graffiti art works ‘was around the city centre area of Bukit Bintang. ... [Where] SUPER SUNDAY...and PHOBIA [KLIK] run their shops in the central Bukit Bintang area’.⁴⁵⁰

The main roads in Bukit Bintang are the Jalan Bukit Bintang, Jalan Sultan Ismail, Jalan Imbi and Jalan Pudu. Public transportation to and from this area is provided by the Monorail trains, above the ground level, and by public buses on the roads.

The geographers Ley and Cybriwsky discovered in the first research article about graffiti art and gang graffiti⁴⁵¹ in the 1974, indicators for contested space between rival gangs.⁴⁵² During my research, I observed similar behavior among the graffiti artists in Greater Kuala Lumpur. For example, the TSS graffiti art crew unofficially ‘curated’ one wall in Bukit Bintang for its own artistic needs. The graffiti artists in GKL called this location the ‘Blue wall’ (Figure 3.24). The authors of the book *Graffiti Asia*, Sanada and Hassan, who I personally met and interviewed in March 2009, were also astonished about the fact, that the graffiti art crews in GKL acquired and administrated certain walls. When I interviewed Sanada and Hassan, about this interesting fact, they recalled what the graffiti artist DWANE from PHB KLK crew said in relation to the ‘Blue’ wall. DWANE said apparently that the ‘Blue’ wall is actually under the control of the rival crew TSS:

⁴⁴⁸ The graffiti artist PHOBIA’s store was first opened in December 2003 – see: Chan, “The Writing on the Wall.” PHOBIA opened his graffiti art store on the 6th floor of Sungai Wang Plaza (6F-38, T-hop Level). In 2009 the store moved out from Sungai Wang and moved few hundred meters down to Imbi – see: Oleh Isma Ismail, “Luahan Bakat Unik: Umpama Butik Jalanan,” *Metro*, 18. October 2009. The store then relocated one year later another few meters to its current address and is known as the ‘District’ shop.

⁴⁴⁹ The Super Sunday Concept Store is located within the Monorail Station Bukit Bintang.

⁴⁵⁰ Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*, p. 95.

⁴⁵¹ Gang graffiti differs from graffiti art. The objectives of gang graffiti are based on different objectives than graffiti art’s objectives.

⁴⁵² Ley, David, and Roman Cybriwsky. “Urban Graffiti as Territorial Markers.” (1974), p. 491.

*"Ohh" this ['Blue' wall] is THE SUPER SUNDAY wall'. ... "Ohh, you know, that is like kind their area."*⁴⁵³

This is also the reason, why the 'Blue' wall featured, on the 12 October 2008, twelve pieces and four characters from the TSS crew and only three pieces and six characters from other graffiti artists (and all those remaining works were created by close friends of the TSS: NAS-EL, BARBIE, BURP and by a foreign graffiti art tourist – ASK).⁴⁵⁴ The 'Blue' wall was very attractive for graffiti artists, as the wall was in the immediate city center of Kuala Lumpur and the wall was visible from the Monorail trains and from the roads. The wall was on the rear side of the Plaza Imbi shopping complex, in front of a large parking space in between the streets Jalan Imbi, Jalan Sultan Ismail and Jalan Bulan 2. The wall according to my measurements was 64.8 m long and the whole wall was whitewashed on the 18 February 2011 (Figure 3.25). The history of graffiti art works at this location was not very long, as there were no layers of graffiti art works on this 'Blue' wall in July 2008. Among the first graffiti artists to paint on to the wall were THA-B⁴⁵⁵ and BONKS. BONKS explained in 2009:

*Yeah it used to be pretty empty [on the 'Blue' wall]. I started filling it up quite nicely, then other writers starting killing on that wall... Now there's so many nice pieces there I don't know how to compete with it.*⁴⁵⁶

After the whitewashing of the 'Blue' in 2011, this location never again gained the same 'dynamics' as in 2008–2009, when this location featured very interesting graffiti art works (Figure 4.103, p. 340; Figure 4.189-Figure 4.196, pp. 421-425). On the contrary, this location rather devaluated in terms of aesthetically valuable graffiti art works, as seen in Figure 3.26-Figure 3.28, because this location was rather saturated with tags, throw-ups and quick pieces. This shows that current public and private strategies, in the graffiti art removal are not effective. In fact, it seems that the removal

⁴⁵³ "SRK" Publishers et al., Audio-recorded Interview, 09 March 2009. [21:30min]

⁴⁵⁴ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". pp. 173; 175.

⁴⁵⁵ See: <<http://tha-bhe.fotopages.com/?entry=696753>>

⁴⁵⁶ BONKS2, Online Interview, 10. April 2009

of graffiti art works, in this case, has unintended consequences. Here the removal erased aesthetically interesting, multicolored graffiti art works and these were replaced with what the public perceives as vandalism. This is well explained in the *Spot Theory*, which suggests that:

*'Common sense', and more than a few public anti-graffiti campaigns, would take this to mean that painting over graffiti as quickly as possible at any given spot will make that spot less desirable for graffiti writers, and so reduce graffiti. Graffiti writers know, though, that such a strategy is less likely to eradicate graffiti than to alter the type of graffiti written... . If a particular spot comes to be known for being painted over quickly, writers will often cease painting more artistic and time-consuming pieces there, and begin painting quicker throw-ups and tags. From a graffiti writer's perspective, a spot that won't last long doesn't merit serious artistic investment—but then again, a spot with high traffic and visibility isn't to be abandoned, either. The result is less aesthetically sophisticated graffiti, which can quickly be replaced once painted over by the property owner or the city.'*⁴⁵⁷

Only a few meters away from the 'Blue' wall was another popular graffiti art wall in 2007–2009, which was called by the graffiti artists the 'Las Vegas' wall, or the 'Chocolate' wall due to its color (Figure 3.29). The wall was situated in between Jalan Imbi, Jalan Kampung Pandan and Jalan 1/77B. This wall was again attractive for graffiti artists, as the wall was next to the main road and one could see it from the Monorail trains.⁴⁵⁸ In 2010, the wall was whitewashed and graffiti artists could not paint onto this wall anymore, as the management planted trees and flowers exactly in front of the wall, as is visible in Figure 3.30. This is once again as observed by the authors of the *Spot Theory*, Ferrell and Weide, as it suggests that: *'Installation of a new security fence ... can render a favorite spot inaccessible'*.⁴⁵⁹

Across the street of the 'Blue' and the 'Las Vegas/Chocolate' wall is an abandoned construction site, as seen in Figure 3.31. The construction site is at the traffic light on

⁴⁵⁷ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory," pp. 53-54.

⁴⁵⁸ This wall is depicted in the book: Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*. pp. 95; 97.

⁴⁵⁹ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory," pp. 50.

the Jalan Imbi and Jalan Kampung Pandan crossing. This location is in the heart of the city center. The building itself is already abandoned and unfinished for several years. However, the graffiti artists did not ‘discover’ this spot until 2009. This was again surprising to the authors of the book *Graffiti Asia*.⁴⁶⁰ They were surprised, that this abandoned construction site remained graffiti art free until 2009. Sanada and Hassan stated with regards to this abandoned building:

*Like that crossing, near Bukit Bintang. ... There is this Blue wall. I just looked around and there is just like: “Oooh.” There is like a big, abandoned building, just right on the other side. I am like what!? No [one] wants [to paint on it,] to do it??!*⁴⁶¹

Nevertheless, after 2009 this gloomy, abandoned building became a graffiti art location for visiting graffiti art tourists and a practice ground for the local graffiti artists from GKL – especially from the local PHBKLK and RTC crews.

Next to this abandoned construction site was another graffiti art location. It was the side of a shop house at the corner of Jalan Imbi (Figure 3.32). This wall started being painted by graffiti artists in the year 2009. Since that time, the wall has changed its appearance several times.

The Bukit Bintang area can be considered, along with the Petronas Twin Towers, as the city center of Kuala Lumpur. Graffiti art works occur often in this location, as they can be easily ‘seen’ by a large audience and that is desirable by the graffiti artists producing these graffiti art works. Besides these mentioned locations, there are/were other graffiti art locations in Bukit Bintang. The graffiti artist KIOUE received a commission to paint the parking lots on the fifth floor of the Lot 10 shopping mall (Figure 3.38) and the whole 6th floor of the Sungai Wang Plaza which has been decorated with graffiti art works commissioned by the Sungai Wang Plaza from

⁴⁶⁰ Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*.

⁴⁶¹ "SRK"Publishers et al. [06:50min]

PHOBIA⁴⁶² (Figure 3.34) in between the years 2004–2011. Further, in Lorong Pudu 14 the graffiti artists KIOUE and THA-B painted very beautiful realistic characters of elderly people⁴⁶³ (Figure 3.35). The parking place walls along Jalan Bukit Bintang and Jalan Tong Shin opposite the Royale Bintang Hotel were exhibiting until 2012, pieces and characters from various graffiti artists including JACE⁴⁶⁴ (Figure 3.36). The Pudu jail walls, before its demolition, were also once featuring graffiti art works and there were other spots in the area of Bukit Bintang, such as the elevated location, where KIOUE and THA-B painted their pieces, together with the internationally well-known graffiti artist REVOK from Los Angeles (Figure 3.37).⁴⁶⁵



Figure 3.21 View on the highly exposed advertisement area of Bukit Bintang. Bukit Bintang, KL.

⁴⁶² Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". p. 144 (Figure 4.26)

⁴⁶³ Ibid. p. 188 (Figure 4.106)

⁴⁶⁴ His artworks are featured for example in the book: Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*. p. 122-123; 212-213; 376. The wall featured one of his little characters called 'Gouzou', while falling down from a skateboard. For other 'Gouzou' characters by JACE see: Figure A.513, Figure A.539, Figure A.540.

⁴⁶⁵ Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*. p. 95.



Figure 3.22 A frequented area of GKL: Bukit Bintang. See the elevated Monorail train. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.23 'Graff Jam 09' in front of the Pavilion shopping mall in Bukit Bintang. Twenty canvases for the National Visual Arts Gallery Malaysia were produced at this event. 07 February 2009. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.24 The 'Blue' wall at the parking place near the monorail station Bukit Bintang.
12 October 2008. Bukit Bintang, Jalan Imbi, KL.



Figure 3.25 The 'Blue' wall in Bukit Bintang being whitewashed and an advertisement is put in place. The car advertisement obviously failed, as it was never being displayed there.
18 February 2011. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.26 The former 'Blue' wall in Bukit Bintang after the whitewash.
02 April 2011. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.27 The former 'Blue' wall in Bukit Bintang after the whitewash.
22 April 2012. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.28 The former 'Blue' wall in Bukit Bintang after the whitewash.
06 November 2013. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.29 The smaller Bukit Bintang 'Chocolate' wall at the Las Vegas enterprise as seen from Monorail.
12. October 2008. Bukit Bintang, Jalan Imbi, KL.



Figure 3.30 The smaller Bukit Bintang 'Chocolate' wall at the Las Vegas enterprise after plants were planted.
14 August 2011. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.31 Abandoned construction site of a building in Jalan Imbi.
14 August 2011. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.32 Side of a corner shop house in Jalan Imbi.
07 February 2010. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.33 The 5th floor of the parking lots in the mall LOT10 decorated by graffiti art works by KIOUE.
03 July 2010. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.34 The 6th floor of the Sungai Wang Plaza decorated by graffiti art works by PHOBIA.
26 July 2008. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.35 Characters by KIOUE and THA-B in Lorong Pudu 14.
28 October 2008. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.36 Parking place in Jalan Bukit Bintang and Jalan Tong Shin opposite the Royale Bintang Hotel. 2010. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.37 High above ground pieces in the Bukit Bintang area in the year 2008. 2008. Bukit Bintang, KL.

3.1.1.5 GKL, Shah Alam: ‘Old’ Skate Park

This graffiti art location is important for the artistic evolution of the Shah Alam (SA) graffiti artists from the PW crew, who have been a significant influence until the present day of the graffiti art culture in Malaysia. The skate park was built for skateboarders. However, I have never encountered any skateboarder in this location since 2008. That was because SA opened a new skate park.⁴⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the general public used this location as a leisure time area of SA.

This deserted skate park became the playground of the graffiti artists from SA, GKL. The ‘Old’ skate park has a flat concrete surface for skateboarding, two 10 m width and 1.5 m high concrete stairs and a 5 m width and two 2 m high concrete halfpipes (Figure 3.38-Figure 3.39).⁴⁶⁷ The graffiti artists use the concrete structures as their canvases – the rear side of the stairs and the halfpipes. The Old Shah Alam skate park is in the Section 18, along the streets Jalan Pinang Raja 18/2 and near Jalan Pinang 18/1.

The first graffiti art works were painted at this location at the first Malaysian Graffiti Jam organized by the PW crew in the year 2005. NENOK, who himself was also a very successful and known skater,⁴⁶⁸ explained that ‘*back then [in 2005] it was illegal*’ to paint graffiti art works in this skate park.⁴⁶⁹ This location later became another tolerated spot for graffiti artists in GKL – similarly to the Melawati wall (see p. 126). However, the PW writers claimed this spot more or less for themselves and their friends (similarly to what was described on p. 142). NENOK explained that not everyone came to the old skate park to practice graffiti art. NENOK further clarified that just graffiti artists, who were ‘acquainted’ with the PW crew went there (see

⁴⁶⁶ According to my informants, the new skate park attracted all the skaters, because it is one of the best skate parks in Malaysia.

⁴⁶⁷ Measurements by author.

⁴⁶⁸ "Nenok Interview," *Revolution skateboarding magazine*, May 2003.

⁴⁶⁹ NENOK in: PW crew Group-Interview, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 October 2008.

quotation from the *Spot theory* in footnote 427, p. 125).⁴⁷⁰ The PW graffiti artists also organized subsequent graffiti art jams in SA and GKL. The second graffiti art jam was at the tennis wall in Section 20 of SA, the third graffiti art jam was at the Melawati wall and the fourth graffiti art jam was at the KTM Shah Alam tunnel in 2005. NUKE, another important graffiti artist and a member of the PW explained to me that: ‘every wall was illegal [at the time] when we wrote these [jams. We named them:] “Graff Jam Haraam” ‘.⁴⁷¹ Some references to these mentioned *Graff Jams Haraam* can still be found online.⁴⁷² The other two mentioned locations in SA are introduced next.



Figure 3.38 The Old Skate Park in Section 18 of Shah Alam. [See the NUKE piece. Sizes in Figure J.130.] 09 August 2011. Shah Alam, GKL.

⁴⁷⁰ Personal communication with NENOK: 18 September 2008. Shah Alam.

⁴⁷¹ NUKE: Group-Interview.

Haraam is an Arabic term meaning ‘forbidden’. Haraam is the highest status of prohibition given to anything that would result in sin when a Muslim commits it. (Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haraam>)

⁴⁷² NBA KLIK, in *new born artfrom still da toys?....* , (2005).



Figure 3.39 Youngsters calling the researcher to take their picture.
16 February 2013. Shah Alam, GKL.

3.1.1.6 GKL, Shah Alam: Tunnel Walls in Section 18

Some of the best walls for graffiti artists in SA – not only in terms of its size – are the walls in the tunnel next to the Shah Alam KTM commuter train station in Section 18. These walls, around 3 m in height, are the main stage for the graffiti artists in SA in terms of visibility.⁴⁷³ Here the graffiti artists can expose their graffiti art works to the public eye. The walls are situated underneath the road Persiaran Sultan leading over the road Jalan Nyiur 18/41. The Persiaran Sultan is at this point an elevated road, creating a bridge over Jalan Nyiur and this flyover creates at this position a kind of a ‘tunnel’ (Figure 3.40). The bridge, as an urban structure, formed for the graffiti artists several tempting surfaces to paint on. This bridge played a very important part in the history of Malaysian graffiti art, because it is the place, where in the year 2000 the most senior

⁴⁷³ The walls directed towards the road are 2.8 m of height and 3.4 m height – the wall closer to the train tracks is the higher one of the two bridge walls.

Malaysian graffiti artists PHOBIA from Batu Pahat and NENOK from SA met for the first time in person and painted together for the first time ever.⁴⁷⁴



Figure 3.40 NENOK walking in front of the tunnel walls near the KTM train station in Shah Alam. 18 September 2008. Shah Alam, GKL.

3.1.1.7 GKL, Shah Alam: Tennis Wall in Section 20

Another important graffiti art location in SA is the ‘tennis’ wall, represented in Figure 3.41. The second Graffiti Jam in Malaysia was organized in the year 2005 on this ‘*Tennis Courts wall in Section 20*’ by the PW graffiti artists. The tennis wall is part of a police recreational complex, as NENOK explained. NENOK further explained, that the police told the graffiti artists to paint only ‘*nice pictures*’ on to the 17.5 m width and 3 m high wall.⁴⁷⁵ The tennis wall is situated in between the Jalan Pelanduk 20/19 and Jalan Tupai 20/16 in Section 20 of SA. As I observed, this wall was only occasionally painted by the PW graffiti artists and had a more special, ‘higher’ value for the PW graffiti artists.

⁴⁷⁴ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". pp. 122-125; 141-143. NENOK and PHOBIA knew each other first only from the virtual space of the internet.

⁴⁷⁵ Own measurements.



Figure 3.41 Tennis wall in Section 20 in Shah Alam. The three characters depict PW members as tennis players. 18 September 2008. Shah Alam, GKL.

3.1.1.8 GKL, Secret Spot: Rooftop Gallery

The ‘Rooftop’ gallery, as I call it, was not known to many graffiti artists in GKL. The initiated graffiti artists usually referred to this location as to ‘The rooftop’. The rooftop was considered even among some of the initiated graffiti artists as a ‘secret spot’. Therefore, I am following Lundy’s example here and I am not revealing the location’s exact position, even though I am presenting photographs from this spot.⁴⁷⁶ This graffiti art site was located on the top of a condominium block. The building was in GKL and the structure was over 20 floors high. The rooftop space, as a whole, was quite colossal. I visited this location only twice. The first time I visited this location in September 2008 and the second time in December 2008. Altogether, I only spent about an hour at this location. I was first invited to this location by DWANE and SIEK, who invited me to come and see the graffiti art works at this location. I happily accepted their invitation. Nevertheless, I did not know what to expect, but once there, the rooftop

⁴⁷⁶ Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers". (Chill Spots) p. 166.

gallery was breathtaking – Figure 3.42. I was surrounded by 2 m high walls with the best quality of graffiti art works from GKL. All the works were painted by the PHB KLK crew or by their friends. The pieces and characters at this location were perfectly executed, in terms of technique, and the works were of the best quality. No other graffiti artists, besides the PHB KLK and their friends, were painting on these walls. Only the members of PHB KLK made the decisions on what can be painted over in this location. By saying that, it is obvious, that the ‘Rooftop’ was PHB KLK’s own territory – compare with the territorial claims of the TSS (footnote 453, p. 142) and the PW (footnote 470, p. 155). It was a very spectacular location.

The Rooftop gallery was not an officially designated location for graffiti art. Once the management of the condominium realized what was happening on the rooftop, the management wanted the graffiti artists to stop painting these walls. The management did not accept and had not agreed with the walls being painted by the graffiti artists. I realized this already while I was entering the rooftop for the first time. After I arrived in the elevator, with SIEK, at the highest floor of the building, we went around one corner and there were staircases leading to the rooftop. However, as I could see, the staircase was secured by a gate and the gate was locked. SIEK explained to me, that we would have to climb through a last, remaining small gap, which was left open in between the railing and the staircase (Figure 3.43). That was hazardous, as the gap was only about 40-50 cm wide. Another distraction was that one could see through the gap of the staircases to all 20 floors below (see Figure 3.43). SIEK showed me how to master this task (Figure 3.44). When I was entering the location, I passed my backpack through the gap to him and then I tried to follow, but I could not fit through the gap, as the space was very narrow. However, I concentrated and on the third attempt, I made it through the gap. This ethnographic research experience was a pure adrenalin rush.

On the Rooftop gallery were many walls. The outside walls, surrounding the Rooftop, were 2 m high (Figure 3.42). In the middle of the Rooftop was a small structure, of several meters in height (Figure 3.45).⁴⁷⁷ All these walls were used by the graffiti artists as surfaces for the production of graffiti art works.

I had planned to visit the Rooftop gallery once more in February 2009, but it was not possible, as the last gap in between the staircase was completely sealed off and the Rooftop became inaccessible. The management secured the last gap with chains, to hinder the graffiti artists access to the rooftop (see Figure 3.46).

The history of the rooftop goes back – approximately – to January 2007. Before this date, the graffiti artists used to paint in the parking place areas on the ground level of the building. The graffiti artist MEDEA, as a friend of the PHB KLIK, was also coming to paint at this parking place with the PHB KLIK graffiti artists. MEDEA was probably the first graffiti artist, who discovered this secret spot. It happened in the following way as MEDEA remembered:

*Before ... we [discovered the Rooftop, we] always make it at the car park, down there. So, nobody was going to the rooftop [that time]. Yeah, after I saw that the door [to the Rooftop] didn't get locked, so we can climb there. I just told to PHOBIA KLIK: "How about if we going there, painting there?!" [The] PHOBIA KLIK agree[d].*⁴⁷⁸

The first production painted on the Rooftop, was the 'Yellow production' (Figure 3.45). All participating graffiti artists used for this first graffiti art production the color yellow, as an unifying element. According to MEDEA, after the production was finished, all the graffiti art works were shown on the Malaysian TV3 channel, on a program for teenagers, called *Remaja*.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁷ See Fig. 7 in: Novak, "Western Influences in Southeast Asian Paintings: Comparison of a Balinese Ink Painting and of Two Malaysian Graffiti Artworks." p. 110.

⁴⁷⁸ MEDEA, Audio-recorded Interview (1/3), 12 March 2009. [37:10]

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid. [37:45]



Figure 3.42 Skyline of Kuala Lumpur as seen from the secret rooftop location.
21 December 2008. Undisclosed location, GKL.



Figure 3.43 a-b An extreme way to the rooftop gallery through a very narrow opening.
07 September 2008. Undisclosed location, GKL.



Figure 3.44 SIEK 'slipping' through an extremely narrow opening in a railing to [enter and] exit the rooftop.
07 September 2008. Undisclosed location, GKL.



Figure 3.45 A segment of the 'Yellow production' on the secret rooftop.
07 September 2008. Undisclosed location, GKL.



Figure 3.46 a-b The entrance to the secret rooftop was in February 2009 completely sealed off with a chain.
12 February 2009. Undisclosed location, GKL.

3.1.1.9 KL: Bukit Kiara Rakan Muda Sport Complex

Bukit Kiara Rakan Muda Sport Complex is a location very exposed to the public (Figure 3.47). This governmental sports center has, among others, a covered street skate park including a halfpipe and the walls surrounding the skate park have since 2010 been continually, officially, painted by invited Malaysian graffiti artists (see Figure 3.48). The massive structural exterior walls, several meters high, were decorated with graffiti art works by the PHB KLK crew in December 2007 (Figure 3.47), who in return were rewarded for this commission with certificates by ‘The Malaysian Book of Records’ for the longest graffiti wall in Malaysia (269.90 m). The Book of Records itself states that the creation of the 270 m long work took 20 days and that the graffiti art work was revealed to the public on 29 December 2007.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁸⁰ C. K. Yap, ed. *Malaysia Book of Records*, Edisi Dwibahasa ed. (Kuala Lumpur: Datuk Danny Ooi H. E., June 2008). p. 287.



Figure 3.47 Bukit Kiara Rakan Muda Complex. Outside walls with graffiti art works next to the road.
07 September 2008. Bukit Kiara Rakan Muda Complex, KL.



Figure 3.48 Bukit Kiara Rakan Muda Complex. Indoor walls of the skate park.
07 September 2008. Bukit Kiara Rakan Muda Complex, KL.

3.1.1.10 Other locations in GKL

Besides the above – in separate sub-sections – discussed and illustrated locations, there were naturally other spots frequented and popular with the graffiti artists in GKL. However, these will be listed only briefly in this section.

In the year 2009, the graffiti artists from GKL ‘acquired’ a new popular spot in Wangsa Maju. Since 2009 this location is continually painted over with new graffiti art works.⁴⁸¹ The triangular shaped wall in Wangsa Maju was positioned near the crossing of Jalan Wangsa Delima 1 and Jalan 34/26 underneath the Wangsa Maju Aeon supermarket [previously Carrefour] and a Shell petrol station (Figure 3.49).

Between the years 2008–2010, graffiti artists from GKL also used to produce their graffiti art works at a tennis wall in the schoolyard in Jelatek (Figure 3.50). During this period, this wall was in a way abandoned, and the schoolyard was not in a good condition. The wall was part of the Kompleks Sukan Datuk Keramat in between the streets Jalan Keramat Dalam and Jalan Jelatek. After the revitalization of the schoolyard, graffiti art did not occur again on this wall.

Since 2007, graffiti artists in Kajang – and other visiting graffiti artists from GKL – produced graffiti art works on the tunnel walls along the KTM train tracks in Kajang (Figure 3.51). The tunnel was underneath the Jalan Sungai Chua (B11) flyover near the street Jalan Kajang 1 and Jalan Dua. This spot occasionally attracted various graffiti artists from GKL.

In the year 2011, the PW crew ‘created’ two new graffiti art locations. One wall was underneath the LRT station Setiawangsa (Figure 3.52). This location can be found in the street Jalan Jelatek, near Jalan AU 1a/4d and the second wall was in another

⁴⁸¹ One work from this location is also included into the paper: Novak et al., "Comparison between Wayang Kulit Kelantan and Graffiti Art in Greater Kuala Lumpur: Similarities and Differences."

tunnel near the KTM train tracks next to the KTM station Batu Tiga (Figure 3.53). The tunnel was underneath the road Persiaran Jubli Perak, near Lebuhraya Persekutuan.

An older – rarely frequented – location from around the year 2006 was the wall in the Chinatown area in Jalan Panggong (Figure 3.54).

Finally, I list another location, where graffiti art works were present for a short period in 2008. This location was at the wall underneath the Maharajalela Monorail train station in Jalan Maharajalela (Figure 3.55).

In this section, it was further highlighted that graffiti artists have to ‘acquire’ new graffiti art spots, as the public administration does not provide such spots to the graffiti artists automatically, spontaneously. The graffiti artists have to ‘claim’ such graffiti art spots. However, certain graffiti artists – such as from the PHBKLK, TSS, PW or RTC crews – are more often inclined to acquire – such spots in GKL. Perhaps contrary to this, some graffiti artists in GKL – as ESCAPE – do not produce such spots. This is well illustrated in the *Spot theory*:

*Some [graffiti] writers ... become very good at selecting new or ‘virgin’ spots that other [graffiti] writers have not yet painted; yet others never acquire this proficiency, and base their graffiti [art] careers on contributing to spots that other writers have previously deemed appropriate and painted.*⁴⁸²

⁴⁸² Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 55.



Figure 3.49 Triangular wall at Wangsa Maju, underneath Aeon [Carrefour] and a Shell petrol station.
09 August 2011. Wangsa Maju, GKL.



Figure 3.50 MIST149's character at the LRT Jelatek tennis wall, as seen with the camera through a fence.
02 November 2008. Jelatek, KL.



Figure 3.51 Tunnel walls along the KTM tracks in Kajang.
08 January 2009. Kajang, GKL.



Figure 3.52 The graffiti art wall next to the Setiawangsa LRT train station. [See also Figure J.67-Figure J.68.]
04 September 2011. Setiawangsa, KL.



Figure 3.53 The tunnel wall near to the KTM train station Batu Tiga. [See also Figure J.124-Figure J.129.]
07 July 2011. Batu Tiga, GKL.



Figure 3.54 a-b Graffiti art works on top of a Rakan Muda mural in Chinatown.
03 October 2008. Jalan Panggong, KL.



Figure 3.55 The wall underneath the Maharajalela Monorail train station.
12 October 2008. Jalan Maharajalela, KL.

3.1.2 Other Research Locations Outside of Malaysia

I also gathered data for this research from other geographical locations, such as from Singapore, Istanbul and Prague. I visited Singapore and Istanbul as a tourist and Prague is my birthplace. Data gathered from these research locations were mostly to highlight the differences or the commonalities between the graffiti art culture in GKL or from these additional research locations. Such data are used occasionally throughout the chapters of this thesis and can only be considered as supportive descriptive data.

3.1.2.1 Singapore

Singapore is another country in the Southeast Asian region. Singapore's history is closely tied to that of Malaysia, as these two countries formed for a short time the Federation of Malaysia. Singapore is nowadays one of the most prosperous countries in the world, with a very strict legislation and therefore with only a very small graffiti art culture. The urban landscape of Singapore is very clean and modern. However, there are a few dedicated graffiti artists in Singapore, but the graffiti art culture of Singapore is

significantly restricted. There is nearly no illegal graffiti art in Singapore and the majority of graffiti art works from Singapore was produced over the years in the Somerset skate park and in the *Scape compound (see Figure 3.56-Figure 3.57).



Figure 3.56 A 'MIMER' quick piece on a obstacles in the Somerset skate park, where graffiti art was sanctioned.
11 March 2009. Somerset, Singapore.



Figure 3.57 Murals by Singaporean graffiti artists on the *SCAPE building near the Somerset skate park.
11 March 2009. Somerset, Singapore.

3.1.2.2 Istanbul

Istanbul, and the whole of present day Turkey, has since forever been the bridge between the Orient and the Occident, connecting the East with the West. Turkey finds itself somewhere between the cultures of the ‘East’ and the ‘West’ (Figure 3.58). Istanbul is the only city in the world spanning two continents – Asia and Europe. I visited Turkey for a conference in April 2014 and conducted fieldwork in this city. I gathered data from a few interviews with local, Turkish, graffiti artists and I gathered some very good visual data related to the graffiti art research from the streets of Istanbul. The main research area for my fieldwork was the İstiklal street in Taksim, the area around the Galata tower, the Hayderpaşa train station, the hall of fame at Tatlıpınar street and the hall of fame at Zeytinburnu (Figure 3.59-Figure 3.62).



Figure 3.58 Bosphorus bridge connecting Europe and Asia.
28 April 2014, Bosphorus, Istanbul.



Figure 3.59 Galata Tower as a landmark.
28 April 2014, Karaköy Pier, Istanbul.



Figure 3.60 The trainyard at the Haydarpaşa train station.
28 April 2014, Haydarpaşa, Istanbul.



Figure 3.61 A very large hall of fame in the Tatlıpınar street in Istanbul.
27 April 2014, Tatlıpınar street, Istanbul.



Figure 3.62 Graffiti artists FUNK, ÖMER and MACHO painting at a hall of fame.
27 April 2014, Zeytinburnu, Istanbul.

3.1.2.3 Prague

Prague is another historically and culturally rich city. The city center of Prague is under the protection of UNESCO (Figure 3.63-Figure 3.65). I conducted in Prague several interviews with local, Czech, and international graffiti artists. At the same time, I conducted research about the graffiti art culture in Prague, which resulted in the conference paper *Graffiti Art as Public Art and the City Image: A Comparison of Prague and Kuala Lumpur*.⁴⁸³ I also conducted the legibility research experiment with Czech graffiti artists (see p. 308), as these do not have any knowledge of the graffiti art works produced in GKL. The three main research locations in Prague were the halls of fame in Modřany, Barrandov and at Těšnov (Figure 3.66-Figure 3.68).



Figure 3.63 View on the Old Town and the Charles Bridge.
09 September 2012, Charles bridge, Prague.

⁴⁸³ Novak, "Graffiti Art as Public Art and the City Image: A Comparison of Prague and Kuala Lumpur".



Figure 3.64 The Old Town square.
10 September 2012, Old Town square, Prague.



Figure 3.65 View on the Prague castle from the Charles Bridge.
01 November 2012, Charles bridge, Prague



Figure 3.66 The hall of fame at Modřany.⁴⁸⁴
05 June 2014, Modřany, Prague



Figure 3.67 The hall of fame at Barrandov.
10 May 2009, Barrandov, Prague.

⁴⁸⁴ This location was used also as the backdrop for the video: HEX Production, "Jindra Smola Footzeep," (YouTube, 2014).



Figure 3.68 The hall of fame at Těšnov.
09 February 2014, Těšnov, Prague.

3.2 Participants

Graffiti artists' TAG NAMES are presented in this research in capital letters as is common practice in the graffiti art research. Civilian names of graffiti artists are only provided if they are publically known from published sources.

Participants in this research were, primarily, graffiti artists who were actively taking part in the graffiti art culture. Participation is defined here as active production of graffiti art works in any form. Graffiti art works can be produced in a sanctioned form or unauthorized, but in accordance with the graffiti art cultural traditions. In special focus were graffiti artists creating graffiti art works in the area of GKL – local and foreign. The research does not exclude foreign graffiti artists either if they created graffiti art in GKL or if they were discussing graffiti art works from GKL or in general.

Throughout the research period, I was with some of the participants in a more individual personal contact than with others. However, generally I had relatively close contact with all of the participants, derived from the participant as observer method. This also places my own perspective close to that of the global graffiti art culture.

Throughout this study, I aimed to portrait the individual graffiti artist, where applicable, in relation to the objectives of this thesis.

Direct (or indirect) participants of this study were the following graffiti artists:

A80S (MAL),⁴⁸⁵ AMOE (MAL),⁴⁸⁶ ‘Anonymous Berlin writer’ (D),⁴⁸⁷ AROE (GB),⁴⁸⁸ ASE (CZ),⁴⁸⁹ ASKOE (MAL),⁴⁹⁰ BALY (MAL),⁴⁹¹ BESH (CZ),⁴⁹² BIBICHUN (MAL),⁴⁹³ BIOR (CZ),⁴⁹⁴ BLACK FRYDAY [KENJI] (MAL),⁴⁹⁵ BOK crew (TR),⁴⁹⁶ BOND (D),⁴⁹⁷ BONE (MAL),⁴⁹⁸ BONKS2 (MAL),⁴⁹⁹ BONY (SGP),⁵⁰⁰ BUDEAN (MAL),⁵⁰¹ BURP (MAL),⁵⁰² BURAK (CZ),⁵⁰³ CAGO (CZ),⁵⁰⁴ CAKES (CZ),⁵⁰⁵ CARPET (MAL),⁵⁰⁶ CLOAK (MAL),⁵⁰⁷ CLOG2 (SGP),⁵⁰⁸ COAD (T),⁵⁰⁹ CRAZ (VN),⁵¹⁰ CREN (D),⁵¹¹ CYDE02 (BRU),⁵¹² DAMIS (MAL),⁵¹³ DATOM (MAL),⁵¹⁴

⁴⁸⁵ A80S, Audio-recorded Interview, 16 August 2008; *ibid.*

⁴⁸⁶ AMOE, Online interview, 11 May 2014.

⁴⁸⁷ Anonymous Berlin writer, Audio-recorded Interview, 15 February 2009.

⁴⁸⁸ AROE, Email, 31 July 2009.

⁴⁸⁹ ASE, Audio-recorded Interview, 24 October 2012.

⁴⁹⁰ ASKOE, Audio-recorded Interview, 16 February 2013.

⁴⁹¹ BALY, Audio-recorded Interview, 16 August 2008; *ibid.*

⁴⁹² BESH, Audio-recorded Interview, 17 November 2012; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 05 September 2013; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 16 August 2009.

⁴⁹³ BIBICHUN, Audio-recorded Interview, 02 February 2008; BIBICHUN, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2009; BIBICHUN, Email Interview, 15-20 August 2011.

⁴⁹⁴ BIOR, Email Interview, 09 February 2010; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 27 October 2012.

⁴⁹⁵ BLACK FRIDAY, Audio-recorded Interview, 14 April 2013; BLACK FRYDAY, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012.

⁴⁹⁶ BOK crew, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 April 2014.

⁴⁹⁷ BOND, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 December 2012.

⁴⁹⁸ BONE.

⁴⁹⁹ BONKS2, Online Interview, 10 April 2009; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 22 April 2012.

⁵⁰⁰ BONY, Online interview, 07 July 2009.

⁵⁰¹ BUDEAN, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012.

⁵⁰² BURP, Audio-recorded Interview, 07 March 2009; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 13 May 2012.

⁵⁰³ BURAK, Email Interview, 13 September 2009.

⁵⁰⁴ CAGO, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 August 2013.

⁵⁰⁵ CAKES, Email Interview, 01 September 2009.

⁵⁰⁶ CARPET, Audio-recorded Interview, 20 August 2008; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 12 February 2009; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 21 March 2013.

⁵⁰⁷ CLOAK, Audio-recorded Interview, 15 December 2012; *ibid.*

⁵⁰⁸ CLOG02, Email interview, 06 August 2009.

⁵⁰⁹ COAD, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2012.

⁵¹⁰ CRAZ, Email Interview, 27 September 2009.

⁵¹¹ CREN, Audio-recorded Interview, 07 June 2014.

DREW (MAL),⁵¹⁵ DWANE2 (MAL),⁵¹⁶ EAZ (USA),⁵¹⁷ ESCAPE (MAL),⁵¹⁸ ESOK (SGP),⁵¹⁹ EZOP (CZ),⁵²⁰ FIDOW711 (MAL),⁵²¹ FLIN (S),⁵²² FLIP1 (RP),⁵²³ FONER (EU),⁵²⁴ FUNK (TR),⁵²⁵ HANES (CZ),⁵²⁶ JABA (CO),⁵²⁷ KASIO (D),⁵²⁸ KATUN (MAL),⁵²⁹ KAY (MAL),⁵³⁰ KDM (MAL),⁵³¹ KEAS (MAL),⁵³² KHALIL (MAL),⁵³³ KIMES (T),⁵³⁴ KIOUE (MAL),⁵³⁵ KOS (MAL),⁵³⁶ KURN (MAL),⁵³⁷ MACHO (TR),⁵³⁸ MADNUZ (MAL),⁵³⁹ ‘Mauermaler’ (D),⁵⁴⁰ MEDEA (MAL),⁵⁴¹ MICKEY (NL),⁵⁴² MILE09 (MAL),⁵⁴³ MILKA (CZ),⁵⁴⁴ MIRA2 (CZ),⁵⁴⁵ MIST149 (MAL),⁵⁴⁶ MOGOT

⁵¹² CYDE02, Email Interview, 02 August 2009.

⁵¹³ DAMIS, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2009.

⁵¹⁴ DATOM, Audio-recorded Interview, 28 February 2009; *ibid*.

⁵¹⁵ DREW, Email Interview, 2008.

⁵¹⁶ DWANE2, Audio-recorded Interview, 16 August 2008b; *ibid*; *ibid*; *ibid*.

⁵¹⁷ EAZ ONE, Email, 29 September 2009.

⁵¹⁸ ESCAPE, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012; *ibid*.

⁵¹⁹ ESOK, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2012.

⁵²⁰ EZOP, Audio-recorded Interview, 11 November 2012.

⁵²¹ FIDOW711, Audio-recorded Interview, 17 December 2008.

⁵²² FLIN, Audio-recorded Interview, 09 January 2009.

⁵²³ FLIP1, Email Interview, 03 April 2013.

⁵²⁴ FONER, Audio-recorded Interview, 17 January 2009.

⁵²⁵ FUNK, Audio-recorded Interview, 27 April 2014; ———, Online Interview, 18 July 2009.

⁵²⁶ HANES, Audio-recorded Interview, 01 November 2012; ———, Email Interview, 01 February 2010.

⁵²⁷ JABA, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012.

⁵²⁸ KASIO [CASIO], Audio-recorded Interview, 15 February 2009.

⁵²⁹ KATUN; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 17 May 2013.

⁵³⁰ KAY, Audio-recorded Interview, 13 September 2008; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 12 March 2009.

⁵³¹ KDM, Audio-recorded Interview, 03 November 2008.

⁵³² Group-Interview.

⁵³³ KHALIL, Audio-recorded Interview, 14 December 2008.

⁵³⁴ KIMES, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2012.

⁵³⁵ KIOUE, Audio-recorded Interview, 23 October 2008; *ibid*; *ibid*; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 01 March 2009; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 10 June 2010; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2013.

⁵³⁶ KOS, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012.

⁵³⁷ KURN, Audio-recorded Interview, 03 November 2008.

⁵³⁸ MACHO, Audio-recorded Interview, 27 April 2014.

⁵³⁹ MADNUZ, Online Interview, 04 October 2008; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 08 January 2009.

⁵⁴⁰ Political sprayers from East-Germany [‘Mauermaler’], Public talk and Audio-recorded Interview, 14 June 2014.

⁵⁴¹ MEDEA, Audio-recorded Interview, 12 March 2009; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 6 April 2014.

⁵⁴² MICKEY, Audio-recorded Interview, 07 June 2014.

⁵⁴³ MILE09, Audio-recorded Interview, 02 November 2008; *ibid*.

⁵⁴⁴ MILKA, Audio-recorded Interview, 11 September 2013.

⁵⁴⁵ MIRA2, Audio-recorded Interview (1/5), 15. December 2011b; *ibid*.

(MAL),⁵⁴⁷ MR. WANY (I),⁵⁴⁸ NAS-EL (MAL),⁵⁴⁹ NEWBA (MAL),⁵⁵⁰ NENOK (MAL),⁵⁵¹ NUKE (MAL),⁵⁵² ÖMER (TR),⁵⁵³ PARSE (MAL),⁵⁵⁴ PHOBIA (MAL),⁵⁵⁵ POIS (CZ),⁵⁵⁶ PORS (CH),⁵⁵⁷ PW crew (MAL),⁵⁵⁸ RASH (MAL),⁵⁵⁹ RAT (MAL),⁵⁶⁰ REYNA (BRU),⁵⁶¹ RIDIK (CZ),⁵⁶² ROSYONE (CH),⁵⁶³ SAINT (MAL),⁵⁶⁴ SCHIZO (MAL),⁵⁶⁵ SCOPE (SGP),⁵⁶⁶ SEEKAYEM (NZ),⁵⁶⁷ SHIEKO [SUGA52] (MAL),⁵⁶⁸ SIEK (MAL),⁵⁶⁹ SIRA (MAL),⁵⁷⁰ SIXTHIE (MAL),⁵⁷¹ SKETCH (SGP),⁵⁷² SKORE (MAL),⁵⁷³ SLACSATU (SGP),⁵⁷⁴ SNOOZE (MAL),⁵⁷⁵ SOME70 (MAL),⁵⁷⁶ SONA

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- ⁵⁴⁶ ROSAK [MIST149], Online interview 11 May 2014; MIST149, Audio-recorded Interview, 07 September 2008; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 11 February 2009; *ibid.*
- ⁵⁴⁷ MOGOT [NAY2], Audio-recorded Interview, 02 November 2008.
- ⁵⁴⁸ MR.WANY, Audio-recorded Interview, 27 February 2012.
- ⁵⁴⁹ NAS-EL, Audio-recorded Interview, 13 March 2009.
- ⁵⁵⁰ NEWBA, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2012.
- ⁵⁵¹ Group-Interview; NENOK, Audio-recorded Interview, 17 September 2008; *ibid*; *ibid*; *ibid.*
- ⁵⁵² Group-Interview; NUKE, Online Interview, 13 October 2008; *ibid*; *ibid*; *ibid*; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 16 February 2013; ———, Online interview, 11 May 2014.
- ⁵⁵³ ÖMER, Audio-recorded Interview, 27 April 2014.
- ⁵⁵⁴ PARSE, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2012.
- ⁵⁵⁵ PHOBIA, Audio-recorded Interview, 12 February 2009; ———, Interview Notes, 20 August 2008; *ibid.*
- ⁵⁵⁶ POIS, Audio-recorded Interview, 02 September 2009; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 18 December 2011; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 02 July 2013 2013.
- ⁵⁵⁷ PORS, Audio-recorded Interview, 16 August 2009.
- ⁵⁵⁸ Group-Interview.
- ⁵⁵⁹ RASH, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012.
- ⁵⁶⁰ RAT, Audio-recorded Interview, 14 December 2008.
- ⁵⁶¹ REYNA, Email Interview, 02 August 2009.
- ⁵⁶² RIDIK, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 August 2013; ———, Email Interview, 09 September 2009.
- ⁵⁶³ ROSY ONE, Audio-recorded Interview, 07 June 2014.
- ⁵⁶⁴ SAINT, Audio-recorded Interview, 01 March 2009.
- ⁵⁶⁵ SCHIZO, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012.
- ⁵⁶⁶ SCOPE, Online Interview, 07 July 2009; ———, Email Interview, 16 June 2010.
- ⁵⁶⁷ SEEKAYEM, Audio-recorded Interview, 03 November 2008.
- ⁵⁶⁸ SUGA52, Audio-recorded Interview, 14 February 2009b.
- ⁵⁶⁹ SIEK, Audio-recorded Interview 2/4, 13 September 2008; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 23 February 2013.
- ⁵⁷⁰ SIRA, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012.
- ⁵⁷¹ SIXTHIE, Online Response, 22 December 2008.
- ⁵⁷² SKETCH, Email interview, 04 August 2009.
- ⁵⁷³ SKORE, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2009.
- ⁵⁷⁴ SLACSATU, Email Interview, 02 August 2009; SLACSATU, Audio-recorded Interview (1/3), 25 February 2012.
- ⁵⁷⁵ SNOZZE, Audio-recorded Interview, 02 November 2008; *ibid.*
- ⁵⁷⁶ SOME70, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2009.

(MAL),⁵⁷⁷ SOPEY (MAL),⁵⁷⁸ SPEL (AUS),⁵⁷⁹ SPOKE (MAL),⁵⁸⁰ SPUXS114 (MAL),⁵⁸¹ SRK publishers (GB),⁵⁸² SWEB (CZ),⁵⁸³ SYCO03 (SGP),⁵⁸⁴ T-KID (USA),⁵⁸⁵ THA-B (MAL),⁵⁸⁶ THEY (MAL),⁵⁸⁷ TNQ31 (EU),⁵⁸⁸ TOUCH (CHN),⁵⁸⁹ TOURIST (MAL),⁵⁹⁰ TRACE (SGP),⁵⁹¹ TRUE635 (CZ),⁵⁹² VDS (MAL),⁵⁹³ VLADIMIR518 (CZ),⁵⁹⁴ VLT (MAL),⁵⁹⁵ VOLRE (MAL),⁵⁹⁶ WAZER [ASWER] (MAL),⁵⁹⁷ WON (D),⁵⁹⁸ YUDOE (CZ),⁵⁹⁹ YUMZ (MAL),⁶⁰⁰ ZANY (RI),⁶⁰¹ ZIDS (T),⁶⁰² ZLO (CZ)⁶⁰³ and probably some others I might have forgotten to list.⁶⁰⁴

This very extensive list includes graffiti artists that I had interviewed in the years 2008–2014. I also intentionally listed graffiti artists that I had interviewed only very briefly, as a brief response might have shaped some of the perspectives I have about the

⁵⁷⁷ SONA, Audio-recorded Interview, 05 March 2009.

⁵⁷⁸ SOPEY, Audio-recorded Interview, 09 March 2009.

⁵⁷⁹ SPEL, Audio-recorded Interview, 09 February 2014.

⁵⁸⁰ SPOKE, Audio-recorded Interview, 03 November 2008.

⁵⁸¹ SPUXS114, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012.

⁵⁸² SRK publishers, Audio-recorded Interview, 09 March 2009.

⁵⁸³ SWEB, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 August 2013.

⁵⁸⁴ SYCO03, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2012; ———, Online Interview, July 2009.

⁵⁸⁵ T-KID170, Audio-recorded Interview, 07 June 2014.

⁵⁸⁶ THA-B, Online Interview, 25 September 2008; *ibid*.

⁵⁸⁷ THEY, Audio-recorded Interview, 02 November 2008; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2009; ———, Online interview, 22 April 2013.

⁵⁸⁸ TNQ30, Audio-recorded Interview, 30 January 2009.

⁵⁸⁹ TOUCH, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2012.

⁵⁹⁰ TOURIST, Audio-recorded Interview, 12 March 2009.

⁵⁹¹ TRASE, Email Interview, 21 June 2010.

⁵⁹² TRUE635, Audio-recorded Interview, 21 August 2009.

⁵⁹³ VDS, Audio-recorded Interview, 14 February 2009; *ibid*; *ibid*; *ibid*.

⁵⁹⁴ VLADIMIR518, Audio-recorded Interview, 17 August 2013.

⁵⁹⁵ VLT [VIOLENT], Audio-recorded Interview, 24 September 2008; *ibid*.

⁵⁹⁶ VOLRE, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012.

⁵⁹⁷ ASWER, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012; Group-Interview.

⁵⁹⁸ WON, Email, 15 April 2010.

⁵⁹⁹ YUDOE, Audio-recorded Interview, 23 August 2013.

⁶⁰⁰ YUMZ, Audio-recorded Interview, 06 April 2014; ———, Audio-recorded Interview, 16 February 2013.

⁶⁰¹ ZANY, Email Interview, 20 August 2009.

⁶⁰² ZIDS, Audio-recorded Interview, 26 February 2012.

⁶⁰³ ZLO, Audio-recorded Interview, 16 August 2009.

⁶⁰⁴ The nationalities of the graffiti artists are listed in brackets with appropriate ‘International Car Codes’ for the lack of a better, short, indication.

topic of this thesis. I did not list graffiti artists that I only informally talked to, but who might have influenced my opinions too.

3.3 Private Research Archive

This present study expands my masters dissertation.⁶⁰⁵ Thus, my own private research archive acquired during my previous fieldwork (2008–2010) was used as a data source for this study. The research archive includes, for instance, 700 pages of interview transcripts (26 hours of audio-recorded interviews) and over 20.000 digital photographs from the research location of GKL (spanning over the period 2008–2010). This research archive significantly grew in size through 2011–2014.

The research archive has an extensive historical importance, as it contains many graffiti art works and interviews.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Most data present in this current research are primary data collected mainly from fieldwork with interview and visual methods. Secondary data were collected from printed and digital publications. A survey and a legibility experiment were conducted during several interviews. I conducted interviews with participants in my mother tongue Czech, also in Turkish, but mainly in English. The total sum of audio-recorded interviews expands beyond 20 hours of audio-recorded interviews from the years 2011–2014. I made heavy use of the ethnographic method of photo elicitation. However, to do research within the graffiti art culture has its limitations, because the graffiti art culture and its participants often want to retain their independency and graffiti artists often show a certain sort of resistance to intrusive research.

⁶⁰⁵ Novak, David. *The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley*. MA Dissertation. University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. 2011.

3.4.1 Library Research

Library research was done in the Main Library of University Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. Besides various printed publications, digital online resources represented an important part of the library research, especially on the historical backgrounds of the graffiti art culture and on current research in this field. The most commonly used online databases and journal collections were JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org/>), ProQuest (<http://www.proquest.com>), Taylor & Francis (<http://www.taylorandfrancis.com/>) and ScienceDirect (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/>).

Nowadays, graffiti artists very often gather in the internet environment. Therefore, it was possible to locate a significant amount of secondary data in this virtual space. Malaysian news articles were located and accessed on the publishers' portals. The most important resource for news reports on graffiti art in Malaysia was the largest Malaysian newspaper The Star (<http://thestar.com.my/>) and subsequently the New Straits Times newspaper (<http://www.nst.com.my/>).

3.4.2 Visual Methods

In the beginning, there was the question of whether a still image – a photograph – of a graffiti art work can be equal to the real, physical graffiti art work. The answer is no. A good photograph will represent and replicate much of the original graffiti art work, but a photograph will not be able to transmit the atmosphere of the whole graffiti art work. Graffiti art is a site-specific art form. Graffiti art is connected to the urban environment where it is placed and it cannot be separated from it. Graffiti art is literally 'produced on the city itself'. Only in sketches or on canvas are graffiti art works separated from the urban environment. To experience the real impact of graffiti art works discussed in this present research, it would be necessary to go outdoors and experience the graffiti art works with your own senses. It is a must to experience the size of a graffiti art work, to see the colors and to understand the environment a graffiti

art work is positioned in. It is important to walk up to the location of a graffiti art work, to hear the sounds surrounding the graffiti art works (the street traffic or the singing birds) and to touch physically the surface of these graffiti art works. One has also to experience the temperature or smell the scents of the surrounding area where a graffiti art work is located. However, photographic documentation is the only way that graffiti art works are usually preserved. Simply put, graffiti art works are in 'public galleries', which are freely accessible.

The life span of graffiti art works varies from several hours to several years, if not painted on canvas or on some other durable and storable materials. Therefore, visual documentation is a necessity for the research of graffiti art. I used for documentation the visual method of photography.

3.4.2.1 Visual Research Collection: Photography

During this present research, throughout the years 2011–2014, I continued to expand my visual research collection of graffiti art works. For this purpose I used the simple compact digital cameras Nikon Coolpix S700, Sony DSC-W90, Samsung PL90/VLUU PL90 and Olympus T105,T100,X36. Digital photographs were copied onto a computer hard drive and stored. The sizes of digital photographs varied usually from 5–8 Megapixels. The average size of an image was 3264 x 2448 pixels. The photographs in this study were all taken by the author – if not otherwise stated in the caption or in the text. I documented the Malaysian graffiti art works and the urban development in GKL over a period of more than six years – I started doing this documentation in 2008 and continued to do so until the present day. In this process I collected tens of thousands of digital photographs. For this task, I was regularly visiting graffiti art locations in GKL and explored the area of GKL – and of other cities – in a race against time, because graffiti art works' final judge is time. Some graffiti art works might last hours, some several years. The life span of the graffiti art differs

significantly. The graffiti art work in Figure 3.69 lasted at its location for several months (Figure 3.69-Figure 3.71), but already after a few weeks it was altered with other spray painted inscriptions (Figure 3.71),⁶⁰⁶ before it was finally completely altered (Figure 3.72). This example is common in the graffiti art culture. Every graffiti art work is painted with the knowledge that it might survive several hours, a day, weeks, months or years. Therefore this art form is also a true example of contemporary art-for-art's-sake.

Besides photographic documentation, I also sometimes made use of video recordings. For the purpose of recording live motion pictures, I used either the above-mentioned photo cameras or a handy cam. However, video recordings were not the primary visual methods used in this research.

It needs once again to be emphasized that photography is the most powerful research tool for the visual exploration of the graffiti art culture. Photography should be continuously incorporated into graffiti art research, because graffiti art is a visual art form and the storing of photographs is nowadays easy with modern information technologies available to every researcher.⁶⁰⁷ For researchers it is of the utmost importance and advantage to repeatedly take photographs of graffiti art works (Figure 3.75-Figure 3.84), their environment (Figure 3.73-Figure 3.84) and to store these photographs in a digital research archive on computers. These photographs provide a researcher with plentiful visual information for evaluation in the future (see Figure 3.85-Figure 3.90). Graffiti art works and their environment changes over time (see Figure 3.73-Figure 3.84; Figure 3.85-Figure 3.90) and the insight of a researcher on the graffiti art culture grows with time too. With an extensive research archive at hand, containing

⁶⁰⁶ Even a more altered stage of the graffiti art work is printed in: "Digital Photography: Combing the Streets," *PC.com* June 2010.

⁶⁰⁷ For a detailed published paper on this topic refer to: David Novak, "Photography and Classification of Information: Proposed Framework for Graffiti Art," *Street Art & Urban Creativity Scientific Journal Methodologies for Research* 1, no. 1 (2015a).

several hundreds or thousands of photographs, a researcher can formulate new hypothesis and conclusions for future research.

Photography of graffiti art works is very useful especially for arts students interested in graffiti art research. I personally shot probably over 50.000 digital photographs of graffiti art works during 2008–2014. This number includes also some hundreds of photographs of the urban landscape harvesting graffiti art works, as the urban landscape is the ‘canvas’ for graffiti artists (Figure 3.73-Figure 3.74; Figure 3.85-Figure 3.90; Figure 4.15-Figure 4.17, pp. 248-249).

It needs to be stated, that photography in the hands of the researcher represents a very powerful tool, as the researcher influences the presentation of research information often through photographs, as I do in this present study. It is important to always bear in mind that the representation in a photograph, of a graffiti art work, is always contextual to its environment, as graffiti art is a site-specific art form. Compare for example the possible presentation of the CARPET piece within the graffiti art production of other PHBKLLK graffiti artists (Figure 3.91-Figure 3.95). In photographs in Figure 3.91-Figure 3.96 it is demonstrated that the CARPET piece can be presented in different types of representation, ranging from general to detailed (Figure 3.91-Figure 3.96). For research purposes related to visual arts the presentation in Figure 3.94 would be appropriate – this suggested form of presentation is further demonstrated in the piece by BIOR in Figure 3.97-Figure 3.99. However, in urbanism Figure 3.91 it would be more appropriate for the presentation of CARPET’s piece. Sociologists or art historians might be interested in the production process of a graffiti art work. Such a graffiti art production is shown in Figure 3.100, whereby a researcher takes parallel images of the location where a graffiti art work is being produced and later these individual photographs are stitched together in a computer, with the help of a graphics software. The angle for taking photographs is important as it influences the final photograph, as is

shown in Figure 3.101, where one stitched image was taken parallel to the wall and the second from one spot.

To sum up, photography is a very important research tool in graffiti art research.



Figure 3.69 This work by KIOUE and THA-B, titled “PENGORBANAN” [“SACRIFICE”], lasted at its location several months, but was destroyed already after few weeks.
28 October 2008, Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.70 The graffiti art work from Figure 3.69 exactly one month later.
28 November 2008, Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.71 The graffiti art work from Figure 3.69 was altered already after two months.
15 December 2008, Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.72 BONKS2 painted finally a piece over the mural in Figure 3.69 (See also Appendix: Figure A.821).
07 February 2010. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 3.73 Whitewashed walls by the DBKL at the riverbank walls at Pasar Seni LRT station.
12 October 2008. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 3.74 Pieces occurred once again at the riverbank walls at Pasar Seni LRT station.
14 March 2009. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 3.75 KATUN's and CARPET's 1st place winning work from KulSign 2010 Festival.
27 January 2011, Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 3.76 KATUN's and CARPET's mural partly covered by flash floods and defaced by PARSE.
13 April 2012, Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 3.77 KATUN's and CARPET's 1st place winning work from KulSign 2010 Festival defaced by PARSE. 15 April 2012, Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 3.78 KATUN's and CARPET's mural with a message from PHB KLK/ZNC to PARSE as seen from LRT train. 30 June 2012, Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 3.79 KATUN's and CARPET's mural used as a stage for the 'positive' propaganda produced on the ground.
14 July 2012, Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.

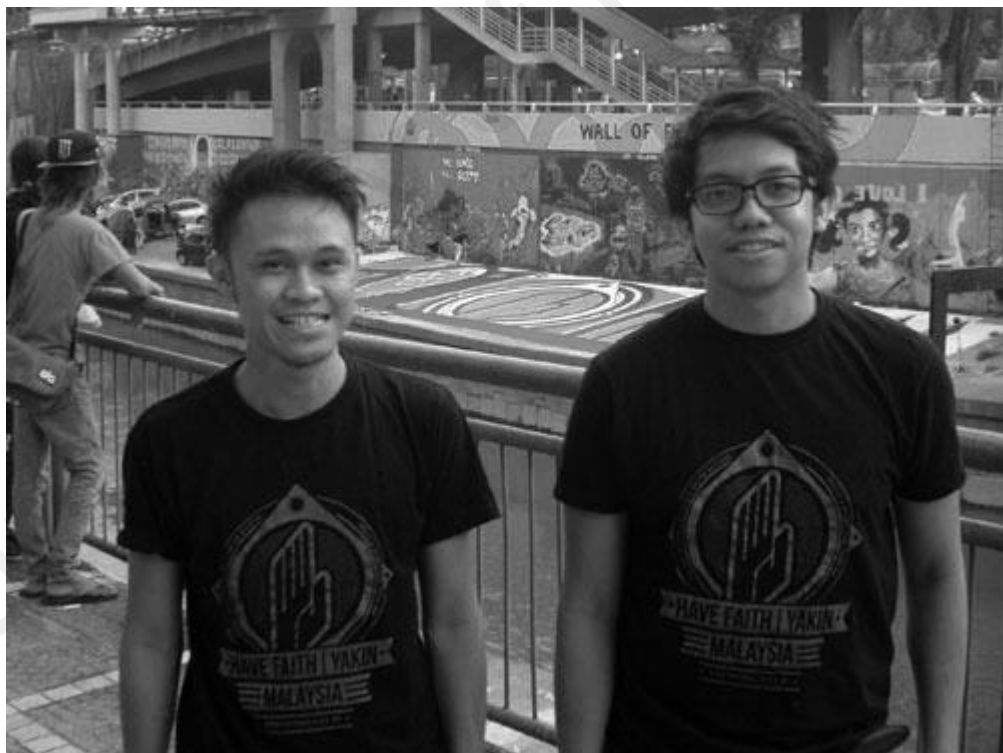


Figure 3.80 KATUN's and CARPET's mural used as a stage for the mural by 'Have Faith. Yakin. Malaysia'.
14 July 2012, Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 3.81 KATUN's and CARPET's mural used as a stage for the 'positive' propaganda on the ground. 14 July 2012, Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 3.82 KATUN's and CARPET's mural used as a backdrop to a local Tamil movie production. 09 January 2013, Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 3.83 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winning works from KulSign 2010 Festival defaced.
15 September 2013, Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 3.84 The 'Wall of Fame 2010' from Figure 3.75-Figure 3.83 completely painted over in early 2014.
06 March 2014, Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 3.85 The whole Melawati tennis wall in late November 2008.
30 November 2008. Melawati, GKL.

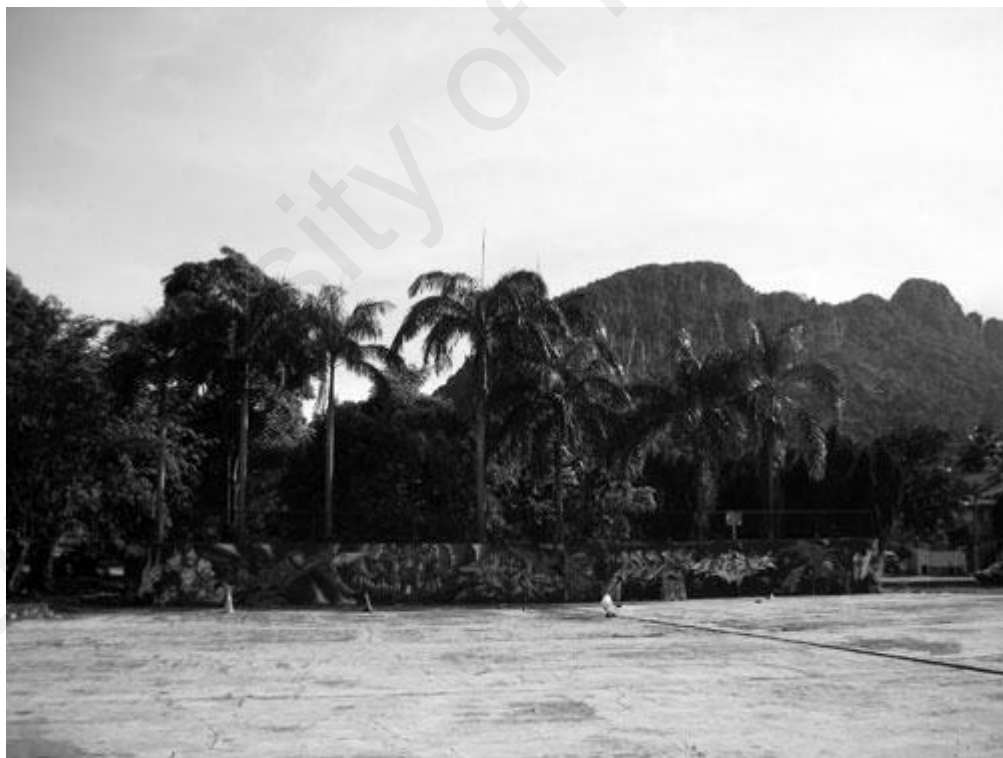


Figure 3.86 The whole Melawati tennis wall in early December 2008.
01 December 2008. Melawati, GKL.



Figure 3.87 A segment of the Melawati tennis wall in late 2008.
01 December 2008. Melawati, GKL.



Figure 3.88 The whole Melawati tennis wall in late April 2012. See the new futsal field on the right.
30 April 2012. Melawati, GKL.



Figure 3.89 The whole Melawati tennis wall in early March 2014. See the new sports fields.
06 March 2014. Melawati, GKL.



Figure 3.90 The whole Melawati tennis wall in early March 2014. See the new sports fields.
06 March 2014. Melawati, GKL.



Figure 3.91 The 'Phbklk Strictly Wild Style' production in Imbi; general street view.
06 March 2014. Imbi, KL.



Figure 3.92 The 'Phbklk Strictly Wild Style' production in Imbi; general street view (opposite of Figure 3.91).
06 March 2014. Imbi, KL.



Figure 3.93 CARPET piece in the 'Phbkklk Strictly Wild Style' production in Imbi; space above the piece included.
06 March 2014. Imbi, KL.



Figure 3.94 CARPET piece in the 'Phbkklk Strictly Wild Style' production in Imbi; space above piece not included.
06 March 2014. Imbi, KL.



Figure 3.95 CARPET piece in the 'Phbklk Strictly Wild Style' production in Imbi; a pedestrian included in photo.
06 March 2014. Imbi, KL.



Figure 3.96 Detail of the letterform 'C' in the CARPET piece in the 'Phbklk Strictly Wild Style' production in Imbi.
06 March 2014. Imbi, KL.



Figure 3.97 BIOR piece at the large-scale hall of fame in Prague, Modřany. Angular angle photograph.
06 July 2013. Modřany, Prague.



Figure 3.98 BIOR piece at the large-scale hall of fame in Prague, Modřany. Frontal photograph.
06 July 2013. Modřany, Prague.



Figure 3.99 BIOR piece. Width: 551 cm; height: 239 cm. Frontal photograph focusing 'only' on the piece.
06 July 2013. Modřany, Prague.



Figure 3.100 a, b, c: Production steps.
30 November 2008. Melawati, GKL.



Figure 3.101 a, b: Two different photographing techniques of the same graffiti art production.
01 December 2008. Melawati, GKL.

3.4.2.2 Visual-Catalogue of Graffiti Art Samples from GKL (VI-CA)

At the outset of this study, a visual catalogue (VI-CA), a research tool, of graffiti art works from the area of GKL was constructed. VI-CA was constructed to investigate the evaluation processes employed by graffiti artists and to investigate their aesthetical expectations with regards to graffiti art works. The VI-CA included a selection of 1.003 graffiti art works from the area of Greater Kuala Lumpur (see pages 503-600). The samples included in VI-CA were selected from my private research archive and a few images were used from participants' private collections.⁶⁰⁸ The samples were not selected randomly, but with the intention of providing a wide range of examples. The selected images were decreased in size to 500 px in width (characters into squares of 500 px) to keep the page number of this thesis low and not to extensively increase the Microsoft Word file size. A printed, black and white, bound version of the VI-CA was handed over during interviews to graffiti artists. The VI-CA consisted of 153 tags (printed on eight A4 size pages), 150 throw-ups (printed on eight A4 size pages), 250 characters (printed on eleven A4 size pages) and 450 pieces (printed on twenty nine A4 size pages). The participants were then interviewed and questioned about their aesthetical preferences in graffiti art works.

The captions to Figures were established based on my own knowledge, gathered throughout the research years 2008–2014. Authors and years were further identified based on the application of 'connoisseurship'. Connoisseurship is:

*[a] field of traditional art historical research concerned with identifying the authorship, provenance (history of ownership), and stylistic character of artworks, through a forensic examination of the surface and all other material qualities of the artefact in question.*⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁸ I used around three dozen images from SUGA52 and SONA. I included into VI-CA mainly their graffiti art works from 2004–2007. Both these graffiti artists very kindly provided these photographs in the year 2009.

⁶⁰⁹ Harris, *Art History: The Key Concepts*. p. 63-64.

3.4.2.3 Pixel Analysis

Photographs of four graffiti art works from KL were examined with a pixel analysis method. This pixel analysis method was derived from the research conducted by the anthropologists Dr. Elisabeth Oberzaucher and Prof. Karl Grammer from the University of Vienna.

The four examined graffiti art works were first categorized according to eight identified themes, similar to Elbedour, Bastien and Center in their research (Table 4.39, p. 418).⁶¹⁰ The thematic content categories aimed to show the political nature of the four examined graffiti art works. Furthermore, the photographs of the four graffiti art works were examined based on a total pixel count analysis. The examination aimed to highlight the perceptual distribution of individual elements contained in the four pieces' compositions.

First, the graffiti art works' outlines were traced in Adobe Photoshop software and the total pixel count was determined (Figure I.3, p. 719; Figure I.13, p. 721; Figure I.20, p. 723; Figure I.29, p. 724). Then the pixel count of the single elements forming the whole composition of a graffiti art work was obtained. The resulting pixel count values of the single elements forming the complete graffiti art work was translated into percentages (see Pixel Analysis for Gaza War Murals, page 719).

3.4.3 Interviews

The interview method was used for the obtainment of primary data from international and Malaysian graffiti artists. Face-to-face audio-recorded interviews were recorded with a compact digital photo camera. The interviews were rather semi-structured and unstructured (for selection of questions see p. 749).

⁶¹⁰ Salman Elbedour et al., "Identity Formation in the Shadow of Conflict: Projective Drawings by Palestinian and Israeli Arab Children from the West Bank and Gaza," *Journal of Peace Research* 34, no. 2 (1997).

The interview method is a significant qualitative research method in the context of the graffiti art research. It allows a researcher to gather in depth information. Audio-recorded interviews allow the participants to freely express their thoughts in contrast to online or email interviews, where the answers are in general very brief. Thus audio-recorded interviews provide much deeper insights.

English language was used as a bridge language, as *lingua franca*, as me and the participants are not native English speakers. Some participants were very fluent in English others were less so. Since English was the *lingua franca* in this study, there are problems with direct quotations, because of the incorrect grammar (see for example MEDEA's statement associated with the footnote 478, p. 160). However, besides English, I also conducted interviews in Turkish and in my mother tongue Czech. Interviews were recorded at graffiti art events or at arranged meetings at halls of fame, graffiti art shops, homes, cafes (Figure 3.102), restaurants and in the streets.



Figure 3.102 Interview in Shah Alam. From the left: NUKE, David Novak and ASKOE. 16 February 2013. Section 6, Shah Alam, GKL. (Credit: YUMZ for taking this requested photograph.)

3.4.3.1 Photo Elicitation Method

Photo elicitation represents another very valuable research method in the graffiti art research – especially in relation to visual arts. Photo elicitation is a combination of the interview method with the visual method of photography. The sociologist and ethnographer Gregory Snyder, who researched graffiti art in New York City, noted that photo elicitation is an important interview method ‘*developed by John Collier in 1967 and perfected by Douglas Harper*’.⁶¹¹ The research participants are presented with an image and asked to talk about particular photographs. In such a way a discussion is easily stimulated. Especially in the case of graffiti art, the participants are generally greatly interested and stimulated by a visual image representing any form of graffiti art.

3.4.3.2 Evaluation of Graffiti Art Works and the Usage of VI-CA

To be able to understand the visual culture of graffiti artists, there is the need to interview the graffiti artists. To achieve a better understanding of evaluation criteria used by graffiti artists, I conducted photo elicitation sessions with the help of the constructed visual catalogue (VI-CA; see p. 206). Each photograph of a graffiti art work contained in VI-CA was designated with a number starting from 33 continuing till 1036 (see pp. 520-600). During the interview sessions participants were asked to elaborate on questions such as, ‘*How should a tag [throw-up,] [character,] [piece] look like? What do you like?*’, or to elaborate on the antinomy of this question. To stimulate these answers and to translate them possibly, into visual information, the participants were asked to go through the VI-CA and to indicate numbers of works they like. In this way, it was possible to establish an individual aesthetical preference list for each graffiti artist participating in this form of interview. The responses were later typed into a Microsoft Excel table and the responses were evaluated. In such a way, I established a consensus

⁶¹¹ Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 196.

among participating graffiti artists. However, not all participants were willing to talk about all forms of graffiti art works. Therefore, it was desirable to interview such artists about graffiti art forms these graffiti artists liked the most or at which the graffiti artists were outstanding.

3.4.4 Legibility Research Experiment Method

A research experiment was constructed to investigate, in practical terms, the legibility of graffiti art works, pieces, amongst graffiti artists. The hypothesis was that the knowledge of a graffiti artist's tag name significantly contributes to the legibility of a piece. For the investigation of legibility in pieces, I prepared an innovative legibility research experiment. The legibility research experiment was based on two research groups (experimental group and control group); each group had 6 participants, who were exposed during the research experiment to different conditions. The 'experimental group' had to decipher the legibility of the pieces starting from the most illegible pieces, advancing towards the most legible pieces. However, the 'control group' had to decipher the legibility of the pieces starting from the most legible ones, advancing towards the illegible ones. The main independent variable in the experiment was the order of 20 photographs, which formed the research instrument. A diagram of the research experiment is below in Figure 3.103 and a detailed description of the legibility research experiment follows.

The legibility research experiment is based on quite a simple concept. The aim of the experiment was to reveal, what a participant sees in a letter oriented graffiti art work and at the same time, to obtain a recorded image of the participant's visual perception in such a way that allows storage and allows reproduction (see Figure E.22, p. 654).

I developed this idea after many hours of fieldwork spent talking to participants about graffiti art works. The participants often indicated during photo elicitation sessions that they see ‘such and such elements’ in a graffiti art work and then the participants tried to describe the position of such elements. However, I had to ask back and forth many times to clarify their statements, but often I was still not exactly sure what was on the participant’s mind. This present legibility research method gives appropriate feedback about the participant’s visual perception of a certain graffiti art work (see Table 4.4-Table 4.5, pp. 309-310) and reveals the legibility of a piece.⁶¹²

The research instrument and the manual for the research instrument are as follows. A photograph of a graffiti art work is printed out in black and white⁶¹³ and inserted into a transparent office sheet protector/punched pocket. Then the sheet protector, with the inserted photograph, is passed to a participant – in this case to a graffiti art expert – and the participant of the experiment is asked to ‘read, decipher’ the letterforms which form the subject matter of a piece (the sample selection of photographs is on pages 633-652). Further, the participants of this experiment were given permanent markers (Figure 3.104)⁶¹⁴ to indicate, to draw, their perceptions of the pieces’ letterforms on to the sheet protectors. During the first two experimental surveys (pilot study), the participants ASE and HANES were asked to indicate the letterforms’ outlines onto the sheet protector (Figure 3.105). However, this proved to be very time consuming and not at all motivating for the participants, as the participants often disagreed with the letterform constructions of other graffiti artists they had to outline. Therefore, the research method was simplified and the participants were asked to only indicate the simplified letterform

⁶¹² This same research method can be in future studies developed into a stronger, more accurate method in a lab equipped with eye tracking devices or interactive pen displays and digital drawing tablets.

⁶¹³ The photographs were all printed out in black and white, because of the too high color printing costs.

⁶¹⁴ Product description:

Centropen 2636 F, OHP - Permanent. Foil Marker (0,6 mm; Liner 1,2 mm) [8 595013 611425 >].
Centropen 2846 M, Permanent. (1 mm; Round 2 mm) [8 595013 612309 >].

shapes – as tags into the pieces (Figure 3.106; see also examples of results by MIRA2 and POIS on pp. 675-688).⁶¹⁵

The sample for the research instrument in the legibility research experiment was formed out of 20 pieces (pp. 633-652). It was decided to use five pieces from four influential graffiti artists from GKL – five for each graffiti artist. After identifying four influential graffiti artists – CARPET, KIOUE, NUKE and SIEK – all available photographs of their pieces, from my research archive, were transferred into separate digital folders in the computer. For CARPET and SIEK there were 28 items available, for NUKE 32 items and 37 items for KIOUE. This selection was narrowed down to 25 single items – pieces – for each graffiti artist (see Figure D.1 – Figure D.100, pp. 622-632). Subsequently the selection was narrowed down to five photographs for each graffiti artist. The final selection is shown in Table 3.2 below (see also pp. 633-652).

Table 3.2 The sample selection of five pieces, out of 25, for the legibility experiment.

#	<i>SIEK</i>	<i>KIOUE</i>	<i>CARPET</i>	<i>NUKE</i>
1.	Figure D.3	Figure D.30	Figure D.55	Figure D.77
2.	Figure D.13	Figure D.36	Figure D.62	Figure D.83
3.	Figure D.15	Figure D.40	Figure D.63	Figure D.87
4.	Figure D.19	Figure D.42	Figure D.67	Figure D.94
5.	Figure D.23	Figure D.49	Figure D.73	Figure D.100

The sample selection of the five works per graffiti artist was based on:

1) Diversity and style development:

The aim was to show, if applicable, pieces produced by the graffiti artists in years 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. The goal was to illustrate the style development of the graffiti artists in a gradual development in time and therefore it was of advantage to include into the selection various examples from different periods.

⁶¹⁵ Further, some participants were even asked to make the indications directly onto the print out, without the sheet protector cover.

2) Difficulty of legibility:

The photographic sample selection was performed in August 2012 (approximately one year after my PhD candidature started). At this time, I already had several interviews with graffiti artists with regards to legibility of graffiti art works. Therefore, my understanding about the legibility of graffiti art works was already established (see for example the larger transcript of the interview with POIS from December 2011, footnote 689, on page 282). I understood that graffiti artists use certain principles to increase their success in the process of deciphering graffiti art works. One such principle is the presence of a tag in a piece. Therefore, the sample selection tried to omit graffiti art works, pieces, with tags as signatures of authors.

After the sample selection was completed, each photograph of the 20 graffiti art works, pieces, was adjusted to fit horizontally onto an A4 size page. Subsequently the sample was printed out onto an A4 size sheet of paper. In a second set two photographs were fit vertically onto an A4 sized page.

Next, the most illegible piece for each of the four graffiti artist was determined. This process was repeated until only the most legible piece for each artist remained (see Table 3.3; see also pp. 633-652).

Table 3.3 Order of illegibility of pieces from the most illegible to the easiest legible

<i>Illegibility of pieces from the most illegible (1.) to the easiest legible (5.)</i>				
#	NUKE	CARPET	KIOUE	SIEK
1.	Figure D.77	Figure D.73	Figure D.30	Figure D.23
2.	Figure D.94	Figure D.67	Figure D.40	Figure D.19
3.	Figure D.87	Figure D.55	Figure D.49	Figure D.13
4.	Figure D.100	Figure D.63	Figure D.42	Figure D.15
5.	Figure D.83	Figure D.62	Figure D.36	Figure D.3

As graffiti artists consistently repeat their tag names in pieces, it was decided to make it more challenging for the participants of this legibility research experiment by achieving confusion in the photographic research sample. The following, repeating, pattern, starting with the most illegible pieces, was established: NUKE > CARPET > KIOUE > SIEK. This pattern was repeated five times (Table 3.3; pp. 633-652). The confusion about the subject matter tag names occurring among the 20 selected graffiti art works was increased with the selection of different subjects of pieces produced by the graffiti artist NUKE. This graffiti artist used several names to paint pieces such as NUKE, NUKERS and DESYR, to name only the three names from the five selected for the sample (pp. 629-632). This diversity of NUKE's subject matter in his pieces made the legibility experiment even more challenging for the graffiti artists and objective in terms of results. I finally established the following structure for the research sample photographs in the legibility experiment: NUKERS> CARPET> KIOUE> SIEK> DESYR> CARPET> KIOUE> SIEK> DESYR> CARPET> KIOUE> SIEK> NUKE> CARPET> KIOUE> SIEK> NUKE> CARPET> KIOUE> SIEK (the photographic sample as the research instrument is on pages 633-652).

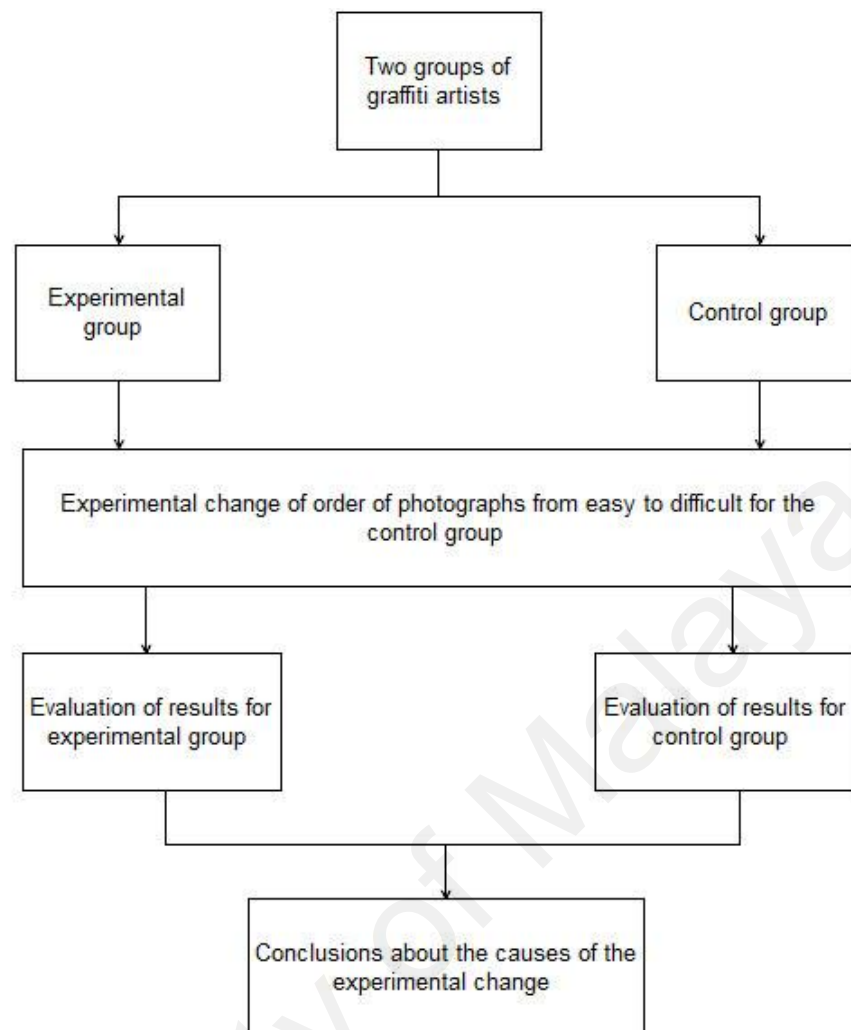


Figure 3.103 The structure of the legibility research experiment.



Figure 3.104 The Centropen Permanent Markers: 2636 F and 2846 M.
22 February 2013. Pantai Dalam, KL.



Figure 3.105 HANES while doing the legibility survey (outlines) on the provided sheet protectors.
01 November 2012. Staroměstská, Prague.



Figure 3.106 EZOP while doing the legibility survey (simple letters) on the provided sheet protectors.
11 November 2012. Vinohrady, Prague.



Figure 3.107 KIOUE verifying the letterforms of his pieces on the sheet protectors.
26 February 2013. Sungai Wang, KL.



Figure 3.108 KIOUE verifying the letterform 'K' of his piece on the sheet protectors.
26 February 2013. Sungai Wang, KL.

3.4.4.1 Participants in the Legibility Research Experiment

The research experiment was conducted in Prague, Czech Republic. The participants were all Czech graffiti artists (for their works see Figure 3.109-Figure 3.118 and page 609). This makes all participants experts. The sample of participants was a purposive/targeted sample selection with varying amounts of expertise in the legibility of graffiti art works. It was assumed that the legibility success rate increases with the graffiti artists' personal involvement in the graffiti art culture. Therefore, it was aimed at achieving two equal experimental groups with similar expertise levels (Table 3.4-Table 3.5). Participants from Prague formed an ideal sample, as the graffiti art culture in Prague nearly all focuses on letterforms, and not characters, as is often the case in Malaysia, and Czech graffiti artists had no knowledge about graffiti art in Malaysia.⁶¹⁶ However, the search for participants willing to take part in the research experiment proved challenging.

Table 3.4. Demographical data for the Experimental Group

	Born	Experience	Country	Experiment	Photo Size
ASE:	1983	8 Years	Czech Rep.	24 Oct 2012	1 per page
HANES:	1986	12 Years	Czech Rep.	01 Nov 2012	1 per page
EZOP: ⁶¹⁷	1978	6 Years	Czech Rep.	11 Nov 2012	1 per page
MIRA2: ⁶¹⁸	1978	20 Years	Czech Rep.	06 June 2013	2 per page
BESH: ⁶¹⁹	1978	19 Years	Czech Rep.	05 Sept 2013	2 per page
MILKA:	1978	2 Years	Czech Rep.	11 Sept 2013	2 per page

⁶¹⁶ The graffiti art culture in Prague underwent a different historical evolution than in GKL and graffiti art in Prague is strongly oriented in the direction of illegal graffiti art works – bombing. See for example the studies and books: Snopek, "Kluci Potřebují Dobrodružství: Formování Identity Na Pražské Graffiti Scéně [Boys Need Adventure: Identity Formation on Prague's Graffiti Scene]"; Jan Snopek, "Naše Jména Chceme Všude, Kudy Jdeme : Etnografická Koláž" (Bc. Bc., Západočeská univerzita: Fakulta humanitních studií, 2002). Overstreet, *In Graffiti We Trust*.

⁶¹⁷ Overstreet, *In Graffiti We Trust*.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

Table 3.5. Demographical data for the Control Group

	Born	Experience	Country	Experiment	Photo Size
POIS: ⁶²⁰	1975	21 Years	Czech Rep.	02 July 2013	2 per page
VLADIMIR518: ⁶²¹	1978	19 Years	Czech Rep.	19 July 2013	2 per page
YUDOE:	1982	16 Years	Czech Rep.	23 Aug 2013	1 per page
CAGO:	1992	7 Years	Czech Rep.	25 Aug 2013	1 per page
RIDIK:	1984	10 Years	Czech Rep.	26 Aug 2013	1 per page
SWEB: ⁶²²	1979	10 Years	Czech Rep.	26 Aug 2013	2 per page



Figure 3.109 VLADIMIR518. 28 July 2010.



Figure 3.110 CAGO. 07 July 2013.



Figure 3.111 POIS. 14 November 2004.

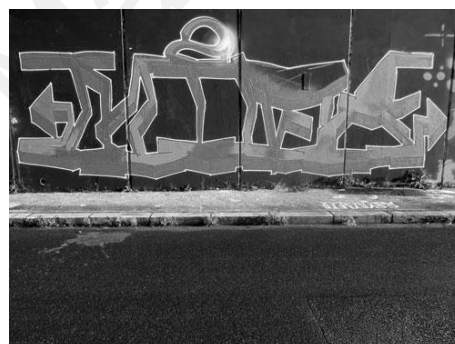


Figure 3.112 MIRA2. 27 December 2013.



Figure 3.113 HANES. 09 February 2014.



Figure 3.114 YUDOE. 30 December 2013.

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Ibid.



Figure 3.115 RIDIK. 06 May 2009.



Figure 3.116 BESH. 31 December 2013.



Figure 3.117 Commission by ASE. 07 September 2013.



Figure 3.118 Tag by SWEB. 29 October 2004.

3.4.4.2 Variables in the Legibility Research Experiment

Variable is an element, which can be changed and have different properties. In the legibility research experiment the targeted selection of graffiti artists from Prague, Czech Republic was the control variable, as the distance between Prague and Kuala Lumpur is significant – around 10,000 km. Therefore, the participating graffiti artists from Prague did not possess any knowledge of the graffiti art culture in GKL and this knowledge was not acquired on the internet, as Malaysian graffiti art works do not have any impact on the graffiti art culture in the Czech Republic. This controlled variable is crucial for the research experiment, as graffiti artists apply ‘*connoisseurship*’, their knowledge of a graffiti artist’s personal style to easily decipher his works, as the graffiti artists know exactly what letterforms they are looking for in a piece. This indirectly suggests that the legibility of graffiti art works becomes easier, once the observers can apply ‘*connoisseurship*’.

This was also confirmed through the presentation of the same research instrument and subsequently the conducted research experiment with the graffiti artist CLOAK from GKL in April 2013. CLOAK easily determined the authors of the 20 works, even though he did not see the letterforms in some of the pieces!⁶²³ Therefore, the control variable played an important role in the legibility research experiment and so this variable remained in the legibility experiment constant.

An independent variable is a variable, which is manipulated and it is observed how this change affects the experiment. The independent variable is a reason, which leads to the cause called 'dependent variable'. Therefore, in this experiment, the independent variable was the 'difficulty of legibility of a piece' (see Table 3.3, p. 213). The dependent variable is regarded as the cause of the influence of the independent variable. Therefore, in this experiment, the dependent variable was 'the success rate (scores) of deciphered pieces'. The independent variable has minimally two levels, two forms, which in the experiment are explored – in this case the order of photographs presented to the participants during the research experiment.

In the research experiment, the order of the 20 sample photographs was the independent variable. The 'experimental group' had to decipher the legibility of the pieces starting from the most illegible ones, advancing towards the most legible ones: Figure A (Figure E.1, p. 633) – Figure T (Figure E.20, p. 652). However, the 'control group' had to decipher the legibility of the pieces starting from the most legible ones, advancing towards the most illegible ones: Figure T (Figure E.20, p. 652) – Figure A (Figure E.1, p. 633).

⁶²³ CLOAK correctly identified the subject matter of the piece, but did could not visually represent any of the letterforms.

Another supplementary independent variable was the size of the presented photographs during the research experiment. Half of each group received the research instrument sample photographs, in A4 sized paper, with 1 photograph and the other half from each group received a page with 2 smaller photographs (Figure 3.119; Table 3.4-Table 3.5).



Figure 3.119 VLADIMIR518 confronting the legibility experiment with 2 photographs on a A4 sized sheet of paper. 19 July 2013. Ohrada-Žižkov, Prague.

3.4.4.3 Evaluation of the Legibility Research Experiment

The legibility research experiment was evaluated based on the final responses of the participants. Each participant's set of final responses was evaluated in terms of the participant's success in the deciphering process of the letterforms in pieces in the photographic research instrument (Table 4.4-Table 4.5, pages 309-310).

Four possible values (scores) were established for the evaluation of a response:

- a) 100% correct legibility
- b) 1 letter illegible
- c) 2 letters illegible
- d) Wrong answer – more than two letters wrongly deciphered.

The responses were then evaluated as overall results of the legibility experiment and as results for the experimental and control group in relation to the dependent variable.

The evaluation of the research experiment needs to be understood in the context of visual arts and the results of the legibility experiment are strongly related to the visual representations of the graffiti art works as represented in Figure E.23-Figure E.62 on pages 655-674. This legibility experiment provides researchers, art historians and the public with an insight into the anatomy of a piece and to the structural shaping of letterforms in compositions in pieces.

3.4.4.4 Collection of Samples of Letterforms E and K

To illustrate the variety of individual and collective creativity, I also collected several samples of letterforms produced by 18 participants of this present study (MIRA2, RIDIK, CAGO, SWEB, YUMZ, NUKE, CARPET, KIOUE, CLOAK, BLACK FRYDAY, YUDOE, KATUN, ASE, BOND, POIS, SIEK, VOLRE and HANES). The participants were asked to create on an A4 sized white sheet of paper, generally, two examples of the letterform E and two examples of the letterform K – see APPENDIX C: Samples of Letterforms E and K by Research Participants, page 609. Nevertheless, some graffiti artists created more than two variations of the letterforms. No style or form specification was given to the participants; the participants were only asked to produce the letterforms in a different form from the tag (Figure 3.120-Figure 3.121). The letterforms could have been created in any graffiti art style.

The selection of the letterforms E and K was not random. The selection was based on Table 3.6, which shows that the letterforms E and K were the most often occurring letterforms in the 20 selected graffiti art works for the legibility research experiment.

Table 3.6 Letterform frequency in the 20-selected graffiti art works in the legibility research experiment.

<i>Letterforms present in the 20 selected graffiti art works – pieces</i>	
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	A	C	D	E	I	K	O	N	P	R	S	T	U	Y
NUKE	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	-
[NUKERS]	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-
[DESYR]	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	2
CARPET	5	5	-	5	-	-	-	-	5	5	-	5	-	-
KIOUE	-	-	-	5	5	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	5	-
SIEK	-	-	-	5	4	5	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-
Total	5	5	2	20	9	13	4	3	5	8	8	5	8	2



Figure 3.120 YUMZ drawing Es and Ks and NUKE verifying the letterforms of his piece on the sheet protectors.
16 February 2013. Section 6, Shah Alam, GKL.



Figure 3.121 CARPET drawing Es and Ks. Here CARPET turned the paper upside down to have a better angle.
21 February 2013. Imbi, KL.

3.4.5 Measurements of Sizes

To convey and give the reader an idea of the scale of a graffiti art work I tried to take photographs, which included people, cars or other common everyday objects to indicate scale. I also measured the exact sizes of graffiti art works. For this purpose, I used a measurement tool and a new method for the measurement of graffiti art works. The suggested method was published in 2014 under the title *Methodology for the Measurement of Graffiti Art Works: Focus on the Piece*.⁶²⁴

The measurement of a graffiti art work always starts at its most extreme point: *top, bottom, left, right* (see Figure 3.122-Figure 3.125). Backgrounds of the works were not included in the measurements, because otherwise it would be very difficult to determine the starting/ending points for the measurements.

The measurement of the sizes of graffiti art works also aimed at providing first accurate results about actual sizes of graffiti art works, such as average widths, heights and width and height ratios. For this purpose during the years 2011–2012, I measured the widths and heights of 268 graffiti art works in the area of GKL (N=268). The sample (N=268) was formed by 61% (N=162) of pieces, 16% (N=43) of throw-ups, 13% (N=35) of characters and 10% (N=28) of tags. For the sample of these measurements, see 'APPENDIX J: Sizes of 268 Graffiti Art Works (Sample Data)', on page 726. The distribution of authorship to the graffiti art works was based on connoisseurship (on connoisseurship see the quotation to footnote 609, p. 206).

⁶²⁴ David Novak, "Methodology for the Measurement of Graffiti Art Works: Focus on the Piece," *World Applied Sciences Journal* 32, no. 1 (2014b).



Figure 3.122 Measuring the height of 290 cm of a character by DAMIS at Klang riverbank wall at Damai. 22 April 2012. Klang riverbank wall at Damai, KL.



Figure 3.123 Measurements from the most distant points. Height: 290cm; width: 263cm.



Figure 3.124 Measuring the height of 221cm of a piece by KIOUE at Klang riverbank wall at Jelatek. 09 September 2011. Klang riverbank wall at Jelatek, KL.



Figure 3.125 Measurements from the most distant points. Height: 221cm; width: 752 cm.

3.4.6 Survey

In the year 2012, I continued to do in depth research on a small sample of graffiti art murals with contents referring to the Gaza War, of 2008–2009. These murals were produced in Kuala Lumpur and also in Singapore (see Gaza War Murals, page 400). In

the year 2012, in addition to interviews, a small scale sample survey was conducted among graffiti artists, whereby I gathered responses from 34 experts – international graffiti artists, who completed a 14-item questionnaire.⁶²⁵ These international graffiti artists were: AKES (MAL), ANOKAYER (MAL), ASWER (MAL), BIBICHUN (MAL), BOL23 (I), BONY (SGP), BURGLAR/SUPER POLYP (F), CAKES/POINT (CZ), CAS (TR), CLAW (USA), DAMIS (MAL), EDGE (GB), ESCAPE (MAL), FUNK ONE (TR), KASI ONE (MAL), KIOUE (MAL), MADNUZ (MAL), MEDEAPROJEKT (MAL), MR 53 (NL), NUKE1 (MAL), PEROLTZ (MAL), PHOBIA (MAL), RASH ONE (MAL), REEZE (MAL), REYNA (RP), SEPET (MAL), SIRA SATU (MAL), SKETCH ONE (SGP), SONEA (MAL), SPUXS 114 (MAL), STRANGER (SGP), SYCO (SGP), THA-B (MAL), WALLY (MAL). The sample (N=34) was formed by 94% (N=32) of males and 6% (N=2) of female respondents. The sample's religious structure was as follows: 79% (N=27) Muslims, 15% (N=5) Atheists, 3% (N=1) Christians and 3% (N=1) Jewish. The oldest respondent was born in 1968 and the youngest in 1995. The sample consisted of 82% of Asian (N=28) and of 18% (N=6) of EU or USA citizens; the sample's (N=34) structure by citizenship: 61% (N=21) Malaysians, 12% (N=4) Singaporeans, 6% (N=2) Turks, 3% (N=1) Filipino, 3% (N=1) British, 3% (N=1) Czech, 3% (N=1) Dutch, 3% (N=1) French, 3% (N=1) Italian, and 3% (N=1) American. The most common ethnic group in the sample (N=32) was the Malay ethnic group with 72% (N=23); the result referring to ethnicity was obtained from 32 answers. Two answers were missing.

⁶²⁵ The graffiti artists BATES (born 1971) very kindly filled the questionnaire two times, but due to unknown technical problems the responses did not show up.

The survey questionnaire was initially distributed to 140 international graffiti artists via email between 30 May–29 June 2012. Email addresses of 60 graffiti artists were obtained from one of the oldest graffiti art websites *Art Crimes: The Writing on the Wall* <<http://artcrimes.org/index/artists.html>> and 80 email addresses were from my own research database. The response rate was 15% (N=21) usable responses. In addition to the distribution of the survey via email, a printed version of the questionnaire was distributed to 13 Malaysian graffiti artists in June 2012.

The questionnaire about graffiti art activism consisted of 14 questions. Items #1-6 of the questionnaire focused on the respondent's demographic data (year of birth, religion etc.) and the other 8 items were opinions to be answered along a 7-point Likert-scale (for the questionnaire see page 715).

3.5 Visual Content Analysis

A visual content analysis was performed on a sample of graffiti art works selected from my visual research collection. The research sample consists of 163 graffiti art works (n=163) – see 'Sample for Visual Content Analysis', page 689. I used a purposive sampling technique – heterogeneous sampling – to capture a wide range of themes/motifs in the graffiti art works from GKL. The sample focused on themes and motifs in graffiti art works, especially on cultural themes, omitting works focusing only on the promotion of a graffiti art tag name through the stylization of letterforms. The research sample contains three graffiti art forms – tag, piece and character (Table 3.7). Characters are represented in the research sample the most, as they tend to be theme oriented.⁶²⁶

⁶²⁶ The high occurrence of characters in the research sample is in addition caused by the popularity of this form among graffiti artists in GKL, compared to other countries, as was already reported by: Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley".p. 172-179.

Table 3.7. Representation of graffiti art forms tag, piece and character in the sample (n=163).

<i>Graffiti art form</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Tag	2	1.23
Throw-up	0	0
Piece	20	12.27
Character	141	86.50
TOTAL	163	100%

In 18 works, the identified theme was based on lettering, whereby the letterforms of these graffiti art works, as in Figure F.144 (p. 704), or their fill-in designs as in Figure F.103 (p. 700) and Figure F.155 (p. 705), determined the identified theme, motif of such a work.

Table 3.8. Theme, motif based on lettering (letterings' shapes) or not on lettering.

<i>Theme based on:</i>	<i># of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Lettering	18	11.04
Not lettering	145	88.96
TOTAL	163	100%

In the attempt to avoid sample bias, I included works produced by a large variety of graffiti artists (Table 3.9).⁶²⁷ However, five graffiti artists – KATUN, KIOUE, NENOK, SIEK, SNOZZE – produced or co-authored 31.80% of the works in the sample. The works were authored in total by 49 Malaysian graffiti artists, 1 Malaysian crew, a Singaporean artist and 3 works could not be assigned to any author, as I relied on my knowledge of the graffiti art culture in GKL based on connoisseurship (on connoisseurship see the quotation to footnote 609, p. 206). Most works were produced as individual solo works, but some works were authored on a collaborative basis. Collaboration of several graffiti artists on one work is common in GKL. The majority of graffiti artists in the research sample are Malaysian Muslims (89.80%); four graffiti artists are Chinese Malaysians (8.16%) and one is a Euro-Asian Malaysian (2.04%).

⁶²⁷ Authors of three graffiti art works could not be identified. The statistical population of graffiti artists in Malaysia was 123 graffiti artists during the first decade of the Malaysian graffiti art history. Ibid.: 237.

Table 3.9. Representation of graffiti artists' works by individual and collaborative works.

<i>Graffiti artist</i>	<i>No. of individual works</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>	<i>No. of collaborative works</i>
??	3	1.54	-
AKEN	1	0.51	-
AKES	1	0.51	-
ANOKAYER	4	2.05	2
BALY	2	1.03	-
BARBIE	2	1.03	1
BIBICHUN	7	3.59	1
BLACK FRYDAY	5	2.56	3
BONE	8	4.10	2
BONKS	3	1.54	-
BUDEAN	3	1.54	3
BUZY	2	1.03	1
CARPET	8	4.10	2
CLOAK	5	2.56	2
DATOM	2	1.03	1
DON2	1	0.51	-
ESCAPE	2	1.03	-
FLIP	1	0.51	1
JIMBIT	1	0.51	1
JUON	1	0.51	-
KATUN	15	7.69	3
KAY	5	2.56	2
KIOUE	15	7.69	5
KOS	1	0.51	-
MEDEA	3	1.54	2
MILE09	2	1.03	-
MIST149	2	1.03	1
NAS-EL	5	2.56	2
NENOK	13	6.67	-
NEWBA	3	1.54	-
NUKE	2	1.03	-
PAKEY	1	0.51	1
PEROLDZ	1	0.51	1
PHANTOM	2	1.03	-
PHBKLLK (Crew)	3	1.54	3
PHENUT	1	0.51	-
PHOBIA	6	3.08	1
REEZE	1	0.51	1
RN	2	1.03	-

SEVEN	1	0.51	-
SHAGGY	1	0.51	-
SHERYO (Singapore)	1	0.51	1
SHIEKO	1	0.51	-
SIEK	10	5.13	6
SIRA	1	0.51	1
SNOZZE	9	4.62	1
SPUXS	3	1.54	2
THA-B	8	4.10	4
THEY	7	3.59	1
VIOLENT	5	2.56	1
VOLRE	2	1.03	2
WITHOUTMOTIVE	1	0.51	-
TOTAL	163	100%	61

The majority of graffiti art works in the research sample were photographed in 2008 and the rest in 2009–2012 (Table 3.10).

Table 3.10. Works' year of documentation.

<i>Year photographed:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
2008	70	42.94
2009	12	7.36
2010	26	15.95
2011	40	24.54
2012	15	9.20
TOTAL	163	100%

The works in the research sample were produced in very different locations in GKL, as is shown in Table 3.11 below. However, most of the works (31.29%) were produced at walls along the Klang Riverbanks, underneath the Pasar Seni LRT train station, in the city center of Kuala Lumpur (Figure 3.6-Figure 3.10, pp. 132-134; Figure 3.126). For years this location has been very popular for the graffiti artists in GKL, as this location exposes the works and skills of the graffiti artists to the public and tourists.

Table 3.11. Representation of the locations in the sample.

<i>Graffiti art works' locations</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
'Blue' wall at Bukit Bintang	3	1.84
Abandoned building Imbi	1	0.61
Central Market	9	5.52
Damai wall	3	1.84
Dato' Keramat	6	3.68
Imbi shop house wall	2	1.23
Jelatek wall	20	12.27
Kajang KTM Train Bridge walls: River Chua	1	0.61
KLCC area	1	0.61
Las Vegas/Chocolate wall at Bukit Bintang	2	1.23
Lorong Pudu 14(KIOUE & THA-B's faces.)	1	0.61
Lot 10 Mall park house	1	0.61
Lot 10 Mall area	1	0.61
Maharajalela Monorail wall	2	1.23
Masjid Jamek area	1	0.61
Melawati tennis wall	13	7.98
MIA at Jalan Ampang	4	2.45
Mont Kiara – Rakan Muda Sport Complex	1	0.61
National Visual Arts Gallery	4	2.45
Pasar Seni	51	31.29
Secret spot	15	9.20
Shah Alam (other)	1	0.61
Shah Alam 'Old' skate park	4	2.45
Shah Alam tennis wall	3	1.84
Shah Alam tunnel walls	5	3.07
Sungai Wang Mall	5	3.07
Tennis Wall LRT Jelatek	1	0.61
Wangsa Maju (Carrefour)	2	1.23
TOTAL	163	100%

For this specific visual content analysis, I constructed an adequate research instrument. I constructed a table of 33 items – *research instrument* – to analyze each, single work in the research sample (see: Rule Set for Visual Content Analysis, p.

707).⁶²⁸ The 33 items in the research instrument provided ‘general’ data (bio and nonvisual data; visual characteristics) and ‘theme’ oriented data (‘description’).

Each of the 33 items was assigned, during the visual content analysis, multiple pre-established categories, to measure the frequency of occurrence of individual categories. The results are expressed in percentages. All categories were identified from within the research sample at the outset of the study, by using my own expert judgment. This research instrument, constructed for the study of graffiti art works, allowed the obtainment of rich and distinct data about the graffiti art culture in GKL.⁶²⁹



Figure 3.126 The Klang Riverbank wall underneath the Pasar Seni LRT train, as seen from within the LRT train. 06 March 2014. Pasar Seni, KL.

⁶²⁸ The 33 items provide ‘general’ data (bio and nonvisual data; visual characteristics) and ‘theme’ oriented data (‘description’).

Bio and nonvisual data: form; location; official event vs. spontaneous; mobile vs. static surface; commission or competition.

Visual characteristics: author/-s; year photographed.

Description: based on lettering vs. not; single element vs. multiple; scene vs. object; realistic vs. other depictions; specific vs. generic; open air vs. indoor scene; graffiti art theme; local arts; activities/hobbies/sports; dark theme; fauna; flora; technology/fantasy; human body parts; weapons or war relation; fashion/garments/accessories; gender; local culture, issue, ethnic; not local culture, issue, ethnic; slogan/comment/quote; popular culture, entertainment; cartoon/comics; personal reference; advertisement; city scene; other scene.

⁶²⁹ Verification of validity of the research instrument and the reliability of the data is average as there are only very few researchers dedicated to the graffiti art research and nearly none are in Southeast Asia and Malaysia. Therefore the research instrument could not be validated by the consensus of experts.

3.5.1 Image Access

The conceptual framework for the construction of the research instrument, for the visual content analysis, was derived from the field of image access, which is part of the Information, Computer and Library sciences. Image access is significant for cataloging, indexing and accessing of images.⁶³⁰ Important researches in this field were first based on the research conducted on Renaissance paintings by the art historian Ervin Panofsky.⁶³¹ Sara Shatford extended⁶³² Panofsky's '*model and showed its significance not only for renaissance paintings, but for all types of images*'.⁶³³ Panofsky's model was also used by Lisa Gottlieb for the identification of 14 letter oriented graffiti art styles.⁶³⁴

3.6 Summary

This present study is using mixed methods of research to investigate the contemporary graffiti art culture and its visual products. The methodology for this study used both established and innovative research methods to investigate graffiti art works. Qualitative, ethnographic, research tools such as interview, photo elicitation and observations form the basis for this present study. Primary data were collected from fieldwork. The main data collection methods encompassed face-to-face interviews and visual methods – photography. The combination of interview and photographic

⁶³⁰ A. Jaimes et al., "A Conceptual Framework for Indexing Visual Information at Multiple Levels," *IS&T/SPIE Internet Imaging* 3964(2000); Paula Berinstein, "Do You See What I See? Image Indexing Principles for the Rest of Us," *Online* 23, no. 2 (1999); L. Hollink et al., "Classification of User Image Description," *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies* 61, no. 5 (2004); Sara Shatford Layne, "Some Issues in the Indexing of Images," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 45, no. 8 (1994); Sara Shatford Layne, "Subject Access to Art Images," in *Introduction to Art Image Access: Issues, Tools, Standards, Strategies*, ed. Murtha Baca (Getty Publications, 2002).

⁶³¹ Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford University Press, 1939; reprint, Icon Editions, 1972).

⁶³² Sara Shatford, "Analyzing the Subject of a Picture: A Theoretical Approach," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1986).

⁶³³ Hollink et al., "Classification of User Image Description." p. 3.

⁶³⁴ All the 14 identified graffiti art styles are used by graffiti artists to create graffiti art 'pieces'.

Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art"; Gottlieb, *Graffiti Art Styles: A Classification System and Theoretical Analysis*.

documentation merged in the photo elicitation method.⁶³⁵ An important research tool used for photo elicitation was the bespoke Visual Catalogue (VI-CA) of 1.003 samples of graffiti art works from Greater Kuala Lumpur. VI-CA included 153 tags, 150 throw-ups, 250 characters and 450 pieces. I also included as part of the personal interviews a legibility research experiment, oriented at the legibility of graffiti art works. I also gathered samples of the letterforms E and K to show the individual creativity of 18 graffiti artists, who participated in this present study. In addition to face-to-face interviews, data were obtained through email and distributed questionnaires. Participants consisted of Malaysian and international graffiti artists. Special focus was on graffiti artists' works related to the research location of GKL. Quantitative research methods were used for determining average sizes of graffiti art works, and to investigate the content of graffiti art works in GKL.

⁶³⁵ During such an interview, the participants are shown photographs and they are asked to describe and evaluate the image according to some established criteria. Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 196. O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*.

4 CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Data Analysis and Results

This chapter presents the results to the four research questions explored in this study (see page 19). The four research questions are subdivided into four main subsections of this chapter.

Firstly, this chapter answers the question of how do graffiti artists evaluate graffiti art works and what are their aesthetical preferences with regards to tags, throw-ups, pieces and characters? This objective was explored based on graffiti art works produced in Greater Kuala Lumpur (for the research sample see VI-CA, pages 503-600).

Secondly, this chapter presents results related to the content of graffiti art works. Generally, graffiti artists focus in their graffiti art works on letterforms. As the letterforms oriented, stylized, graffiti art works are often illegible to observers, the second subchapter presents, besides others, the results of a legibility research experiment conducted with 12 Czech graffiti artists based on 20 graffiti art works from GKL (for the photographic research sample see, pages 633-652). However, graffiti art works also contain other than letterforms oriented content, which was further explored through a visual content analysis in the third subsection of this present chapter (for the research sample of the visual content analysis see, pages 689-706).

Fourthly, this chapter explores the exact sizes of graffiti art works (for the data of exact sizes of graffiti art works see, pages 726-742). This is of significance, as graffiti art works may well be a focus of more art historians in the near future and other researchers than today, and so it is important to expand the general knowledge of the properties of graffiti art works.

4.1 Evaluation of Graffiti Art Works

The present research aimed to investigate the evolutionary processes employed by graffiti artists, while accessing graffiti art works. Further, the research aimed to pinpoint specific aesthetical preferences of graffiti artists with regards to tags, throw-ups, pieces and characters. These aesthetical preferences shall be presented in the upcoming individual subsections.

In general it seems, as if many graffiti artists are not able to describe exactly in words, what they find visually appealing in graffiti art works. The visual catalogue (VI-CA, p. 503) proved very useful in terms of the identification of aesthetical preferences of graffiti artists. The graffiti artist POIS stated, during an interview, that he has never been able to describe with his own words what he feels while looking at a graffiti art work. At the same time, POIS suggested that according to him there is a consensus among graffiti artists distinguishing a good and bad graffiti art work.⁶³⁶

The present research highlighted that the graffiti art culture seems to be a culture of artists, who are at the same time all practitioners of graffiti art, and who consistently follow recent trends present within the graffiti art culture. Therefore, it can be stated that graffiti artists evaluate graffiti art works partly based on current trends. Generally speaking, influential graffiti artists, active in any point of time and in any location, significantly affect aesthetical preferences of other graffiti artists, as they gathered, through prolific bombing and stylistic excellence, enough social capital within the graffiti art culture, to impose their preferences upon others. This secondarily steers aesthetical preferences of other graffiti artists towards the 'ideals', proposed by influential graffiti artists. This is especially true, when there is one influential crew of graffiti artists, which shows the direction to the rest. These graffiti artists and their

⁶³⁶ POIS.

works become instant benchmarks for other graffiti artists. This is for example visible in the comparison of aesthetical preferences, and of produced graffiti art works, of graffiti artists in GKL and Prague. What was considered as formally preferable in Prague amongst graffiti artists, in 2009–2014, did not overlap, in the same period, with formal, aesthetical preferences of graffiti artists in GKL. In Prague, the graffiti art culture preferred in general, original, strictly letterforms oriented graffiti art works, with innovative and new styles, never seen before, without necessarily clean techniques. Contrary, the graffiti artists in GKL preferred graffiti art works with traditional graffiti art styles, often inspired by Western graffiti art works, characters and a clean technique (see Table 4.1, Figure 4.1-Figure 4.12).⁶³⁷

Further, every graffiti artist develops throughout his graffiti art ‘career’ his own art criticism, judgment, about graffiti art works. This judgment is first acquired in the apprenticeship years, when a graffiti artist absorbs, for the first time in his life, the unwritten rules of the graffiti art culture, while he/she gets familiar with the aesthetics of graffiti art and while he/she learns the techniques and formal principles of graffiti art works.⁶³⁸

At this point, I would like to end the present section with a longer quote from the *Spot Theory*, whereby I modified and added (or deleted) text about evaluation and aesthetics in graffiti art, while I replaced certain key words contained in the original *Spot Theory*:



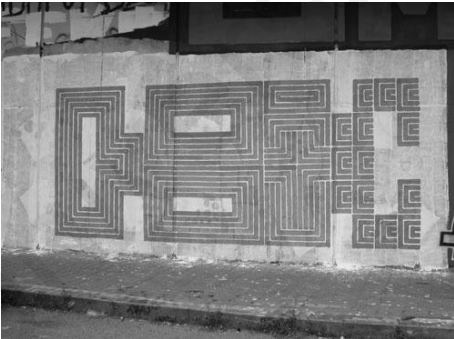

[Graffiti artists] constantly evaluate and criticize one another's graffiti [art works], in this way socializing novice [graffiti artists] into the process of discriminating between [aesthetically preferable] and inappropriate graffiti [art works]. As toy [graffiti artists] become more experienced, this continued feedback—by way of both face-to-face interaction and mediated Internet

⁶³⁷ It needs to be stated that this comparison might be too extreme, because there are in Prague also graffiti artists who prefer and produce graffiti art works in traditional graffiti art styles, as in GKL, but the ‘leadership’ of the graffiti art culture in Prague does prefer innovative works as is here illustrated.

⁶³⁸ Novak et al., "Comparison between Wayang Kulit Kelantan and Graffiti Art in Greater Kuala Lumpur: Similarities and Differences."

communication—molds their perceptions of [aesthetics in graffiti art works]. In addition, [graffiti artists] learn [graffiti art's own aesthetics] through their own viewing and evaluation of [graffiti art works] painted by other [graffiti artists]. When a reputable [graffiti artist] paints a [graffiti art work], it by definition becomes more desirable for other [graffiti artist] to paint [in similar aesthetics], or [similar styles] like [him/her]. Yet even this imitative learning is not without its complexities; '[biting]'—a [graffiti artist copying] a reputable [graffiti artist] without that [graffiti artist]'s permission—can itself become a source of conflict or condemnation. Some [graffiti artists] in turn become very good at [inventing] new or '[fresh]' [styles] that other [graffiti artists] have not yet painted; yet others never acquire this proficiency, and base their graffiti [art] careers on contributing [with styles] that other writers have previously deemed appropriate and painted. Finally, [graffiti artists]' individual tastes and subcultural orientations play a role; some [graffiti artists], for example, prefer to paint [graffiti art works aesthetically pleasing to the general public], where others prefer '[wildstyle]' or '[bombing]' understandable only to other [graffiti artists].⁶³⁹

Table 4.1. A simplified, general comparison of graffiti art works between Prague and GKL, 2009–2014.

PRAGUE, Czech Republic	GREATER KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia
 <p>Figure 4.1 BIOR. 20 May 2009.</p>	 <p>Figure 4.2 NUKE. 12 March 2009.</p>
 <p>Figure 4.3 OBIC. 15 July 2010.</p>	 <p>Figure 4.4 KIOUE [& BURP]. 07 February 2010.</p>

⁶³⁹ This 'paragraph' is my own reformulation of a segment from: Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 55.



Figure 4.5 TODEY. 01 November 2011.



Figure 4.7 HONEY. 04 October 2012.



Figure 4.9 CALON. 06 July 2013.



Figure 4.11 OBLUT. 09 February 2014.



Figure 4.6 RASH. 02 February 2011.



Figure 4.8 SIEK [& KATUN]. December 2012.



Figure 4.10 KATUN. 03 April 2013.



Figure 4.12 REEZE. 01 April 2014.

4.1.1 Criteria for Determining the Best Graffiti Artists

The best graffiti artists are outstanding in their art form. Generally, they master all four forms of graffiti art and have a large portfolio of works to refer to. It is as with other human activities – the most creative and outstanding individuals represent their peers outside of their culture.⁶⁴⁰ In graffiti art, the best graffiti artists are recognized by their peers through:

- a) Proliferation of a tag name in public spaces;
- b) Through an original individual style.

These two main criteria are praised within the graffiti art community and are crucial for the evaluation of graffiti art works. It is difficult, and at the same time incorrect, to judge graffiti art works by other criteria, applied commonly by outsiders, as graffiti art is not a classical example of fine art.

During fieldwork, it was observed that some graffiti artists tended to judge more positively graffiti art works of their close friends, which created a slight bias. However, this tendency of positive judgment towards the works of acquaintances aligns also with the fact that graffiti artists tend to befriend stylistically similar graffiti artists, which might again counterweight this slight bias.

The most recognized graffiti artists in Kuala Lumpur would be from the years 2008–2012, according to their tag names' proliferation, SOME70'S, CARPET, BONKS (Figure 4.13), KOS, KATUN and BONE.⁶⁴¹ Their graffiti art works were the most present in the streets of Kuala Lumpur. Graffiti artists, who were aware of this presence, reacted, while selecting aesthetically preferable graffiti art works from the VI-CA, more emotionally and strongly towards their works than to works of other graffiti artists.

⁶⁴⁰ However, art historians picked mostly unrelated artists as Keith Haring or Jean-Michel Basquiat to represent the graffiti art culture, as I demonstrated in the Introduction to this thesis. Further on this topic refer to the excellent analysis of this problem by Thompson, *American Graffiti*.

⁶⁴¹ The *Spot Theory* also highlighted that great status is conferred on those graffiti artists who can produce graffiti art works in visible locations of a city – such graffiti artist was in GKL probably especially BONKS (see: Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 50).

Foreign graffiti artists, who did not, visit Malaysia, and who were not aware of the situation in Kuala Lumpur's public spaces, and also Malaysian graffiti artists, seemed to react more strongly towards works of graffiti artists, who are well known in the global graffiti art culture (see for example the choices of pieces, p. 266).

In this context, it is very interesting to highlight the different perceptions about painting graffiti art in public spaces. It can be stated that the public's opinion is critical towards tags and throw-ups in public spaces, because the public perceives these, rightfully, as a form of vandalism. Contrary, for graffiti artists tags and throw-up are a form of visual communication and a stimulus to understand other graffiti artists' stylistic approach to the letterform creation.

Graffiti artists communicate and promote their styles through bombing – tags and throw-ups. Graffiti art in Kuala Lumpur emerged around 1999, while there were still not many graffiti art works in the streets of the Malaysian capital. Since then, there has only been a slight increase of graffiti art works in the public spaces of Kuala Lumpur. This state-of-affairs still continued into 2012, when the well established Italian, street and graffiti artist MR.WANY (one of his works is in Figure L.2, p. 753) claimed, 'exaggeration', during an interview, that there are more graffiti art works in one street in Milan, in Italy than in the whole of Malaysia:

*When I arrive in Malaysia, I thought: "Not too much bombing, not too much tag." In Milan, I think in Milan just in one street you have all the bombing and tag what [you have] in Malaysia.*⁶⁴²

What is considered a high amount of graffiti art works in a city is a highly subjective opinion. Even though MR.WANY labeled Kuala Lumpur as a nearly 'graffiti free city', the local Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) attempted in the year 2012 to

⁶⁴² MR.WANY.

control and even to further decrease the amount of graffiti art in the city.⁶⁴³ Further, the highly praised Singaporean graffiti artist Rozaimie Sahbi aka SLACSATU (born 1980) (one of his works is in Figure L.20, p. 762), contrary to MR.WANY, emphasized the high amount of bombing in Kuala Lumpur. However, SLACSATU's observation is based on his experience from Singapore, which is an extremely clean city, as Singapore is nearly graffiti art free. SLACSATU suggested that:

*The [Singaporean] illegal [graffiti art] scene is not really as big as in KL ... But over in KL the good thing is, you can still bomb everywhere.*⁶⁴⁴

Another internationally praised and very well recognized graffiti artist, JABA (Figure L.1, p. 750), emphasized the importance of bombing in the streets of a city. JABA criticized graffiti art works created by artists, who do not participate in the graffiti art culture and just use the spray paint as a tool of production of artworks at legal locations. JABA was concerned about the authenticity of the graffiti art works produced by trained artists, who claim to be graffiti artists:

I think it is quite easy to use a spray can and [at the same time] you do college of fine arts and then you do a graffiti [art work]. And then you have legal walls. It is quite easy to do like beautiful things, but it doesn't mean for me that it is a real graffiti writer, real sprit.⁶⁴⁵ ... I mean with me, if I see a piece, I can tell if he has been in the street before being on a nice [legal] wall.⁶⁴⁶

Further, as indicated below, JABA also expressed his liking for letterforms oriented graffiti art forms, contrary to characters. He highlighted the purity of devotion of graffiti artists from the Malaysian PHIBER WRYTE (PW) (Figure 4.14) graffiti art crew, who accordingly to JABA's perception strictly produce letterforms oriented graffiti art works.

⁶⁴³ Aziz, "Graffiti Artists Given a Place to Work On."

⁶⁴⁴ SLACSATU. [01:50min]

⁶⁴⁵ JABA. [13:30min]

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid. [16:25min]

*Actually, I like really the [PW] crew. I think they are very good. They are very focus on letter[form]s and they keep the tradition and they really make the effort to make nice letters. It's cool.*⁶⁴⁷

The graffiti art culture measures the artist's deeds in the amounts of ones proliferation in public spaces, especially in the streets. This is well expressed in the book *Graffiti School*, where we read in the introduction that:

*Graffiti writing, the art of creating beautiful lettering, is not solely about skill. Someone who is technically talented at drawing isn't necessarily a successful graffiti writer in practice because becoming a legendary [graffiti] writer also takes proactivity - getting out and 'getting up' on a wall. Sketching at home is unlikely to bring you fame and a reputation.*⁶⁴⁸

Further, the *Spot theory* also suggests that there are skills and attitudes essential for the participation in the graffiti art culture, as:

*a highly developed and distinctive repertoire of aesthetic styles, an ability to control with fine precision a spray can or marker, a taste for nocturnal urban adventure, and a readiness to compete with other [graffiti] writers and crews.*⁶⁴⁹

Lundy made similar observations in her study as she stated that: 'Writers who hadn't "paid their dues" in the context of the graffiti world were sometimes looked at with disdain.'⁶⁵⁰ This necessity to produce unsanctioned graffiti art works is probably derived from the historical days of the graffiti art culture. In the early graffiti art era in New York City of the 1970's and 1980's, the status of a graffiti artist was measured according to his amount of bombings on the subway trains. This focus on trains later shifted to the streets in the 1980's and 1990's, but the same rules applied.⁶⁵¹ This attitude of production of illicit graffiti was also copied by the Swiss artist Harald Naegeli (born 1939), the 'Sprayer of Zurich', who produced many illicit graffiti art works in Zurich, in the late 1970's, causing controversies.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid. [25:10min]

⁶⁴⁸ Ganter, *Graffiti School: Student Guide*. p. 6.

⁶⁴⁹ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory," p. 49.

⁶⁵⁰ Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers". p. 50

⁶⁵¹ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*. Pp. 229-234.

The Malaysian PW crew has focused throughout its existence (2003–present) on the maintenance of this graffiti art spirit – including the focus on letterforms based graffiti art works. It could be stated that the PW crew was one of the ‘style keepers’ of the Malaysian graffiti art culture, throughout its history – similarly as the PHB KLK crew. This is still true until the present day, as the PW graffiti artists – NUKE, ASWER, RASH, ROSAK – collaborated, with other graffiti artists AMOE, NESTWO and YUMZ, on the production of an enormous mural reading ‘Assalamualaikum’ [‘May peace be upon you’] in a very visible location at Pasar Seni (Figure 4.15-Figure 4.18). The mural was strictly letterforms oriented and each collaborating artist created 2-3 letters in the mural. The mural production was part of a graffiti art project called *Strictly Alphabets*. The project is directed at Malaysian graffiti artists, as the *Strictly Alphabets* initiative would like to see more Malaysian graffiti artists being more active in the production of letterform oriented graffiti art works (Figure 4.17).⁶⁵²

PW’s focus on traditional values of the graffiti art culture was not welcomed by all Malaysian graffiti artists. The graffiti artist MADNUZ disapproved in 2008 of the PW crew’s focus on this history. MADNUZ would have liked the PW crew, in 2008, to abandon the more authentic, vandalism oriented values and instead direct graffiti art into the mainstream culture, because that would render graffiti art less negative, less underground and less avant-garde in the public opinion. MADNUZ elaborated in 2008 that the PW crew:

*They don’t write it as mainstream.[They] don’t wanna make graff as mainstream. It could [help to] grow up our [Malaysian] graff scene if they [would] support [us]. For me art is art. Vandal is vandal. Why PWTC don’t wanna make their pieces into mainstream=legal? They make their own way from other writers...at least support us...[but] they [are] just like...what should I call it...mm...*⁶⁵³

⁶⁵² YUMZ; [MIST149]; AMOE; NUKE.

⁶⁵³ MADNUZ.

These examples above had the aim to suggest and highlight the importance of original letterform orientation in ‘real’ graffiti art works and the importance of continuous, prolific production of graffiti art works in unsanctioned locations. These two criteria for determining the best graffiti artists seem to be of the most interest to graffiti artists.



Figure 4.13 BONKS, in the background, while outlining one of his throw-ups. See also Figure J.264, page 742. 22 April 2012. Imbi, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.14 ASWER from the PW crew in front of his 'ASWER' piece produced during KUL SIGN FESTIVAL 2012. 26 February 2012. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.15 The large 'Assalamualaikum' ['May peace be upon you'] mural piece in left bottom corner of the photo. 06 March 2014. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.16 The enormous 'Assalamualaikum' ['May peace be upon you'] mural piece in the center-left of the photo.
06 April 2014. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.17 'Assalamualaikum' ['May peace be upon you'] as the first step in the Strictly Alphabets project.
06 March 2014. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.18 A segment of the huge 'Assalamualaikum' ['May peace be upon you'] piece.
06 March 2014. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.

4.1.2 Aesthetical Preferences of Graffiti Artists

This subchapter presents the results obtained from fieldwork, with regards to aesthetical preferences of graffiti artists in a sample of graffiti art works. Data were gathered through interviews, about aesthetical preferences in graffiti art works, among twenty different graffiti artists. Specifically, the focus was on graffiti art works documented in the urban area of Greater Kuala Lumpur (GKL) in Malaysia, represented in the VI-CA selection (p. 503). The overall results are presented in Table 4.2 and discussed in more detail below.⁶⁵⁴ It is useful to bear in mind that graffiti art represents a sort of '*aesthetic resistance to the homogenizing effects of corporate culture and legal control*' as was reminded by Ferrell and Weide in the *Spot Theory*.⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵⁴ Factually this research was also conducted with the graffiti artists SWEB and briefly with T-KID, but their responses were not included into the study due to time constraints.

⁶⁵⁵ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 48.

Table 4.2 Results of favorable graffiti art works in the VI-CA selection.

	Tags (N=153)	Throw-ups (N=150)	Pieces (N=450)	Characters (N=250)
<i>Participants:</i>	N=17	N=16	N=16	N=12
<i>Totally selected:</i>	139	109	385	136
<i>Single items selected:</i>	72 (47%)	67 (45%)	217 (48%)	92 (37%)
<i>Single items omitted:</i>	81 (53%)	83 (55%)	233 (52%)	158 (63%)
<i>Maximum selection:</i>	22	24	95	38
<i>Average selection:</i>	8	7	24	11
<i>Minimal selection:</i>	1	1	2	2
Consensus:				
<i>4 x selected</i>	4 x (24%)	2 x (25%)	10 x (25%)	1 x (33%)
<i>5 x selected</i>	3 x (29%)	2 x (31%)	1 x (31%)	1 x (42%)
<i>6 x selected</i>	1 x (35%)	-	2 x (38%)	-
<i>7 x selected</i>	-	-	1 x (44%)	-
<i>Totally:</i>	8 items	4 items	14 items	2 items

The research about aesthetical preferences, based on the VI-CA sample (pages 520-600), in the graffiti art forms tag, throw-up, piece and character resulted in the discovery of 28 graffiti art works, which were established with a 24–44% high consensus by 20 graffiti artists (Table 4.2). These 28 examples of aesthetically preferable graffiti art works contained 8 tags, 4 throw-ups, 14 pieces and 2 characters. The results show that graffiti art is a global phenomenon, as the determined 28 aesthetically preferable graffiti art works were produced, equally, by 9 Malaysian graffiti artists⁶⁵⁶ and by 9 international graffiti art tourists to Malaysia.⁶⁵⁷ The equal number of Malaysian and international graffiti artists responsible for the production of the determined 28 aesthetically preferable works is surprising, as only 148 (15%) of the 1003 graffiti art works in the VI-CA sample were produced by international graffiti artists.⁶⁵⁸

4.1.2.1 Aesthetically Preferable Tags

In this section, I analyze and introduce the form of graffiti art tags. Tags are the simplest form of graffiti art and at the same time, the tag represents the basic form of graffiti art. A tag is a signature of a graffiti artist. This ‘signature’ should be unique and

⁶⁵⁶ ASKOE, BIBICHUN, BLOB (2X), BONKS (3X), CARPET (3X), KIOUE (2X), NENOK, NUKE (2X) and PHOBIA.

⁶⁵⁷ ARES, DEMS (2X), ETHER (3X), JABA, NASTY, REVOK, ROID, SLACSATU and UTAH (2X). The graffiti artists UTAH and ETHER produced collaboratively also the piece MADE U LOOK in Figure 4.43, page 270.

⁶⁵⁸ The 148 works in the VI-CA sample produced by international graffiti artists can be subdivided into: 29 tags (19%), 33 throw-ups (22%), 78 pieces (17%) and 8 characters (3%).

represent the author of the tag. There are also some preconditions for the tag, so that the graffiti art culture accepts such tags, as is disclosed below. However, firstly I introduce the aesthetically preferred tags in the perception of 17 graffiti artists – ASE, ASKOE, ASWER, BLACK FRIDAY, BOND, CARPET, JABA, KEAS, KOS, MIRA2, MR. WANY, NEWBA, NUKE, POIS, SIEK, SYCO03 and VLADIMIR518. The most preferred tags from the selection of 153 samples (pp. 520-535) were produced by the graffiti artists BONKS (Figure 4.19 and Figure 4.20), DEMS[333] (born 1979) (Figure 4.21), SLACSATU (Figure 4.22), KIOUE (Figure 4.23), Alexandre Hildebrand aka NASTY (born 1974) (Figure 4.24) and CARPET (Figure 4.25 and Figure 4.26).

These eight tags were selected 4 to 6 times by the 17 graffiti artists examining the sample selection of the 153 tags (pp. 520-535). This is a consensus of 24% to 35%. The 17 graffiti artists selected in total, 139 tags as generally pleasing examples, which equals to 72 (47%) of the tags from VI-CA, since 81 (53%) of the 153 tags were completely omitted from the selection of tags. On average, the 17 graffiti artists selected 8 tags – the maximum of selected tags was 22 by ASE and the minimum of selected tags was 1 by POIS. Next, I am presenting some of the opinions of the graffiti artists about these 8 aesthetically preferred tags.

Two different tags by BONKS and CARPET were reflected in the selection of the 8 aesthetically preferred tags (Figure 4.19-Figure 4.26). These tags by the graffiti artists BONKS and CARPET were often selected by other graffiti artists – Malaysian and international alike – for their skillful technical execution and also for their proliferation in the urban area of GKL, if the participants visited GKL. This indicates the importance of proliferation of public spaces with the graffiti art form tag. This is also emphasized in the *Spot theory* as it states that:

*Graffiti writers also greatly value graffiti [art works] that is done in full view of the general public; this graffiti is intended to be seen not only by other graffiti writers, but also by the city's general population.*⁶⁵⁹

The Czech graffiti artist ASE pointed out the originality of the BONKS tag in Figure 4.20. ASE highlighted that the tag's line creates upwards-stretched letterforms, which was in ASE's perception original, as ASE did not see many such tags.⁶⁶⁰ Further, ASE liked in CARPET's tags the skillful technique of handling the spray paint. ASE pointed out that CARPET is changing the thickness of the line in the tag in Figure 4.25, which ASE found attractive and skillful. This opinion emphasizes the technical skills of a graffiti artist and prizes the application of these technical skills on the production of an aesthetically preferred tag.

The Malaysian graffiti artist ASWER suggested that the two graffiti artists, BONKS and CARPET, were considered as being prolific in the streets of GKL and therefore he pointed out their works in the research sample.⁶⁶¹ The Columbian graffiti artist JABA, who visited GKL several times (see p. 750), stated also that BONKS' visual presence in the streets of GKL was notable to him during his stay in GKL. Further, JABA liked the speed of line in BONKS' tag, even though JABA reminded that the speed of execution in a tag is not the only criteria for an outstanding graffiti art tag.⁶⁶² In these opinions, we see the importance of proliferation of public spaces, even though the energy contained in a tag also seems to be of importance and relates to the technical execution of a tag. This is another opinion favoring skills as a criterion for a well-executed tag.

⁶⁵⁹ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 51.

⁶⁶⁰ ASE.

⁶⁶¹ ASWER.

⁶⁶² JABA.

The Singaporean graffiti artist SYCO03 (born 1980) expressed his liking for BONKS' tags too, which he encountered in public spaces around GKL. SYCO03 suggested that BONKS' tags are more straight forward compared to CARPET's cursive letterform tag compositions, which SYCO03 found attractive too. Further, SYCO03 expressed his feelings about BONKS' straightforward tags in the expression: '*Oooh, this guy is here.*'⁶⁶³

KEAS pointed out that CARPET's tags resemble CARPET's wildstyle of piecing (for CARPET's pieces see pp. 627-629). KEAS explained that in general the tag is a short abstract of a graffiti artist's style of piecing.⁶⁶⁴ This opinion relates to the association of a tag with the form of piece. KEAS saw a close connection between the stylization of tags and pieces.

KIOUE's tag in Figure 4.23 was highly praised by graffiti artists for its technical execution and overall typographical composition. ASWER showed a lot of surprise after being told, during our interview, that the tag in Figure 4.23 was produced with a spray paint can and not with a calligraphy marker as he firstly thought.⁶⁶⁵ ASE too pointed out in KIOUE's tag the typographical features and praised the calligraphy like quality of the tag.⁶⁶⁶ MR. WANY also voiced the opinion that KIOUE's tag has very good letterforms and flow (see interview with MR. WANY, p. 757).⁶⁶⁷

JABA pointed out that NASTY's tag in Figure 4.24 has been seen in public spaces around Paris, France since the 1980's and the typography of the tag still poses the same energy.

⁶⁶³ SYCO03.

⁶⁶⁴ KEAS, Audio-recorded Interview, 25 February 2012.

⁶⁶⁵ ASWER.

⁶⁶⁶ ASE.

⁶⁶⁷ MR.WANY.

Furthermore, the NASTY tag evoked in ASE the feeling of the most common way of tagging among graffiti artists. ASE suggested that the public probably imagines graffiti art tags in the way as NASTY produces them. ASE added that if a normal person is trying to find a *‘.tff’* font resembling a graffiti art tag writing style, for installation on a computer, the typeface would probably look like the typography in NASTY’s tag.⁶⁶⁸

These opinions listed above are only some examples of the reasons given by graffiti artists of why they selected certain tags from the VI-CA as outstanding works. The evaluation of tags strongly related to the proliferation of public spaces with tags by particular graffiti artists. This was nearly always the case with graffiti artists, who possessed the knowledge of Greater Kuala Lumpur and who lived or visited this urban area. However, participants, who did not physically visit the urban area of GKL could also often reach consensus, with the graffiti artists who had such knowledge, about aesthetically preferable examples of tags. This is probably due to the fact that all participants in this research were experts and could ‘recognise’ skills from the graffiti artists’ works.



Figure 4.19 The tag in “Figure 47” (p. 521) was selected four (4) times.

⁶⁶⁸ ASE.

Note: *‘TTF’* is the short form for a ‘True Type’ Microsoft Windows file format.



Figure 4.20 The tag in "Figure 51" (p. 521) was selected four (4) times.



Figure 4.21 The tag in "Figure 67" (p. 523) was selected four (4) times. [See Figure J.183, p. 737]



Figure 4.22 The tag in "Figure 145" (p. 531) was selected four (4) times.



Figure 4.23 The tag in "Figure 172" (p. 534) was selected five (5) times.



Figure 4.24 The tag in "Figure 104" (p. 527) was selected five (5) times.



Figure 4.25 The tag in "Figure 58" (p. 522) was selected five (5) times.



Figure 4.26 The tag in "Figure 57" (p. 522) was selected six (6) times.

4.1.2.2 Aesthetically Preferable Throw-ups

In this section, I analyze and introduce the form of graffiti art throw-ups. Next are announced the most aesthetically preferred throw-ups in the perception of 16 graffiti artists – ASE, ASWER, BLACK FRIDAY, BOND, CARPET, JABA, KEAS, KOS, MIRA2, MR. WANY, NEWBA, NUKE, POIS, SIEK, SYCO03 and VLADIMIR518. The most preferred throw-ups from the selection of 150 VI-CA samples were produced by BLOB (Figure 4.27), ROID (born 1982) (Figure 4.28), ARES (Figure 4.29) and BONKS (Figure 4.30).

These four aesthetically preferred throw-ups, referred above, were selected 4 or 5 times by 16 graffiti artists examining the sample selection of 150 throw-ups (pp. 536-550). This is a consensus of 25% to 31%. The 16 graffiti artists selected in total 109

throw-ups, which equals to 67 (45%) throw-ups from the VI-CA, as 83 (55%) of the 150 throw-ups were completely omitted from the selection. On average, the 16 graffiti artists selected 7 throw-ups – the maximum of selected throw-ups was 24 by ASE and the minimum was 1 by KEAS and ASWER.

Throw-ups represent, surprisingly, according to the statements of influential and senior graffiti artists JABA, POIS and VLADIMIR518 the most difficult form of graffiti art.⁶⁶⁹

JABA: *For me, like the throw-up is one of the hardest things to do in graffiti [art]! It is hard to have your own throw-up, with style. Yeah, it is quite hard as I found it.*⁶⁷⁰

Throw-ups are line oriented abstracts of flattened letterform-contours of a graffiti artist's tag name. The throw-up is commonly roundish and bubble oriented in its style. A significant feature of throw-ups is the continuity of lines shaping the throw-up. As ASE highlighted, the general construction of a throw-up gives graffiti artists the possibility, to connect letterforms in a throw-up faster to subsequent letterforms in the throw-up.

Two out of the totally four aesthetically preferred throw-ups by the graffiti artist ARES and BONKS were selected 5 times. Throw-ups by the graffiti artist BONKS were often selected by other graffiti artists – Malaysian and international alike – for their skillful execution and also for their proliferation in GKL, as some participants had direct experience of public spaces in GKL. However, the ARES throw-up was rather selected as an example of a 'good' throw-up, as the graffiti artist ARES produced only a few throw-ups in GKL, as he was only a graffiti art tourist.

⁶⁶⁹ JABA; POIS.

⁶⁷⁰ JABA.

ASWER pointed out that letterform consistency in throw-ups is important and directed attention towards BONKS' throw-ups. JABA perceived BONKS' throw-ups as very good, especially the one in Figure A.219 (p. 539). KOS likewise highlighted BONKS' throw-ups and praised the many variations of throw-ups produced by this graffiti artist (see pp. 538-539). SIEK even perceived the graffiti artist BONKS as the perfect example of a prolific producer of throw-ups. MR. WANY emphasized in BONKS's throw-up in Figure A.219 (p. 539) the flow and in ROID's throw-up in Figure 4.28 he recognized real original style (see interview with MR.WANY, p. 760). Further, ASE liked BLOB's and BONKS' individualized styles of throw-ups.

This indicates that graffiti artists look for consistent letterform styles in throw-ups, which unify the whole graffiti art work in a unique, individual style.

These above are only some examples of opinions of graffiti artists with regards to the selection of the 4 preferred throw-ups from the VI-CA.



Figure 4.27 The throw-up in "Figure 205" (p. 537) was selected four (4) times.



Figure 4.28 The throw-up in "Figure 290" (p. 546) was selected four (4) times. [Width: 274 cm; height: 163 cm.]



Figure 4.29 The throw-up in “Figure 193” (p. 536) was selected five (5) times.



Figure 4.30 The throw-up in “Figure 222” (p. 539) was selected five (5) times. [Width: 332 cm; height: 134 cm.]

4.1.2.3 Quick Pieces: A Transitional Graffiti Art Form

In between a throw-up and a piece is a niche occupied by ‘quick pieces’. Quick pieces represent a transitional category between the graffiti art forms throw-up and piece. Quick pieces can be perceived by some graffiti artists at the same time as throw-ups and by others as pieces. To KEAS a throw-up is even a quick version of a piece. This suggestion would shift the throw-up form closer to the form of piece. However, the throw-up is certainly codified as a graffiti art form by itself.

I was made aware of this grey area between the throw-up and the piece during interviews with the participating graffiti artists. While conducting interviews, with regards to favorable throw-ups and pieces, some graffiti artists pointed out that certain samples in the VI-CA, categorized under the forms of throw-ups or pieces, could be considered as examples of the other form. As a matter of fact, SYCO03 suggested that the pieces by UTAH and ETHER in Figure A.727 (p. 580) and Figure A.728 (p. 580)

were simple throw-ups and not pieces as they consisted of only two colors. SYCO03's opinion is true in terms of the simple coloring of the pieces, but his claim relates probably more strongly to the purpose of the graffiti art works. In terms of their purpose throw-ups are more statements of presence, territorial markers of a higher significance than tags. More elaborate throw-ups are quick pieces as in the referred case and as will be illustrated subsequently in the following paragraphs.

This category of quick pieces is related to bombing and therefore close to vandalism. The researcher Lisa Gottlieb described in her research the graffiti art style of 'silvers'.⁶⁷¹ This style of 'silvers' can be related to the transitional graffiti art form category of quick pieces. A related example of this category can be seen in the pieces of the above-mentioned UTAH and ETHER (Figure A.727, p. 580 and Figure A.728 p. 580). These two pieces were created along rail tracks underneath the LRT station Abdullah Hukum in Kuala Lumpur. By chance, I even documented the production process of these two quick pieces as the authors, UTAH and ETHER, divided the production process of these two quick pieces probably into two days at least (Figure 4.31-Figure 4.32). The first photo in Figure 4.31 was taken from within a moving bus and when I returned to the location days later, to examine the pieces, they were already finished (Figure 4.32).

These quick pieces, UTAH and ETHER (Figure 4.31-Figure 4.32), were aimed at the local graffiti art culture and at the public of GKL. They aimed to 'inform' the viewers of the presence of the New York City graffiti artists UTAH and ETHER in GKL. This 'message' was placed in a convenient location, for this purpose, as these quick pieces could be seen by passengers traveling in public buses (as in my case: Figure 4.31), by passengers traveling on KTM Komuter trains, to and from Port Klang,

⁶⁷¹ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". pp. 246-247.

by passengers traveling on LRT trains, to and from Kelana Jaya, by motorists traveling on the road and by pedestrians (even though nobody walks in GKL). As Ferrell and Weide suggest in the *Spot Theory*: '*More traffic means more audience exposure, more risk—and more status.*'⁶⁷²

Another example of a quick piece is the work of BONKS in Figure 4.33.⁶⁷³ This work is really a good example of this transitional category of quick pieces. The work lacks lot of properties of a piece, such as multicolored fill-in, elaborate stylization, 3-D block effects or shadows, a tag, extensions, a background, border lines and other elements associated with pieces. Therefore, the work could also be considered as a throw-up.

Further, MR. WANY suggested that the throw-up by the Chinese graffiti art tourist DREAM [XEME] from Hong Kong is more like a piece (Figure A.237, p. 541): '*This is not really [a] throw-up. It is more [a] piece*'.⁶⁷⁴ ASE was in this case of the same opinion and saw in this work more a piece. This particular throw-up in its full-size is reproduced below in Figure 4.34 (next to it is the throw-up by BLOB, which was selected as one the most aesthetically preferable throw-ups; see Figure 4.27, p. 259). The throw-up DREAM (Figure 4.34), as I classified it, is only executed with one color. Therefore, it did not classify as a piece in my opinion. However, it is true that the work has high stylization of letterforms and a significant size. The work can hardly be identified by outsiders as DREAM. As a matter of fact, this is an excellent example of the difficult task of readability of graffiti art works, which is also discussed in this chapter. The throw-up reads 'DR[r]EaM'. The highly stylized letterforms and the mix of capital letterforms and a lowercase 'a' is confusing. Further, the stylization of the Latin

⁶⁷² Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 53.

⁶⁷³ This work was painted over with the character by BURP, which is depicted, along with the whole production on the 65 m wide Blue wall in Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, in: Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". Figure 4.44, p. 175.

⁶⁷⁴ MR.WANY.

letterforms is nearly abstract, even though classical letter construction is present, maybe because the graffiti artist DREAM [XEME] also creates graffiti art works in the Chinese script.⁶⁷⁵

Another example of a throw-up, which looked to the graffiti artist NEWBA as a piece, is the throw-up by the French [?] graffiti artist ARES. Also ASE considered another throw-up by ARES, this time in Figure A.195 (p. 536) to be more an example of a piece. NEWBA considered the throw-up by ARES in Figure 4.35 as a piece due to the fact that the work is advanced in its visual elements. It is true, that the work has shadow effects, even a sort of a simple bubble fill-in, a cut within each letter, a border outline, tags around the work and even a date. This example is actually the specimen of what was defined by Gottlieb as the style 'silver'.⁶⁷⁶

ASE suggested that he thinks that there is a difference between a throw-up and a silver piece. ASE defined a throw-up as a graffiti art work which is produced in 10 seconds and not longer and a silver piece could go up to 10 minutes of production time, for example. ASE also further highlighted that the BLOB throw-up in Figure A.203 (p. 537) is in his opinion a simplified version of a silver piece, as the work is quickly, not solidly filled-in and probably represents a simplified version of a silver piece.

To conclude this section, it needs to be stated that the grey area between a throw-up and a piece is occupied by the transitional graffiti art form of quick pieces. It is a blurred area, a lot of caution is necessary to draw a correct line dividing the throw-up, and the piece forms of graffiti art works.

⁶⁷⁵ Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*, pp. 30-31.

⁶⁷⁶ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". pp. 246-247.



Figure 4.31 The half-finished UTAH and ETHER pieces. The Gardens shopping mall in the background.
22 August 2011, Abdullah Hukum LRT station, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.32 Finished UTAH and ETHER pieces. The Gardens shopping mall in the background.
28 August 2011, Abdullah Hukum LRT station, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.33 Quick piece by BONKS. The white color was rolled up. Outlined are produced with black spray paint.
28 November 2008, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.34 The DREAM throw-up can be considered also as a quick piece.
17 June 2011, Dato Keramat LRT, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.35 The ARES throw-up can be considered also as a quick piece. [Width: 382 cm; height: 160 cm]
21 July 2011, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.

4.1.2.4 Aesthetically Preferable Pieces

In this section, the form of graffiti art pieces is introduced and analyzed. Pieces represent to graffiti artists the most popular form of graffiti art. Pieces, in general, as large-scale, elaborate and multicolored murals are in their production process very time consuming – in comparison to tags or throw-ups. They are commonly produced within the time span of several hours. Pieces are, besides others, manifestations of a graffiti artists style mastery, technique and self-esteem. The graffiti artist's tag name represents, in the majority of cases, the subject matter and pieces can be produced in various styles (see for example the variety of styles in APPENDIX D: Style development by SIEK, KIOUE, CARPET and NUKE, page 622).

Next, I introduce the results of most aesthetically preferred pieces in the perception of the 16 graffiti artists ASE, ASKOE, ASWER, BIOR, BLACK FRIDAY, BOND, CARPET, JABA, KOS, MIRA2, NEWBA, NUKE, POIS, SIEK, SYCO03 and VLADIMIR518. The examples of most aesthetically preferred pieces, from the selection of 450 samples, were produced by: JABA (Figure 4.36), DEMS (Figure 4.37),

CARPET (Figure 4.38), PHOBIA (Figure 4.39), NENOK (Figure 4.40), NUKE (Figure 4.41 and Figure 4.46), UTAH (Figure 4.42), MADE U LOOK crew [by UTAH and ETHER] (Figure 4.43), BLOB (Figure 4.44), ASKOE (Figure 4.45), ETHER (Figure 4.47 and Figure 4.48) and REVOK (Figure 4.49).

These 14 pieces, referred above, were selected 4 to 7 times by 16 graffiti artists examining the sample selection of 450 pieces (pp. 572-600). This is a consensus of 25% to 44%. The 16 graffiti artists selected in total 385 pieces, which equals to 217 (48%) pieces from the VI-CA sample, as 233 (52%) of the 450 pieces were completely omitted from the selection of pieces. On average, the 16 graffiti artists selected 24 pieces – the maximum of selected pieces was 95 by SIEK and the minimum of selected pieces was 2 by BLACK FRIDAY.⁶⁷⁷

MIRA2 evaluated the piece by REVOK, in Figure 4.49, as excellent. VLADIMIR518 considered the piece as a ‘classic’ piece, the ‘basic’ of graffiti art and added: ‘Everyone should know, how to write his name in this way. In the simplest way.’⁶⁷⁸ SIEK prized this piece too and suggested that the piece is ‘crazy’, as it was produced in September 2008 as one of the first pieces on a high rooftop in the city center of Kuala Lumpur (Figure 3.37, p. 153). SIEK’s opinion shows how much emphasis is put on a graffiti art’s location.

Two different pieces by NUKE and ETHER were represented in the selection of 14 aesthetically preferred pieces. Pieces by the graffiti artists NUKE and ETHER were often selected by other graffiti artists – Malaysian and international alike – mainly for their style. NEWBA suggested that ETHER’s piece in Figure 4.48 maintains fundamental letterform shapes.

⁶⁷⁷ SIEK; FRIDAY.

⁶⁷⁸ VLADIMIR518.

JABA enjoyed in GKL pieces by the Malaysian graffiti artists CARPET, NENOK and NUKE, as he considered their works to possess good, serious styles. The works of these three graffiti artists were also among the selected aesthetically preferred pieces (CARPET (Figure 4.38), NENOK (Figure 4.40), NUKE (Figure 4.41 and Figure 4.46)). BIOR saw for example in CARPET's piece in Figure 4.38 some indication of German graffiti art styles.

JABA, who suggested about himself that he is '*super picky*' in terms of aesthetical preferences in graffiti art works, also expressed his liking for the works by the '*super real*' '*living graffiti [art] legends*' UTAH and ETHER, whose works he considers basic, simple and strong in terms of style.⁶⁷⁹ Here JABA indirectly indicated that the reputation of a graffiti artist plays a significant role in the evaluation process of graffiti art works. This was also repeatedly observed in the evaluations of other graffiti artists, BIOR and POIS to name some, as REVOK and UTAH & ETHER represent globally very well-known graffiti art celebrities.⁶⁸⁰

KOS specified that his own inspiration for the production of large-scale pieces was the graffiti artist BLOB, whose pieces are possessing good color combinations, they are easily legible and possess large scale (for BLOB's pieces see, besides others: Figure 4.44 (p. 271), Figure A.833 (p. 587) or Figure A.887 (p. 590)).⁶⁸¹ JABA too referred with regards to pieces, to size, as he stated that he himself likes to produce big pieces: '*I love big pieces. ... I just like to paint big. I find it easier and then it just looks nicer, more impressive.*' From these statements we can see that the size of a graffiti art work matters.

⁶⁷⁹ JABA.

⁶⁸⁰ REVOK: <http://www.revok1.com/contact/>; UTAH and ETHER: <http://www.utahether.com/>

⁶⁸¹ KOS.

To conclude, pieces are the most valued, elaborate and talked about forms of graffiti art among graffiti artists. The above-illustrated opinions, about pieces, represent only a small fraction of opinions reflecting this very complex and extensive graffiti art form.



Figure 4.36 The piece in "Figure 734" (p. 581) was selected four (4) times.



Figure 4.37 The piece in "Figure 1012" (p. 598) was selected four (4) times. [Width: 943 cm; height: 234 cm]



Figure 4.38 The piece in "Figure 635" (p. 575) was selected four (4) times.



Figure 4.39 The piece in "Figure 643" (p. 575) was selected four (4) times.



Figure 4.40 The piece in "Figure 696" (p. 578) was selected four (4) times.



Figure 4.41 The piece in "Figure 726" (p. 580) was selected four (4) times. [Width: 552 cm; height: 210 cm]



Figure 4.42 The piece in "Figure 727" (p. 580) was selected four (4) times.



Figure 4.43 The piece in "Figure 733" (p. 581) was selected four (4) times.



Figure 4.44 The piece in "Figure 849" (p. 588) was selected four (4) times.



Figure 4.45 The piece in "Figure 852" (p.588) was selected four (4) times.



Figure 4.46 The piece in "Figure 695" (p. 578) was selected five (5) times.



Figure 4.47 The piece in "Figure 717" (p. 580) was selected six (6) times. [Width: 621 cm; height: 209 cm]



Figure 4.48 The piece in "Figure 728" (p. 580) was selected six (6) times.



Figure 4.49 The piece in "Figure 660" (p. 576) was selected seven (7) times.

4.1.2.5 Aesthetically Preferable Characters

In this section, the form of characters is analyzed and introduced. Characters represent, surprisingly, amongst graffiti artists the most unpopular form of graffiti art. This is surprising, as the public likes this graffiti art form the most.

A character is the visual representation of an object (human figure, portrait, vehicle, animal etc.) or a scene (skyline, landscape, sky, universe etc.). There are various styles of characters as the b-boy style,⁶⁸² realistic style, iconic style etc.

⁶⁸² The b-boy character is a very typical example of a graffiti art character, as is also stated in: Ganter, *Graffiti School: Student Guide*, p. 84.

Next, I introduce the most aesthetically preferred characters in the perception of 12 graffiti artists ASE, ASKOE, BLACK FRIDAY, BOND, CARPET, ESCAPE, KIOUE, KOS, NEWBA, POIS, SYCO03 and VLADIMIR518. The most aesthetically preferred characters, from the selection of 250 samples, were produced by KIOUE (Figure 4.50) and Khor Zew Wey (born 1983) aka BIBICHUN (Figure 4.51).

These two characters, denoted above, were selected 4 and 5 times by 12 graffiti artists examining the sample selection of 250 characters (pp. 551-571). This is a consensus of 33% to 42%. The 12 graffiti artists selected in total 136 characters, which equals to 92 (37%) characters from VI-CA, as 158 (63%) of the 250 characters were completely omitted from the selection of aesthetically preferable characters. On average, the 12 graffiti artists selected 11 characters – the maximum of selected characters was 38 by KIOUE and the minimum of selected characters was 2 by VLADIMIR518 and POIS.

Characters are representations of objects and scenes. KOS defined characters as non-letterforms oriented graffiti art works and said that he respects graffiti artists, who produce characters, but in his opinion, graffiti art should be focused on letterforms. KOS also expressed his liking for iconic characters by VIOLENT [VLT], who also uses these characters as throw-ups (see Figure A.330, p. 550). Below it will be illustrated how strong was the dislike towards the form of characters among the research participants.

Characters are a popular form of graffiti art liked by the public. Nevertheless, there is a degree of dislike to characters within the graffiti art culture. Surprisingly, characters are the most disliked form of graffiti art among graffiti artists. POIS stated that he does not much like characters and if then, only some. Actually, POIS was not interested in characters at all during the conducted interview in December 2011, as he stated. POIS especially disliked in the sample selection illusionistic, realistic characters and asked

rhetorically, why somebody has the intention to paint the characters in Figure A.501 (p. 564) and Figure A.511 (p. 565)? To POIS, a character should be interesting, even weird. This would make a character stand out. POIS' opinion will be repeated by other graffiti artists below. However, POIS also pointed at the originality of characters instead of the duplication of reality.

MIRA2 also said that he does not understand characters, as he does like this form. In MIRA2's opinion, characters represent graffiti art, but at the same time, they do not.

To ASWER some characters stand for good graffiti art works. However, ASWER again does not like illusionistic portrait characters, as these are often, in his opinion, only copies of references from photos.

Of the same opinion also was MR. WANY, who stated that the process of copying, transferring a realistic representation onto the surface of a wall is more a matter of technique and '*nothing stylish*'.

ASWER further suggested that a talented graffiti artist can produce a portrait character from his own imagination, which is desirable. MR. WANY stated that he is as well not much interested in realistic characters. Yet, MR. WANY added that he knows many graffiti artists who are, in his own words, '*top*' in the production of realistic characters. MR. WANY and VLADIMIR518 found it acceptable to paint realistic characters, as long they are correct representations of the objects, without undesired distortions. VLADIMIR518, as were other graffiti artists also, was of the opinion that unintentionally distorted characters are excellent examples of graffiti art '*kitsch*'.

JABA during our interview refused altogether to comment on characters, as he is not much interested in characters even though he produces some occasionally (see Figure L.1, p. 750). JABA said: '*On characters I don't want to do comments. I am not interested.*' To JABA characters are just additions to lettering.

The same opinion was expressed by KEAS and NEWBA, who both stated that characters are additions to letterforms. JABA said that characters are additions to make people happy. Again, KEAS also observed that characters help to make a piece stand out and characters please the public very much, as the public is attracted to characters, as they are easily understandable, contrary to letterforms. KEAS continued by suggesting that the public does not pay attention to letterforms as they are too abstract and therefore characters catch the public's attention.

NEWBA felt the same way as he proposed that the public feels bored while looking at graffiti art lettering and therefore graffiti artists add characters to make graffiti art works more fun and nice.

To SYCO03 characters contribute, as another element, to the beautification of a piece.

SIEK stated that he does not know why nowadays graffiti artists like characters, as historically it all started with letters, not with characters. SIEK elaborated on his statement and suggested that graffiti artists, who produce characters maybe want to achieve fame or that those graffiti artists cannot create letterforms. In SIEK's opinion, characters are simple and easy to produce and he himself produces characters sometimes for practice, as SIEK wants to perfect all forms of graffiti art. As a matter of fact, VLADIMIR518 was also of the opinion that master graffiti artists are able to perfect all forms of graffiti art.

All these above listed opinions were rather critical towards the form of characters. It is obvious, that graffiti artists, 'writers', like letterforms and they produce characters rather for the sake of the public.

However, on the contrary, the fine artist and graffiti artist Mohd Zaki Bin Nordin (born 1986) aka ESCAPE stated that he is not interested in letterforms and focuses on

characters.⁶⁸³ ESCAPE continued to state that letterforms are his weakness, as ESCAPE finds it difficult to understand the letterform flow and he does not understand how other graffiti artists create letterforms. This statement only confirms SIEK's opinion, that some graffiti artists are not skilled enough in letterform construction. This is an interesting point, as the 'public opinion' is that everybody can produce letterforms oriented graffiti art works, which is a big misconception. The graffiti artist ESCAPE is also an example of a fine artist using spray paint as his tool and the Malaysian art world selected this artist as one of the representatives of the graffiti art culture, similarly to what happened on the global scale with Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat (see page 2).

In terms of characters, ESCAPE expressed his liking for all sorts of characters. To ESCAPE there are no boundaries in the form of characters, as one can paint literally anything. Nevertheless, ESCAPE personally likes realistic characters. He suggested that some distortions should be present in such representations as these make a work interesting. ESCAPE proposed that a distortion could be for example a larger nose or smaller lips in a portrait to make a work more surrealistic, as he said. ESCAPE finds photorealistic graffiti art works interesting, but emphasized that personal style, concept is important and ESCAPE pointed to the US American graffiti artist MAC,⁶⁸⁴ whose photorealistic portraits always have a special texture in the background, which is original. However, it was illustrated that once again individual style is of importance, even in characters for the evaluation of graffiti art works.

NEWBA prefers 'bold' portraits, such as the one by BIBICHUN in Figure 4.51, contrary to realistic characters such as the one by KATUN in Figure A.396 (p. 555). NEWBA reminds us that in the early graffiti art days graffiti artists used normal,

⁶⁸³ ESCAPE.

⁶⁸⁴ See the web: <http://elmac.net/>

simple, but nice characters (for a classical character by NEWBA see: Figure A.565 (p. 570) and Figure A.579 (p. 571)). MR. WANY too prefers in his own works to create cartoon style characters as they seem to be more '*fresh*' to him and it is possible to bring to such a character some movement. Also other graffiti artists such as VLADIMIR518 suggested that simple, oldschool b-boy graffiti art characters are of interest to him and pointed out NEWBA's character in Figure 4.92 (p. 324 (in VI-CA Figure A.579, p. 571)) as an example of a T-KID 'style' character from New York oldschool days, which VLADIMIR518 likes.

To conclude, characters are the most disliked form of graffiti art among graffiti artists. Especially unpopular it seems are graffiti art works in the realistic style.



Figure 4.50 The character in "Figure 570" (p. 570) was selected four (4) times. [Width: 283 cm; height: 229 cm]



Figure 4.51 The character in "Figure 402" (p. 556) was selected five (5) times.

4.2 Legibility of Letterform-Oriented Graffiti Art Works

Nowadays graffiti art works, especially tags and throw-ups, are a common feature of nearly all global urban spaces.⁶⁸⁵ Since the new millennia the Malaysian urban area of GKL is no exception. Tags and throw-ups especially, in the perception of the public around the world seem to represent a form of alien, monochrome, vandalistic signage. As was empirically experienced during my long-term graffiti art research, the general public has this feeling of alienation, mainly because of the lack of understanding of this art form. The public understands graffiti art as a sort of vandalism, scribbled upon the surface of the city. In addition, people cannot 'read' the tags, throw-ups and pieces, which makes the situation even worse. This causes a fear in the public of the unknown. People actually do not even think about reading these 'scribbled' messages on the walls

⁶⁸⁵ On a comparative study between Prague and Kuala Lumpur see: Novak, "Graffiti Art as Public Art and the City Image: A Comparison of Prague and Kuala Lumpur".

and on other surfaces of the city. People simply filter out the graffiti art works from their perception. This feeling of not being able to read graffiti art works was described by the curator and graffiti artist Jonathan Cohen aka MERES, talking about his own father, in Ronald Kramer's PhD dissertation:

*...He can't see the letters and since he can't see it he feels frustrated and he doesn't even want to know... It is camouflaging text.*⁶⁸⁶

The above cited graffiti artist MERES compared letterform oriented graffiti art works to 'camouflaged text'. This comparison is actually very accurate. The graffiti art forms tag, throw-up and piece, which are purely letterforms oriented, are in fact representing camouflaged text, sometimes in a very light and other times in a very heavy form. Therefore, letterform oriented graffiti art works need to be approached as camouflaged texts, in order to understand these 'alien' works (Figure 4.52).

One of the partial aims of this present study is to present the reader with an insight into the world of graffiti art works. In this attempt, the first major and important step is the legibility of the letterform oriented graffiti art works. A brief introduction into the various forms of letterforms oriented graffiti art works can lead to a better understanding of this sort of contemporary public art (see also Literature Review, p. 62).⁶⁸⁷

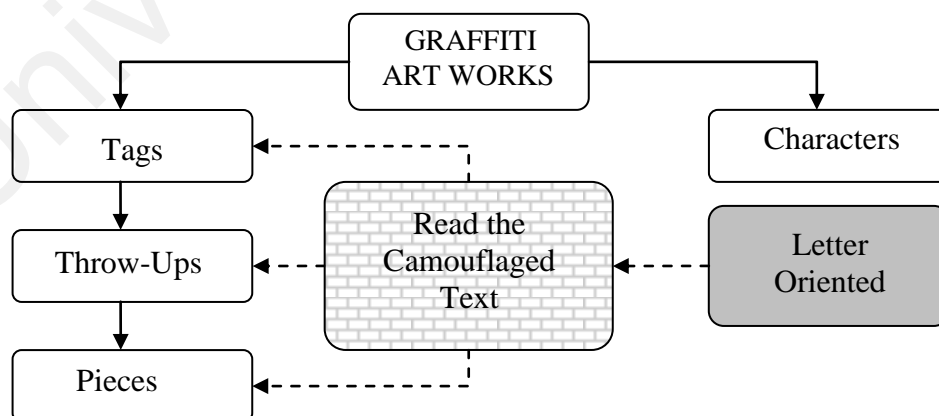


Figure 4.52 Graffiti art forms tag, throw-up and piece are letter oriented.

⁶⁸⁶ Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005". p. 163.

⁶⁸⁷ However, the thesis does not support in anyway the modification (destruction) of public or private property through the present study of graffiti art works!

4.2.1 Legibility of Tags

Tags are the ultimate gateways to the understanding of legibility of the other two letterforms oriented graffiti art forms of throw-up and piece. The graffiti artist POIS, who has been involved in the graffiti art culture since 1992, explained that everything in graffiti art starts with the tag, advances to the throw-up and leads up to the piece. From the piece, everything goes once again back to the tag, as is suggested in the diagram in Figure 4.53. POIS explained with regards to the legibility of graffiti art works:

It is not difficult for me! It is not decoding for me! When you know it, when you know the rhythm of the [graffiti art] subject. Of course, it is sometimes more difficult and you stop because some letter looks different; you have to look at it. But because you are inside of it [of graffiti art], because you live it [graffiti art], because you follow it [graffiti art] the legibility becomes nearly automatic. ...

Look, it is like this. Like in the first spot, there is the tag - definitely. That is for me the building stone, whichever beginning of this subject, but at the same time the end, the final stage of the subject. Because, if you don't do a good tag, you don't do anything right [in graffiti art]! In my opinion.⁶⁸⁸ And from here the throw-up is derived, because so we can get to your question. For me it is the same like with the piece. Throw-ups are generally easily readable, legible, because we are talking about a few lines. But just because of its simplicity. And it consists [the throw-up] from only a few elements. You don't decorate there anything, therefore it is better, if you do it right. It is more difficult to do a good, juicy, interesting, sexy throw-up. In a piece contrary, it can often successfully happen, that you do death [, not good] letters and then you style them, or compose them, or decorate them [with extensions] in such a way that you captivate the other [graffiti artists, who are your audience]. In [the production process of] throw-ups it is even more important to be good in letters. ... Only after doing the tag and the throw-up, only then you can do maybe good pieces. But if you do good pieces, but you can't do a tag, then in my eyes these pieces are devaluating. I find it devaluating, as if you are devaluating yourself.

If we go back to the tag. It is again exactly the same. Like the preceding. Legibility of the tag is simply easy; generally. You watch simply: the development, [the] styles, and the particular [tag] names [in the graffiti art culture]. Habitually, for example just because of the style, you sometimes even don't read [the letterform oriented graffiti art works], you know just because of the style, that this is the person [who did this tag.] And sometimes, when there are unknown tags [to you,] you simply, easily read them or you look at them for a while. But the essence is the simplicity. ... the most important is the simplicity of the tag. Because there you do not have the luxury of decorating, combine anything. Because once

⁶⁸⁸ Of the same opinion was also VLADIMIR518, who stated: 'It is interesting that if a person [, a graffiti artist,] has some shortages than it is manifested from the tag, to the throw-up, until the piece. The mistakes are permanently repeated; and the not perfection of the writing. For me a good writer [, graffiti artist,] is someone who masters all the disciplines [, forms of graffiti art,] and has nowhere a weakness.'

*you do it, it is not any more this fast tag. It is unnecessary. Then it is not this "tag". Throw-up is then again the second level. There you are doing already more lines, it takes more time. But, still, I am for simplicity. Only in the piece you can get more complicated. But not too much.*⁶⁸⁹

From this quotation, it is once again possible to understand that for a graffiti artist it is important to follow the current developments within the graffiti art culture. The constant knowledge of currently participating graffiti artists within the graffiti art culture can easily lead to an ability to decipher graffiti art works automatically. This also means that the ability, the skill of deciphering graffiti art works as such can be acquired, as it is only a matter of practice, plus knowledge. In the case of graffiti art works from the area of GKL the list of practicing graffiti artists in GKL, on page 771, can be of immense help. In the following subsections it will be also shown that, the legibility of graffiti art works is really strongly dependant on the knowledge of the graffiti artists tag names (see Legibility Research Experiment, p. 302).

The graffiti artists orient themselves in the world of graffiti art foremost through tags. Tags are the main communication tools of graffiti artists. What seems to the public as vandalism, and as a matter of fact is vandalism, are visual communication codes of the graffiti art culture.

As Snyder notes, there is more to the tag than just claiming space, but also a story line, who came from out of town, what are the styles the individual graffiti artists use, who came first, who does not like each other and so on.⁶⁹⁰ In Figure 4.54 are represented several quite legible tags. These tags were produced by various graffiti artists, at the 'entrance' area to the Jelatek hall of fame in GKL. Foreign, visiting graffiti artists wrote their tags onto the concrete structure above the Jelatek hall of fame (Figure 3.20, p. 140). In this case, there are in Figure 4.54 tags from 'aiGOR', 'DeMS one' and

⁶⁸⁹ POIS.

⁶⁹⁰ Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. pp. 69-70.

‘JaBSTaR’, who were international influential graffiti art tourists visiting GKL. They ‘left’ behind in GKL these tags represented in Figure 4.54. These legible tags were references of the visit of AIGOR, DEMS333 and JABA, in the hall of fame, to other graffiti artists, who will go there to paint – these tags represent a sort of a ‘guestbook’ at the location (Figure 3.20, p. 140). The eight ‘OAC’ tags in Figure 4.54 were legible too, this time these tags were referring to the Singaporean graffiti art crew ‘OPERATION ARTCORE’. The ‘BMB’ tag is a tag of a local Malaysian crew, but from the city of Seremban. The tag ‘KLAY’ is unknown to me, and probably represents a beginner’s work – even stylistically. Contrary the KOS throw-up in Figure 4.54 is done by one of the most prolific graffiti artists in GKL. All these reported tags from the Figure 4.54 are legible to graffiti artists, as graffiti artists have a good knowledge of the local and international graffiti art culture and therefore graffiti artists can also easily associate certain tags with particular graffiti artists. However, these tags in Figure 4.54 can also be read by people uninitiated in graffiti art. This knowledge of ‘reading’ tags can be of further advantage to understand and ‘decipher’ throw-ups and pieces (see Legibility Research Experiment, p. 302).

Tags are the basic building blocks of graffiti art, because they represent the roots of the artistic tradition developed in Philadelphia and New York City of the late 1960’s.⁶⁹¹ These signatures are like other forms of calligraphy (Latin, Arabic, Chinese, or Japanese), meaning that they try to convey beauty and originality, shared mainly by the graffiti art culture, in the way the letterforms are written in a stylized manner. A ‘classical’ spray painted signature is also included in the VI-CA selection and represents the signature of the current Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak (Figure A.126, p. 529), as he performed this spray painted signature during an anti-drug campaign at

⁶⁹¹ Ley et al., "Urban Graffiti as Territorial Markers."; Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978".

Bukit Jalil, in the year 2004 (Figure 4.55).⁶⁹² The stylistic principles applied to the writing of tags are quite free. However, there are several features of tags, which should be pointed out in terms of legibility.

One stylistic category of tags are 'single stroke tags'. Such tags are commonly quite legible as the single letterforms were written out separately, not causing any visual overlaps of letterforms. Single stroke tags in the VI-CA are represented in Figure A.60, Figure A.75, Figure A.92, Figure A.115, Figure A.132, Figure A.142, Figure A.161, Figure A.164, Figure A.175, Figure A.182, Figure A.183 or Figure A.184. The purpose of such stylized tags is as a matter of fact legibility. No advance knowledge of tag stylization techniques is required here for deciphering the tags. This is also well illustrated with the two last examples of tags within this category (Figure A.183-Figure A.184). Tags in Figure A.183 and Figure A.184 do not represent tag names, but these tags are statements, messages. Therefore, these statements should also fulfill the purpose of legibility, so these messages can be easily communicated to others. A similar example of a written message is in Figure 4.56-Figure 4.57. This extremely large-scale message was produced in late 2008 by the graffiti artist VLT [VIOLENT] at the Pasar Seni riverbank wall, after its second whitewashing by the DBKL city council. VLT wrote (Figure 4.56-Figure 4.57) a simple message to the public administration: 'GIVE THIS WALL!'. As a matter of fact, this wall was really 'given' to the graffiti artists two years later, as the city council organized the first big graffiti art event named *Kulsign Festival 2010* at these walls.⁶⁹³ The message by VLT was perfectly legible, to fulfill the aim of communication to general audiences – not graffiti artists.

⁶⁹² The signature is not a real tag. However, the signature was included into the VI-CA selection, as I was interested if any graffiti artist will react to this 'classical' signature, but none of the 17 graffiti artists did as a matter of fact.

⁶⁹³ Jayaraj, "Close Watch on Tree Contractors."; Rodrigues, "Talking Walls: We Talk Tags, Style & Vandalism with Some of the World's Most Respected Graffiti Writers."; ROSZA et al., "Graffiti Expressions Boost KL Art Scene," *New Straits Times*, 20. December 2010; Team, "Airasia Youth Design Challenge : The Winning Artworks."; Venugopal, "Taking Graffiti Art to a Higher Level."; YouTube, *Kul Sign Festival 2010*.

Another stylistic category of tags are 'one-liner' tags. Such tags are produced with a single continuous line, as in the case of the VI-CA tags in Figure A.38, Figure A.77, Figure A.116 or Figure A.139. Such tags are not easily legible at first glance. However, if the knowledge of tag names of active graffiti artists is known to an observer, such one-liner tags can be quite successfully deciphered.

It needs to be highlighted that tags are also 'adorned' by various symbols. This realization significantly helps in the process of acquiring skills in the deciphering of graffiti art works. In the VI-CA sample we see tags, which are also containing, for instance, not only a tag name but also numerals. These numerals refer to the year of production of the tag, as for instance in the case of the tags in Figure A.85, Figure A.91, Figure A.107, Figure A.110, Figure A.125, Figure A.140, Figure A.150, Figure A.170 or Figure A.177. Other numerals accompanying the tag names in the VI-CA selection represent differentiation marks, to distinguish graffiti artists' tag names apart by the association of a tag name with a number. As Castleman reported, numerals have the function '*to differentiate between writers with the same basic name*',⁶⁹⁴ as in the case of tags in Figure A.48, Figure A.49, Figure A.57, Figure A.71, Figure A.101, Figure A.102, Figure A.108, Figure A.147, Figure A.148, Figure A.149 or Figure A.165.

Tags are executed either in capitals, lower case or in a mix of the lower case and capital letterforms, as in Figure A.36, Figure A.40, Figure A.47, Figure A.58 or Figure A.96. In addition, tags are adorned with supplementary symbols to increase the expressivity, beauty or balance of tags. These symbols accompanying the calligraphic, camouflaged letterforms are also of importance to the legibility of tags. The supplementary symbols are represented with punctuation (.,:;!?"'-), monetary symbols (\$€...), reference marks (©®*...) and other symbols. For various examples of cursive

⁶⁹⁴ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*. p. 75.

letterforms and underlined tags, see the VI-CA tag samples on pages 520-536. For illustrational purposes, I am mentioning the DESYR tag by NUKE in Figure A.68, page 523. This particular tag is surrounded with several symbols incorporated into the composition. There is the directional arrow symbol pointing downwards ↓ from within the letterform R; there is an explosion (a cloud symbol) in the tags left bottom corner and there is the saint halo on top of the tag. The halo is quite often used as a tag decoration, similar to the arrow and star symbols. The halo above a tag was first used in 1971 in New York City by the graffiti artist Wayne Roberts (1951–2012) aka STAY HIGH¹⁴⁹.⁶⁹⁵

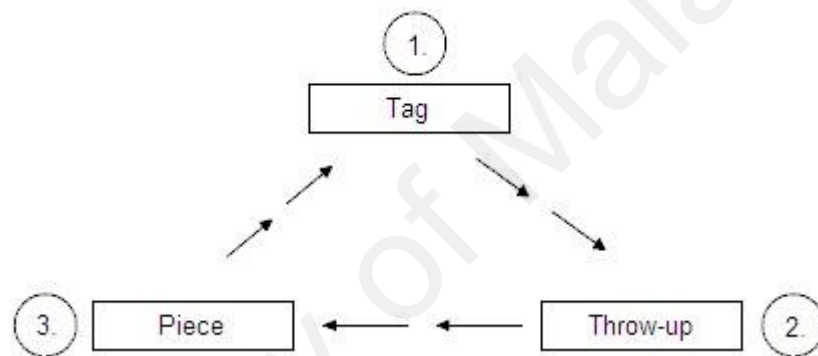


Figure 4.53 Legibility concept by POIS. From tag to throw-up to piece and back to the tag.

⁶⁹⁵ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 48.



Figure 4.54 Tags by “aiGOR”; “DeMS one”; “JaBSTaR”; “OAC” (8x); “BMB”; “KLAY” and a throw-up by “KOS”. [See also Figure J.182-Figure J.184, page 737.]
17 June 2011, Jelatek, KL.



Figure 4.55 Najib Tun Razak initiating an anti-drugs campaign.
Source: SONA (2009). 02 April 2004, Bukit Jalil, GKL.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹⁶ The graffiti art backdrop for the event was painted by the SWS graffiti artists.



Figure 4.56 Simple message by VLT [VIOLENT]: 'GIVE THIS WALL!'.
06 November 2008. Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.57 Simple message by VLT [VIOLENT] as seen at night: 'GIVE THIS WALL!'.
30 November 2008, Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.

4.2.2 Legibility of Throw-ups

The legibility of throw-ups is not too difficult once the observer understands the structure of this graffiti art form. Many examples of this graffiti art form are presented in the VI-CA section of this present thesis dedicated to throw-ups on pages 536-550. Letterforms composing a throw-up are line constructions, silhouettes of letterforms. Such letterforms are then often enhanced with drop shadow effects (Figure A.192, Figure A.206 or Figure A.263); 3D blocks (Figure A.243); with supplementary symbols represented with punctuation (Figure A.203) and with directional arrow symbols (Figure A.201). Overlaps are quite a common feature of throw-ups and this stylization might represent a problem for uninitiated viewers to throw-ups in terms of legibility (Figure A.196, Figure A.216, Figure A.253, Figure A.267, Figure A.302 or Figure A.315). There is similarly also in tags a form of 'one-lined' stylization of throw-ups (Figure A.213, Figure A.218, Figure A.226 or Figure A.231). Such 'one-liner' throw-ups are very difficult to decipher, if the observer does not know what letterforms to look for in such a particular throw-up. Here knowledge of the possible author's tag name is extremely useful. However, a common stylization of throw-ups is based on bubble-letter stylization. Such inflated letterforms are the most common way in throw-up stylization (Figure A.199, Figure A.200, Figure A.210, Figure A.229, Figure A.245, Figure A.261, Figure A.264, Figure A.274, Figure A.287, Figure A.302, Figure A.320, Figure A.325 or Figure A.332). At last, I would like to state that sometimes throw-up letterforms also feature anthropomorphic stylization variations as in Figure 4.58 (and in Figure A.217, Figure A.221 or Figure A.289). In Malaysia graffiti artists use even characters altogether as throw-ups as in Figure A.224, Figure A.239, Figure A.279, Figure A.297, Figure A.317, Figure A.330 or Figure A.335.

Throw-ups, along with tags, are a significant component of what the graffiti art culture refers to as ‘bombing’. Bombing aims at spreading a graffiti artists tag name in public spaces. The art historian Staffan Jacobsen highlighted, that a throw-up can be applied to demonstrate a graffiti artist’s presence more boldly than with a tag.⁶⁹⁷ However, throw-ups can also be used as ‘destructive’ visual instruments within the graffiti art culture, in conflicts among graffiti artists, which was also pointed out in the *Spot Theory*.⁶⁹⁸ This was for example the case, in 2008, in the city center of Bukit Bintang, when the Malaysian graffiti artists CARPET and KATUN painted their throw-ups over the ‘THE SUPER SUNDAY’ blockbuster piece in Figure 4.59. In this case, the CARPET (Figure 4.60-Figure 4.61) and KATUN (Figure 4.62-Figure 4.63) throw-ups were produced on top of a piece, as ‘destructive’ visual instruments. This was due to the extreme competitiveness between the two rival graffiti art crews PHB KLK and TSS. These two crews competed for commercial and stylistic reasons, as graffiti art is a very competitive ‘sport’.⁶⁹⁹ CARPET’s and KATUN’s throw-ups were subcultural messages to the TSS crew, as firstly the PHB KLK crew produced a blockbuster piece in the very same location in Figure 4.59 (for the rest of the background to the PHB KLK piece see Figure F.9, on page 690), but this piece was painted over by the TSS crew with their own blockbuster piece ‘THE SUPER SUNDAY’, as seen in Figure 4.59. This location had ‘cultural significance’ for the graffiti art culture in GKL,⁷⁰⁰ as both graffiti art crews, the PHB KLK and TSS, had their commercial enterprises in this very same area, a distance of just 350 m. The TSS crew left a message in ‘THE SUPER SUNDAY’ blockbuster piece for the PHBKLLK crew, in the form of the tag: ‘BEAT ME IF YOU CAN!’, represented in Figure A.43 on page 521. Weeks later CARPET and KATUN,

⁶⁹⁷ Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art." p. 143.

⁶⁹⁸ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 55.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 50.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 50.

from the PHB KKK crew, altered the 'THE SUPER SUNDAY' blockbuster piece with their throw-ups (Figure 4.60-Figure 4.63). These CARPET and KATUN throw-ups were not easily legible to the public. Both throw-ups were highly stylized (Figure 4.60; Figure 4.62). However, the participants of the graffiti art culture in GKL were aware of the styles of CARPET and KATUN and therefore they knew what tag names these throw-ups represented. Besides, the CARPET throw-up also contains a tag. At this point, I would like to present the explanatory diagrams in Figure 4.61 and Figure 4.63, which should help to shed light onto the letterform structure of the tag names contained in the CARPET and KATUN throw-ups. In Figure 4.61 and Figure 4.63 there are all single letterforms visible and it is apparent that both graffiti artists maintained a unified stylization of all letterforms.



Figure 4.58 SIEK throw-up with an anthropomorphic letterform 'E' stylization.
28 October 2008. Melawati wall, KL.



Figure 4.59 THE SUPER SUNDAY blockbuster piece over a former PHB KLK blockbuster pice.
28 October 2008. Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 4.60 Throw-up by CARPET over THE SU[PER SUNDAY] blockbuster piece. (Figure 1.228 in the VI-CA).
13 December 2008. Bukit Bintang, KL.

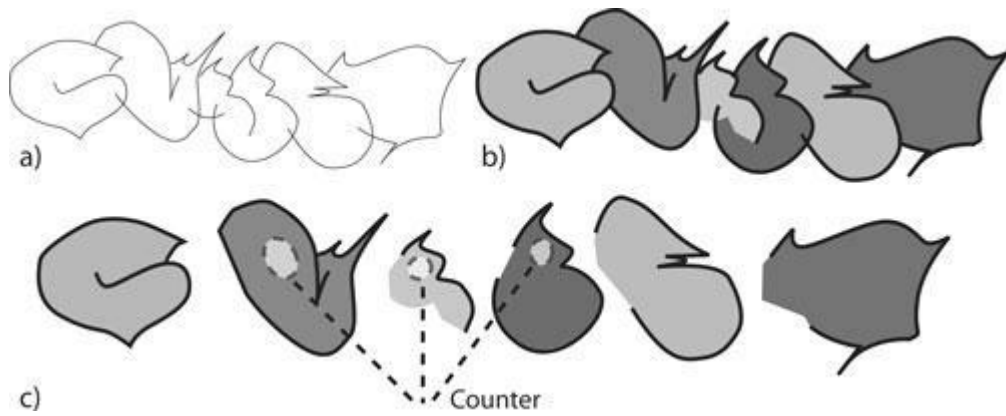


Figure 4.61 Diagram of the Figure 4.60 'CaRPET' throw-up: **a)** outlines; **b)** color differentiation of single letterforms; **c)** single letterforms separated and possible counters indicated in the letters 'a', 'R' and 'P'.



Figure 4.62 Throw-up by KATUN over [THE S]UPER SUNDAY blockbuster piece. 13 December 2008. Bukit Bintang, KL.

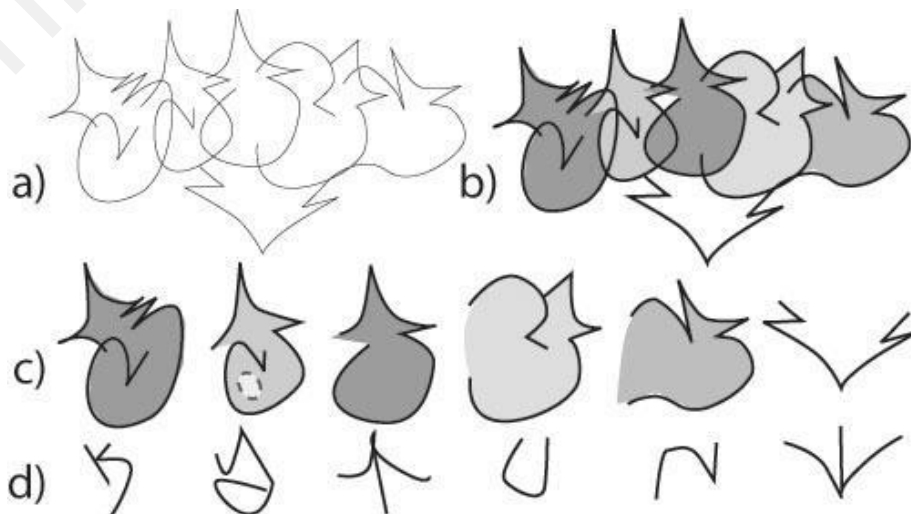


Figure 4.63 Diagram of the Figure 4.62 'kaTUN ↓' throw-up: **a)** outlines; **b)** color differentiation of single letterforms; **c)** single letterforms separated and possible counter indicated in the letterform 'a'; **d)** simplified letterforms 'kaTUN'.

4.2.3 Legibility of Pieces

The representation of letterforms in pieces is significantly varied in terms of their legibility. Some letterforms in pieces are easily legible, but some letterforms in pieces are on the contrary highly illegible. Lisa Gottlieb in her study, on graffiti art styles, classified the legibility of pieces into: '*legible*', '*partially legible*' and '*illegible*'.⁷⁰¹ The legibility of pieces is significantly depending on the graffiti art style used, applied on the stylization of the letterforms contained in a piece. Blockbuster pieces are rather legible (Figure A.665, Figure A.967), as the REVOK piece, which was selected as the most aesthetically preferred graffiti art piece from the VI-CA selection (see Figure 4.49, page 273). The NENOK piece in Figure 4.40 (p. 270) might be classified as partially legible as it was painted in a graffiti art style inspired by 'European' pieces (similar to the NUKE piece in Figure A.695).⁷⁰² The KEAS piece in Figure 4.64 is another piece with rather legible or partially legible letterforms. Also according to the graffiti artist KEAS his piece in Figure 4.64 is '*simple*' in style. KEAS stated in relation to this particular piece that:

*This is my first big piece. I tried to make it simple. After this, I maybe try to do something new. More detailed and new color combination.*⁷⁰³

However, the wildstyle piece below in Figure 4.65, by CARPET, is rather illegible. A legibility diagram of the letterforms contained in this particular piece is provided in Figure 4.66-Figure 4.67 to highlight, that once the stylized structure of the letterforms and the overall composition is understood, the actual legibility is not as difficult as it might have seemed at first. This also applies to the abstract structure of the letterforms in the piece by CLOAK in Figure 4.68. In this particular piece, it is quite sufficient to be

⁷⁰¹ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art". p. 67.

⁷⁰² The higher popularity of European pieces by the graffiti artists from the PW crew was very briefly reported in: Novak, "Western Influences in Southeast Asian Paintings: Comparison of a Balinese Ink Painting and of Two Malaysian Graffiti Artworks."

⁷⁰³ KEAS: PW crew Group-Interview, Audio-recorded Interview, 25. October 2008.

aware of the tag name of the author of the graffiti art work, CLOAK, to visually perceive the structure of the abstract letterforms in Figure 4.68. Once an observer realizes that the subject matter of the piece in Figure 4.68 is the tag name of the graffiti artist CLOAK, the observer can pinpoint the letterforms ‘C’, ‘L’, ‘O’, ‘A’ and ‘K’ in the piece, in Figure 4.68, and ‘understand’ the representational intentions of the graffiti artist CLOAK. What is of interest to report in the case of the piece in Figure 4.68 is, that the graffiti artist CLOAK orients in his graffiti art works on the form of characters (see Figure A.454, p. 560; Figure J.84-Figure J.85, p. 731) and only rarely produces pieces. However, CLOAK, as a skilled artist, produced the piece in Figure 4.68 in a very respectable abstract style, but under normal circumstances, CLOAK is not particularly trained, experienced in the structuring of letterforms, as can be observed in his samples of the letterforms E and K on page 614.⁷⁰⁴ As was stated above, the legibility of letterforms is significantly influenced by the graffiti art style used. In Figure 4.69 a ‘TNQ30’ piece, is in the graffiti art bubble style. Even though the graffiti artist TNQ31 suggested that the piece is quite legible from his perspective, to the uninitiated observer the piece might not be legible at all. TNQ31 stated in relation to this particular piece in Figure 4.69 that:

*I usually make something that’s quite easy to read. You know, like pretty straight form or round or blocky letters, but not wildstyle not...yeah. For me you know, like graffiti [art] is writing and writing is so that other people can read it. If other people can’t read it, for whom you write it for? For yourself or?*⁷⁰⁵

In terms of the legibility of letterforms within pieces, it would be an almost endless ‘adventure’ to elaborate on all the 26 Latin letterforms represented in pieces, in all the individual and collective graffiti art styles. For examples of the stylization of the letterforms E and K, by some of the participants in this present study, see the Appendix

⁷⁰⁴ CLOAK is a very skilled graffiti artist in terms of characters. CLOAK developed his own style and technique to produce original characters.

⁷⁰⁵ TNQ30.

on page 609. Further, for many examples of various styles and levels of legibility in pieces refer to the 450 pieces included in the VI-CA selection on pages 572-600. Three very good and authentic books introducing to its readers the graffiti art letterforms are *Writing*, *Street Fonts* and *Graffiti School*.⁷⁰⁶

Nevertheless, it is of importance to highlight that letterforms in pieces are stylized, as letterforms in tags and throw-ups, either in capitals, lower case or in a mix of the lower case and capital letterforms. Further, letterforms in pieces are very commonly adorned with ‘extensions’ (see the subsection on page 67). Letterforms in pieces are very commonly structurally expanded, in their visual form, with various types of extensions such as arrows, heart symbols, connectors and all sorts of other extensions which are suitable to camouflage the ‘text’ in the piece. For some extensions, see for example Figure 4.70-Figure 4.74 below. In addition, the composition of pieces is expanded with supplementary symbols to increase the expressivity of a piece. These supplementary symbols accompanying the camouflaged letterforms are also of importance to the legibility of pieces, even though these symbols represent only graphical additions to the stylized letterform compositions. These supplementary symbols are represented, once again, with punctuation (.,:;,!?” ‘-) and with other symbols.

At last, it needs to be emphasized that the graffiti artists, focusing in their graffiti art works on letterforms, must know well the structure of the letterforms, which they are working with.⁷⁰⁷ A graffiti artist needs to possess an exact knowledge of the anatomy of letterforms, as a figure painter needs to be fully aware of the correct anatomy of the human body. Graffiti art letterform shapes are derived from basic letterforms.

⁷⁰⁶ Ganter, *Graffiti School: Student Guide*; Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*; Walde, *Street Fonts: Graffiti Alphabets Form around the World*.

⁷⁰⁷ For letterform constructions see: Ganter, *Graffiti School: Student Guide*.

According to an important and in this ‘field’, very experienced Malaysian graffiti artist, NENOK,⁷⁰⁸ it is challenging to create good graffiti art letterform shapes.

*Letters are challenging to you; [it is challenging] to create letters from basic type, to [an] extreme shape of letters.*⁷⁰⁹

In summary, it can be stated that the legibility of letterforms in pieces is always dependent on the author of a graffiti art work. Therefore, I would like to cite at the end of this section one of the globally senior graffiti artists, Julius Caverio (born 1961) aka T-KID170, who has been dedicated to graffiti art since 1977. T-KID emphasized that the legibility of letterforms is always depending on the expressive goals of an author. T-KID170 explained:

*Graffiti [art] is about expressing yourself, through the use of colors and the way you do your letters. It doesn't necessarily have to be readable. ... If the artist wants to convey a message and he wants it legible, he will do it that way. Otherwise, he could also do it through colors, through letters twisted, turning, and going inside and outside of each other. The thing is, the message is in the art. Not so much in the what it says or what it spells out, but in how the [graffiti] artist express themselves through his own flow, so to speak.*⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁸ For NENOK's skills in letterform shaping see his diploma work: Omar, "Ilustrasi Informasi Terhadap Rekataip Graffiti [Information on Illustration of Graffiti Design Type]".

⁷⁰⁹ NENOK: Group-Interview.

⁷¹⁰ T-KID170.



Figure 4.64 KEAS piece. See also the 'INNERCITY WRITER' tag in the right bottom corner.
25 October 2008. Shah Alam, Jalan Nelayan 19/8, GKL.



Figure 4.65: CARPET's piece selected for the demonstration of an illegible piece.
05 April 2010, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.66: CARPET lettering simplified and highlighted.



Figure 4.67: CARPET's lettering from Figure 4.65 simplified, highlighted and separated.⁷¹¹

⁷¹¹ The diagram of the letterforms was produced only based on my own expertise, but the correctness of the diagram was confirmed personally by CARPET during an interview on the 21 February 2013.



Figure 4.68 CLOAK piece with graphical, abstract letterforms. Width: 421 cm; height: 214 cm.
13 September 2011. Jelatek, KL.



Figure 4.69 TNQ30 piece with a bubble background [by TNQ31-see the tag on the left].
31 January 2009. Jelatek, KL.

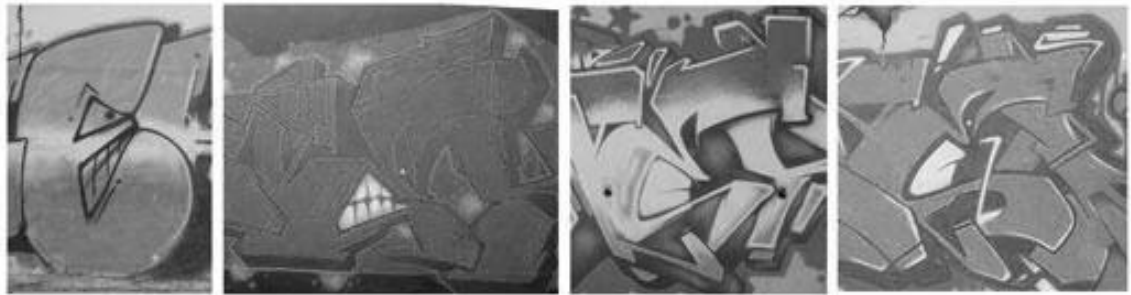


Figure 4.70 a-d: SIEK's four anthropomorphous letterforms 'E' from December 2008-February 2009.



Figure 4.71 Letterform extensions – arrows.
Based on graffiti art works, pieces, by CES, REVOK, CAN2 and others.



Figure 4.72 Letterform extensions.
Based on graffiti art works, pieces, by CES, REVOK, CAN2 and others.

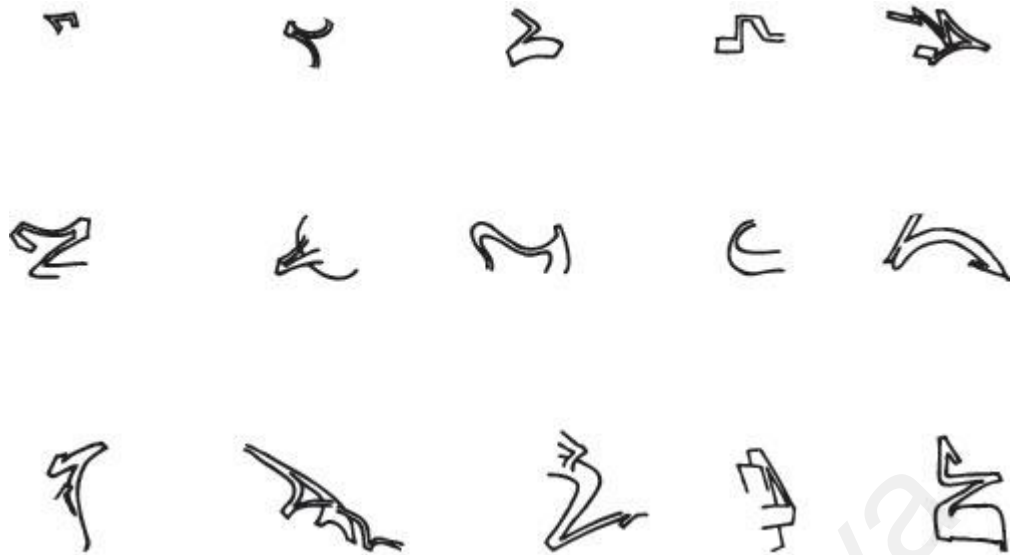


Figure 4.73 Letterform extensions.
Based on graffiti art works, pieces, by CES, REVOK, CAN2 and others.

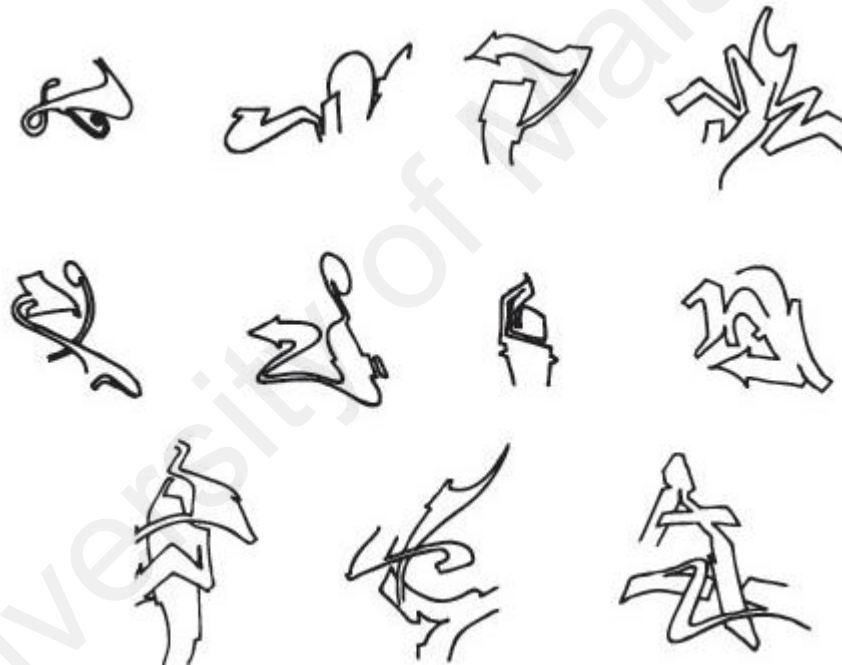


Figure 4.74 Letterform extensions.
Based on graffiti art works, pieces, by CES, REVOK, CAN2 and others.

4.2.3.1 Legibility Research Experiment: Legibility of 20 Pieces Produced by NUKE, CARPET, KIOUE and SIEK

The legibility experiment showed that the legibility of pieces is challenging even for experts. The 12 participants of the legibility research experiment ‘deciphered’ correctly only 29.58% of the sample (see Table 4.3). However, the experts were successful in 65% in their legibility of pieces, if their results for partially legible pieces

are included into the overall result (all correct letterforms (29.58%), 1 letterform wrong (11.25%), 2 letterforms wrong (24.17%)).

Individual results for the ‘Experimental group’ and ‘Control group’ indicated the accuracy of the hypothesis that ‘the knowledge of a graffiti artist’s tag name significantly contributes to the legibility of a piece’ (see ‘Difficulty of legibility’ page 213). This is indicated in the results for the ‘Control group’, as this group scored 14.17% higher success rates in the determination of 100% correct answers. This indicates a causal relation in the manipulated independent variable, in this case in the order of the presented sample photographs starting from the most legible ones, advancing towards the most illegible ones and *vice versa*. The manipulation of the independent variable influenced the scores of the experimental and control group in the legibility research experiment. This is further illustrated in the overall results for the control group, which achieved full and partial legibility of 74.17% (see Table 4.3, see also charts in Figure 4.75-Figure 4.83).

Table 4.3 Overall results of the legibility experiment and results in relation to dependent variable.

		Both Experimental groups together	
All letters correct		29.58% (71/240)	
1 wrong letter		11.25% (27/240)	
2 wrong letters		24.17% (58/240)	
Overall result:			
All correct, 1-2 letter wrong		65.00% (156/240)	
Wrong answers		35.00% (84/240)	
	Experimental group	Control group	Dependent variable difference
All letters correct	22.50% (27/120)	36.67% (44/120)	+ 14.17% (17/120)
1 wrong letter	9.17% (11/120)	13.33% (16/120)	+ 4.16% (5/120)
2 wrong letters	24.17% (29/120)	24.17% (29/123)	0% (0/120)
Overall results: (All correct, 1-2 letter wrong)	55.83% (67/120)	74.17% (89/120)	+ 18.34% (22/120)

Another independent variable was the size of the presentation of the sample photographs during the research experiment. This variable did not play a significant role in the legibility research experiment and did not show a substantial causal relation in the results.

The concept of the legibility experiment was not aimed at a competition among participating graffiti artist, but it was rather an honest attempt to research the legibility of letterform oriented graffiti art works – pieces. However, the graffiti artist YUDOE achieved the highest success rate in comparison to other graffiti artists. It was observed, that YUDOE took his time to assess every piece in the experiment and this approach contributed to his overall high score. Moreover, it is also interesting that YUDOE correctly guessed, in the sample selection of the 20 pieces, that there are constantly repeated 3-4 tag names as subject matters. YUDOE also pointed out that the tag, as was suggested above, helps to ‘decipher’ a piece as the tag is a simplified version of the piece.

In contrast, the former graffiti artist MILKA, who was active in the graffiti art culture in 1993–1994, approached the samples quickly and his overall success in the deciphering process was the lowest within the whole research experiment (Table 4.4-Table 4.5).⁷¹²

The four (4) sets of works – by NUKE, CARPET, KIOUE, SIEK – showed, more than expected, varying amounts of legibility. NUKE’s works were the most legible ones, CARPET’s the second most legible ones, SIEK’s subsequent and KIOUE’s works were nearly illegible (see Table 4.4-Table 4.5; see also bar charts in Figure 4.75-Figure 4.82). This further confirms the observations and results from preceding subsections of this present chapter relating to the legibility of graffiti art works. Legibility of letterform

⁷¹² MILKA’s lowest success rates in the deciphering of the pieces might be compared to an average person without any knowledge of graffiti art works.

oriented graffiti art works strongly relates to the graffiti art style used for the stylization of letterforms in a graffiti art work. This observation was already made by Jack Stewart in the 1970s and this present legibility research experiment confirms Stewart's observation that:

*Many of the [graffiti] writers couldn't even figure out who did this one. One really had to be familiar with the styles of the various [graffiti] writers to decipher work like this.*⁷¹³

The Czech participants in the legibility experiment could not rely on 'connoisseurship', as they did not possess any knowledge about the Malaysian authors NUKE, CARPET, KIOUE and SIEK. The research participants in the research experiment had to rely on their own knowledge of graffiti art styles, to decipher the letterforms contained in the letterform compositions. Or, the participants had to search for 'clues' within the photographs – tags of the graffiti artists – as these generally reveal the subject matter of a graffiti art work.

The graffiti artist NUKE orients his graffiti art works on traditional graffiti art styles derived from traditional graffiti art styles used in 'European' countries and therefore NUKE's pieces are rather easily legible. For example, the pieces in 'Figure E' (p. 637), 'Figure I' (p. 641) and in 'Figure Q' (p. 649) were legible to all of the 12 participants (see Table 4.4-Table 4.5). Further, NUKE's pieces were also selected two times as aesthetically preferable graffiti art works from the VI-CA selection (see Figure 4.41, p. 270 and Figure 4.46, p. 272) indicating the popularity of NUKE's style of pieces among graffiti artists.

CARPET's pieces in the legibility research experiment were the second most legible ones. CARPET's style of letterform construction within the research sample, as I observed, was influenced by New York City wildstyle pieces and by Los Angeles based

⁷¹³ Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978". p. 430.
Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*. p. 151.

graffiti art styles. This made CARPET's pieces less legible in comparison to NUKE's pieces.

SIEK's semi-wildstyle pieces within the research sample were not significantly legible, but the participants, especially from the 'Control group', successfully deciphered some of SIEK's pieces. The higher success rate in the deciphering process of SIEK's pieces, among the participants in the 'Control group', relates to the presence of SIEK's tag in Figure E.20. The legible SIEK tag in Figure E.20 (p. 652) was clearly visible to the participants, as Figure E.20 was the first photograph to be presented to the participants of the 'Control group'.

All KIOUE's pieces were never entirely correctly deciphered by the 12 participants of the research experiment. I contribute this fact to KIOUE's original and highly individual graffiti art style. KIOUE is a very creative, self-taught artist. In terms of graffiti art styles, KIOUE draws inspiration from all kinds of fields and does not limit himself for long periods to a particular graffiti art style. Some graffiti artists, who participated in the research experiment, showed a dislike of KIOUE's works.

However, T-KID, who has been actively doing graffiti art since 1977 for nearly four decades, prized the originality of KIOUE's pieces. During an interview, T-KID looked just very briefly at the VI-CA selection and commented on only a few of the 450 pieces. Interestingly, T-KID commented exactly on the pieces by SIEK, CARPET and KIOUE, who were the three out of the four selected graffiti artists to provide pieces for the legibility experiment. Before T-KID looked at the VI-CA selection, I reminded him that the pieces are only represented in small scale. T-KID said:

Yeah it is hard to tell, because I can barely see it. But you can see, where my influence is, you know. [Laughing.] ... Here we go over here [in SIEK's piece in Figure A.644]. This is the T-KID style, but through Germany; through some detours diluted into something. You know. Here we go again [in the CARPET piece in Figure A.636]. More T-KID style, you know. OK. And here we go the LOOMIT, and the DAIM, you know. You can see the stuff. As I said, people are inspired by certain things, man. The higher thing is, is to take the piece and turn it into your own. Like this guy here [in the KIOUE piece in Figure A.668]. I like

*that. ... That's cool, ... man. Listen, you know, you work with what's around you. Once again, you inspired by thinks you see. You know. I inspired a lot of artistes. I inspired a lot of graffiti writers, man. And that's, you know, I am honored by that. You know, I am not gonna say they are biting of me. Is not biting. Is what they taking. They taking what they see and making it to their own. And that's what it is all about.*⁷¹⁴

This interview extract quoted above, well illustrates the points I tried partially to convey in the paragraphs above with regards to graffiti art styles. Traditional 'European' graffiti art styles tend to be more legible and NUKE inclines to produce pieces in these styles. NUKE, as an influential Malaysian graffiti artist influenced his Malaysian peers with his 'legible' pieces, besides others, also he probably influenced CARPET and SIEK, to make their pieces at least slightly more legible. This influence is also naturally applicable *vice versa*, as CARPET and SIEK are influential Malaysian graffiti artists too. The graffiti artists CARPET and SIEK produced partially legible pieces in wildstyle and semi-wildstyle. However, CARPET's and SIEK's pieces were also inspired by a certain degree of legibility by the pieces of NUKE. This peer influence was certainly also present in the pieces of KIOUE. Nevertheless, KIOUE's pieces are very individual and therefore the participants of the legibility research experiment could not draw on their experience from various graffiti art style groups. KIOUE for example stated during an interview, that he was facing problems in the process of composing his letterform compositions. KIOUE explained that the major challenge he was facing, was the right composition of the letterforms 'K' and 'I' next to each other. KIOUE explained that these two letterforms do not fit harmoniously next to each other. Therefore, KIOUE stylized the letterform 'I' in such a way that the 'I' is 'inserted' into the letterform 'K' (see the diagrams in Figure E.44, Figure E.46 and Figure E.48, on pages 665-667). Further, symmetry also played a role in the first two pieces of KIOUE (Figure 4.84-Figure 4.85), making the letterform compositions nearly

⁷¹⁴ T-KID170.

impossible to decipher, if the participants cannot apply ‘*connoisseurship*’, as the participants did not possess knowledge of KIOUE’s style, as it was the case with the participants; contrary CLOAK successfully applied ‘*connoisseurship*’ (see page 221). Moreover, KIOUE’s individual style is inspired by local, Malaysian influences, as is shown in the sections ‘Islamic Cultural Influences’ and ‘Native Crafts and Arts and Other Local Reflections’, starting on page 325.

Legibility of letterforms in pieces is crucial for the evaluation. This present legibility experiment might help interested readers to understand the structure of a piece, to be able to evaluate, criticize and judge such a graffiti art work. This was well expressed by the artist and graffiti artist VLADIMIR518, who stated that he looks in letterforms, contained in pieces, first for a visual style, which he would find appealing, as there are today too many average pieces, then he examines the whole piece, and only then he seeks to decipher the piece. VLADIMIR518 said:

*Look, I always try to decipher what is written there [in the piece], because that is the basic "message", right? It is not as much the word, but how the word is written. That is in my opinion the message of the piece. As a matter of fact I don't care what letters are there, but it is good to know the letters in order so you know, how the person processed the letters. His letters. When I am not able to read it, I am not even able to correctly evaluate the piece, right? Therefore I am always interested in what is written there, in order to be able to assess how well was the writing [in a piece] processed.*⁷¹⁵

To conclude, the present research indicated that a knowledge of a graffiti artist’s style and of the graffiti artist’s tag name is very significant in the process of deciphering letterform oriented graffiti art works. Legibility of letterforms in pieces is therefore strongly depending on the knowledge of the historical development of certain letterform stylizations. Further, legibility of letterforms in pieces is very high if the observer knows the tag name of the author of a particular letterform oriented graffiti art work.

⁷¹⁵ VLADIMIR518.

Table 4.4 Results of the legibility experiment for the Experimental Group.

Participant:	Figure A	Figure B	Figure C	Figure D
ASE:	<i>SKERS</i>	TASR	T[]UC	BEY
HANES:	<i>IKERS</i>	<i>CARP</i>	PILOT	AKE
EZOP:	<i>KERS</i>	<i>CARAE</i>	T[]Y	E
MIRA2:	<i>KERS</i>	CAETAS	TIY!	KP[.]E[.]Z
BESH:	<i>IKERS</i>	CAE	T	TE[.]E[.]
MILKA:	KRZRZ	COMP	TYR	[-Nothing-]
Participant:	Figure E	Figure F	Figure G	Figure H
ASE:	DESYR	CAPEST	BNK	BSPEYS
HANES:	DESYR	<i>CAPEK</i>	<i>KOWE</i>	BOFER
EZOP:	DESYR	<i>CA PES</i>	KADYSE	B[]TER
MIRA2:	DESYR	CESEIK	BE PULSE	BOREK
BESH:	DESYR	CEPES	CEE[.]S	ROPES
MILKA:	DESYR	STER	DYS	KRK
Participant:	Figure I	Figure J	Figure K	Figure L
ASE:	DESYR	RA[]ES	EKIOSLE	<i>DAEK</i>
HANES:	DESYR	CARPET	<i>KOCE</i>	SAEK
EZOP:	DESYR	<i>CAPE</i>	<i>KOAE</i>	SAEK
MIRA2:	DESYR	BAZER	AKIDZE	<i>DAEK</i>
BESH:	DESYR	<i>CARE[.]</i>	KIOZE	<i>DAEK</i>
MILKA:	DESYR	RMZR	<i>KOTE</i>	DSK
Participant:	Figure M	Figure N	Figure O	Figure P
ASE:	2NUKE	<i>SASPET</i>	<i>KIOV</i>	<i>SOEB</i>
HANES:	NUKE	CARPET	<i>KEOUP</i>	KOEA
EZOP:	NUKE	<i>ATPET</i>	<i>KOU</i>	SOEK
MIRA2:	INUKE	BATPEB	KIOVE	<i>SOER</i>
BESH:	INUKE	<i>APET</i>	<i>KIOV</i>	<i>SOEB</i>
MILKA:	NWRR	ARB	KY	[-Nothing-]
Participant:	Figure Q	Figure R	Figure S	Figure T
ASE:	NUKE	CARPET	CFA	SIED
HANES:	NUKE	CARPET	REA	SIEKO
EZOP:	NUKE	CARPET	TFA	SAEK
MIRA2:	NUKE	ERPEL	TA	SIEK
BESH:	NUKE	CARPET	CAR	<i>SAED</i>
MILKA:	NUKE	GNRPOD	VAA	SIKYA

The results are presented in the following way:

- 100% correct legibility: Gray background
- 1 letter illegible: **Bold emphasis**
- 2 letters illegible: *Italic emphasis*
- Wrong answer: Normal text in CAPITAL letters.

Table 4.5 Results of the legibility experiment for the Control Group.

Participant:	Figure A	Figure B	Figure C	Figure D
POIS:	<i>KERS</i>	CA	[-Nothing-]	K[.]E
VLADIMIR518:	<i>IKERS</i>	<i>CAEPER</i>	<i>KIUT</i>	KEEE
YUDOE:	<i>IKERS</i>	CARPED	BOUR	SIEK
CAGO:	<i>IKERS</i>	<i>CASPE</i>	<i>KINUC</i>	SIEK
RIDIK:	<i>IKERS</i>	CARPED	TIUC	AKE
SWEB:	<i>KERS</i>	CAS[.]	<i>TIOU</i>	KIEOS
Participant:	Figure E	Figure F	Figure G	Figure H
POIS:	DESYR	C[.]PE	[.]SE	[-Nothing-]
VLADIMIR518:	DESYR	<i>CASPER</i>	KNK	BERES
YUDOE:	DESYR	CARPET	BOUR	SIEK
CAGO:	DESYR	CEASPER	THE ROU[~R]	SIEK
RIDIK:	DESYR	CARPET	ROS	KOFER
SWEB:	DESYR	<i>CADPES</i>	KUK	KOPEK
Participant:	Figure I	Figure J	Figure K	Figure L
POIS:	DESYR	<i>CA.PE</i>	KIO.E	<i>DAEK</i>
VLADIMIR518:	DESYR	CARPE	AKIO ONE	SAEK
YUDOE:	DESYR	CARPET	KIOCE	SIEK
CAGO:	DESYR	<i>ARPE</i>	CEKIO ONE	SAEK
RIDIK:	DESYR	CARPE	KIOZE	SAEK
SWEB:	DESYR	KJPY	<i>KOZE</i>	SAEK
Participant:	Figure M	Figure N	Figure O	Figure P
POIS:	NUKE	CASPET	KIOVE	[.]O EK
VLADIMIR518:	NUKE	CARPET	KIOVE	<i>SOEB</i>
YUDOE:	NUKE	CARPET	<i>KIOV</i>	SIEK
CAGO:	NUKE	<i>CASPER</i>	KIONE	<i>SOER</i>
RIDIK:	NUKE	<i>GARPED</i>	KIVR	<i>ROEK</i>
SWEB:	NUKE	CARPET	<i>KOVE</i>	<i>TOEK</i>
Participant:	Figure Q	Figure R	Figure S	Figure T
POIS:	NUKE	CARPET	[-Nothing-]	SIEK
VLADIMIR518:	NUKE	CARPET	TSS	<i>SEIKO</i>
YUDOE:	NUKE	CARPET	BOUR	SIEK
CAGO:	NUKE	CARPET	ZIAF	SIEK
RIDIK:	NUKE	<i>GARPEY</i>	TAF	SIEKO
SWEB:	NUKE	CARPET	TSA	<i>SEKO</i>

The results are presented in the following way:

- 100% correct legibility: Gray background
- 1 letter illegible: **Bold emphasis**
- 2 letters illegible: *Italic emphasis*
- Wrong answer: Normal text in CAPITAL letters.

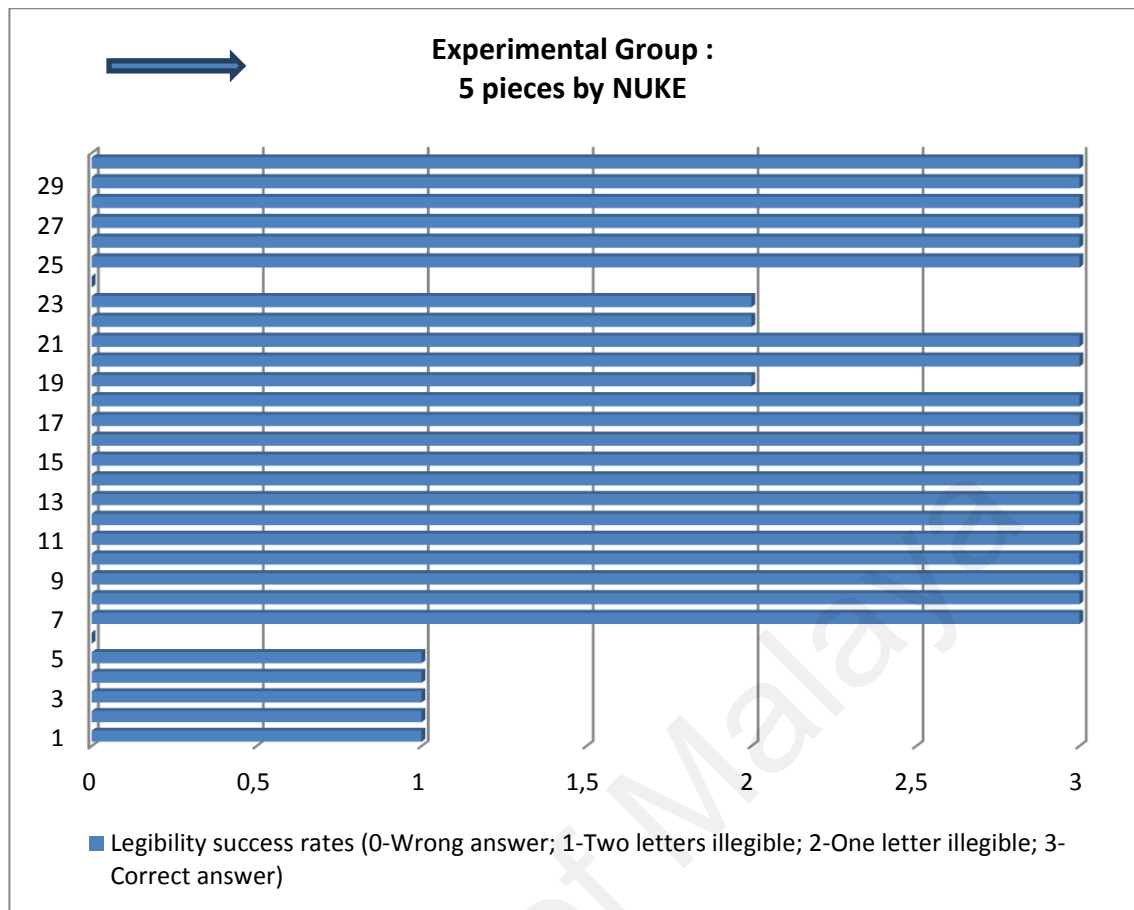


Figure 4.75 Legibility success rates in NUKE's five pieces by the experimental group.

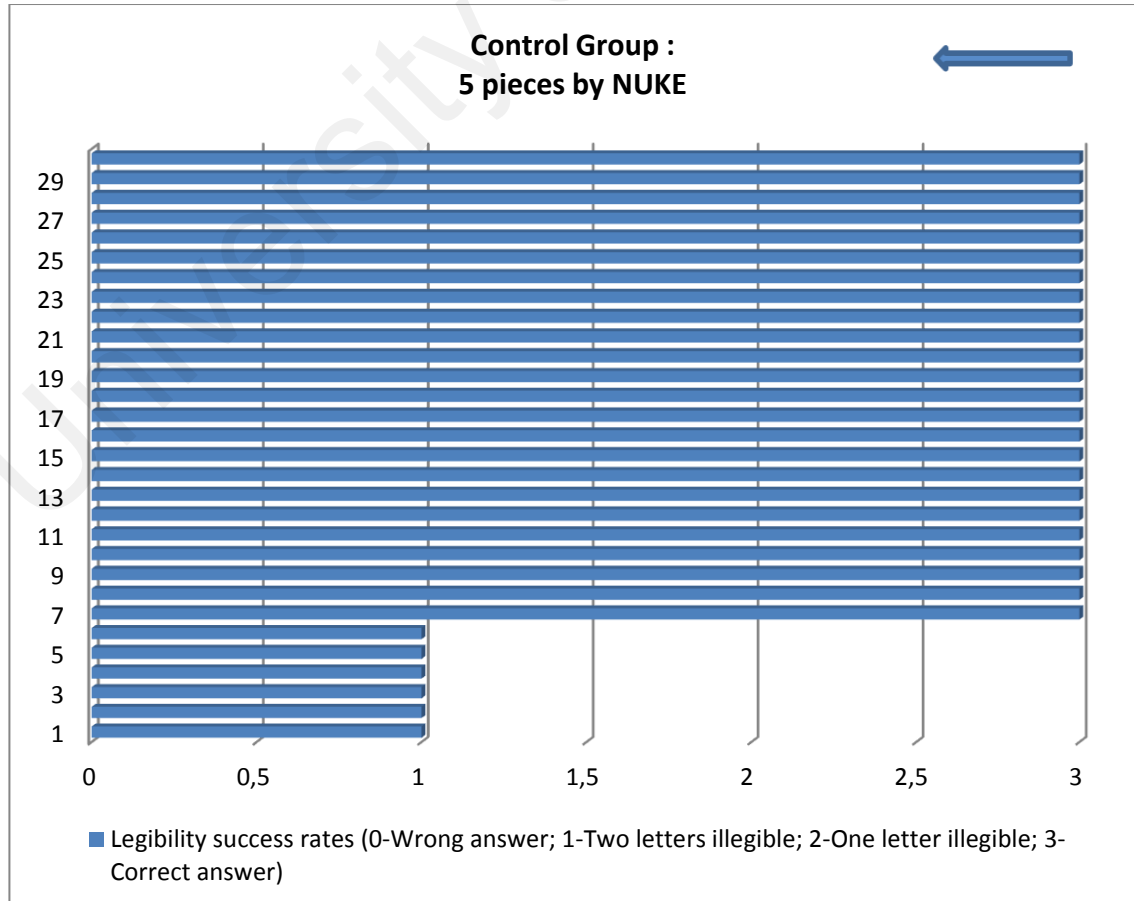


Figure 4.76 Legibility success rates in NUKE's five pieces by the control group.

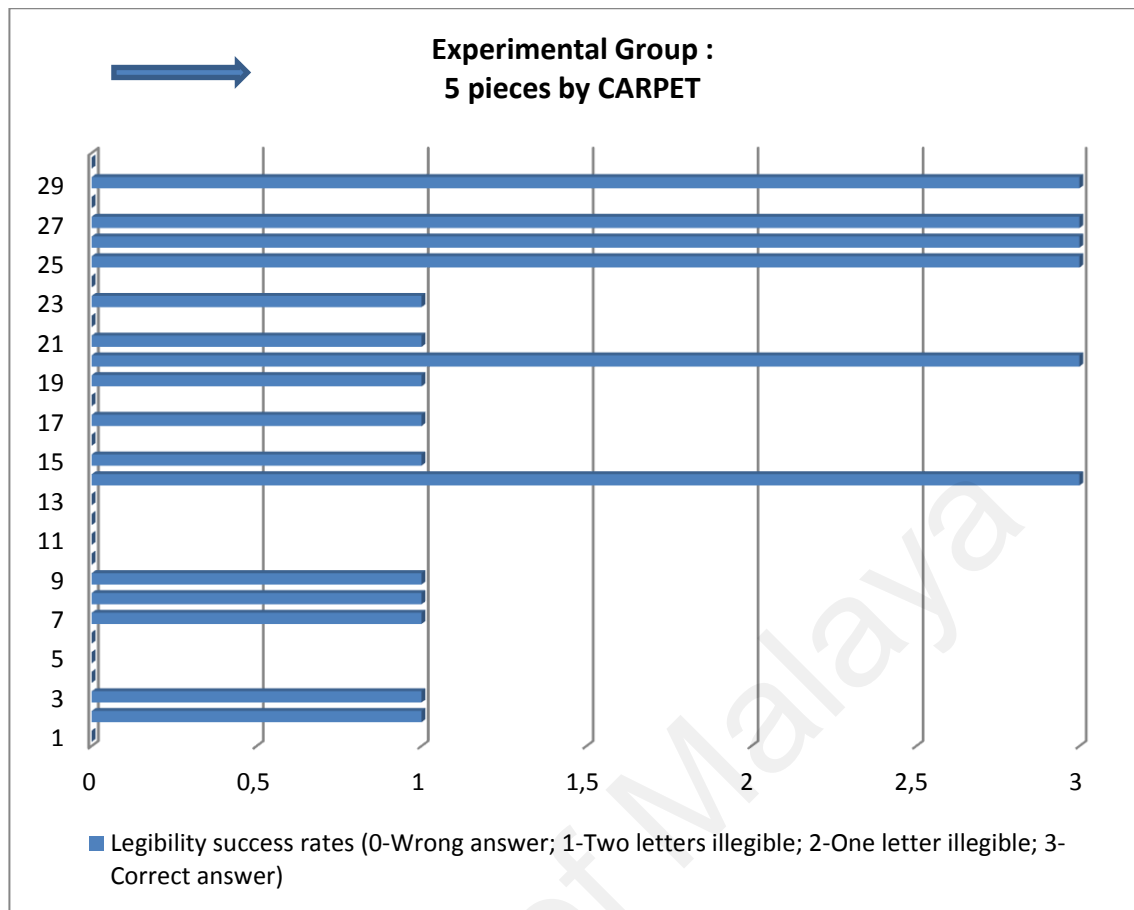


Figure 4.77 Legibility success rates in CARPET's five pieces by the experimental group.

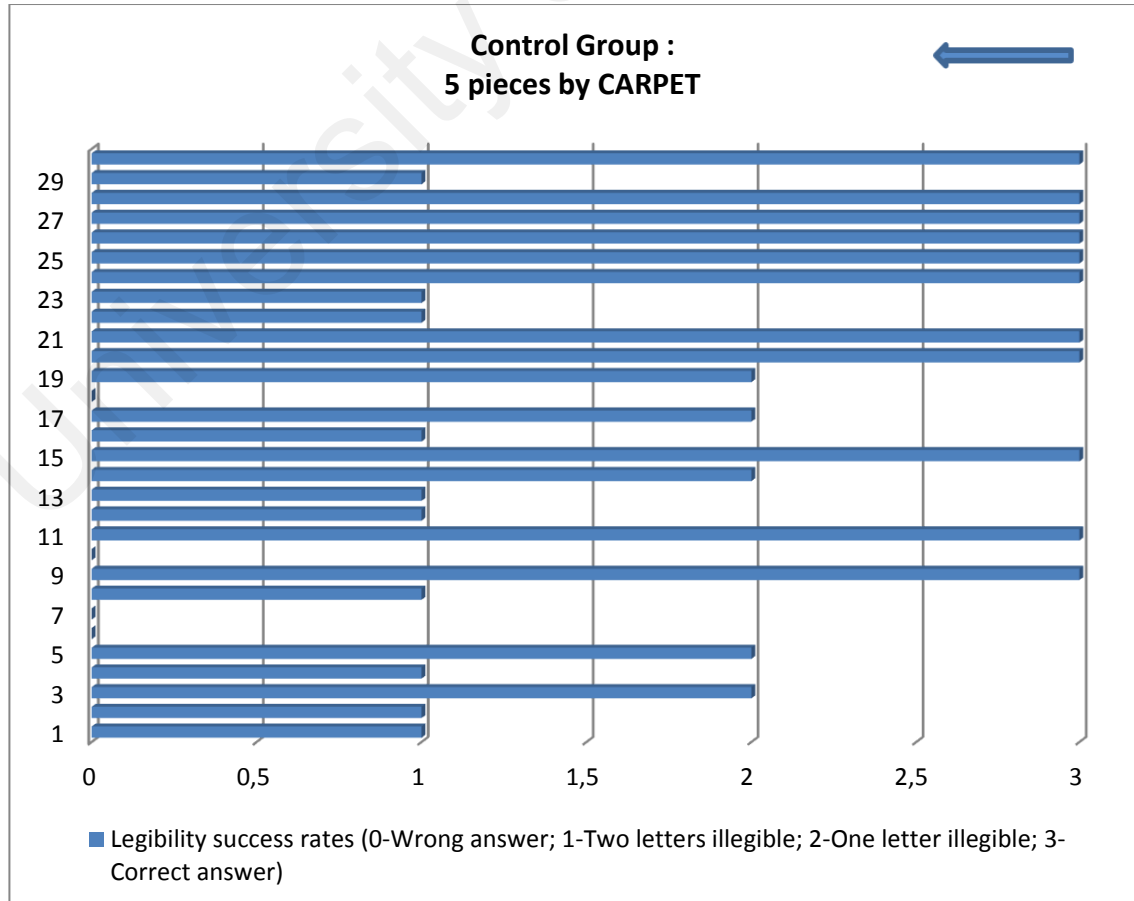


Figure 4.78 Legibility success rates in CARPET's five pieces by the control group.

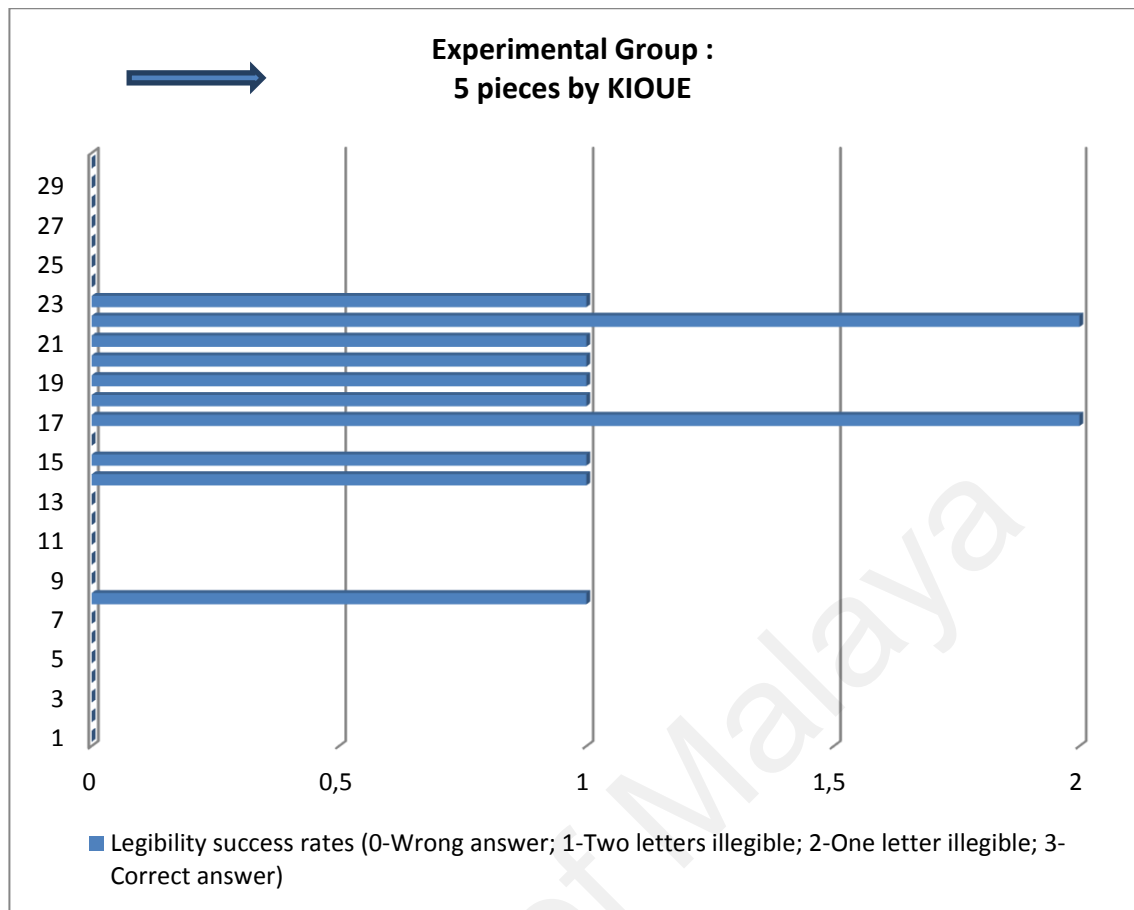


Figure 4.79 Legibility success rates in KIOUE's five pieces by the experimental group.

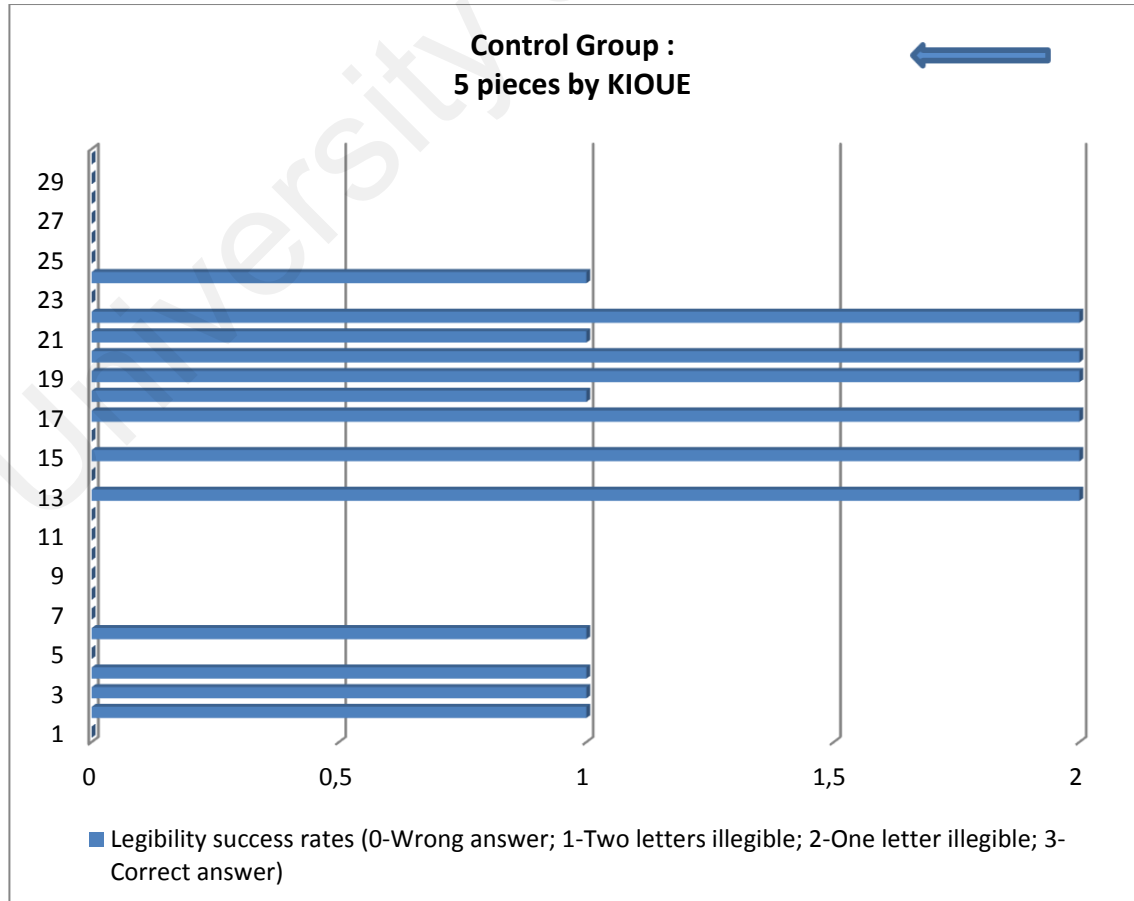


Figure 4.80 Legibility success rates in KIOUE's five pieces by the control group.

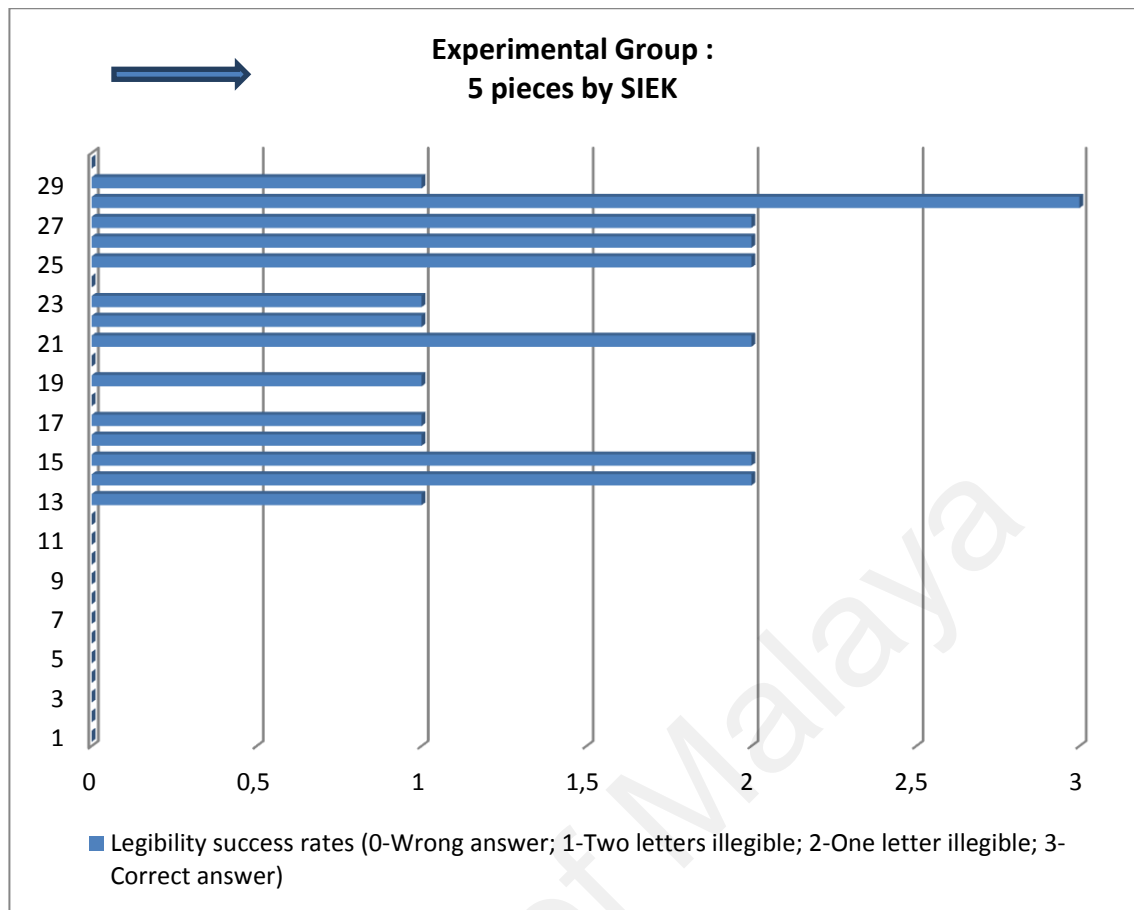


Figure 4.81 Legibility success rates in SIEK's five pieces by the experimental group.

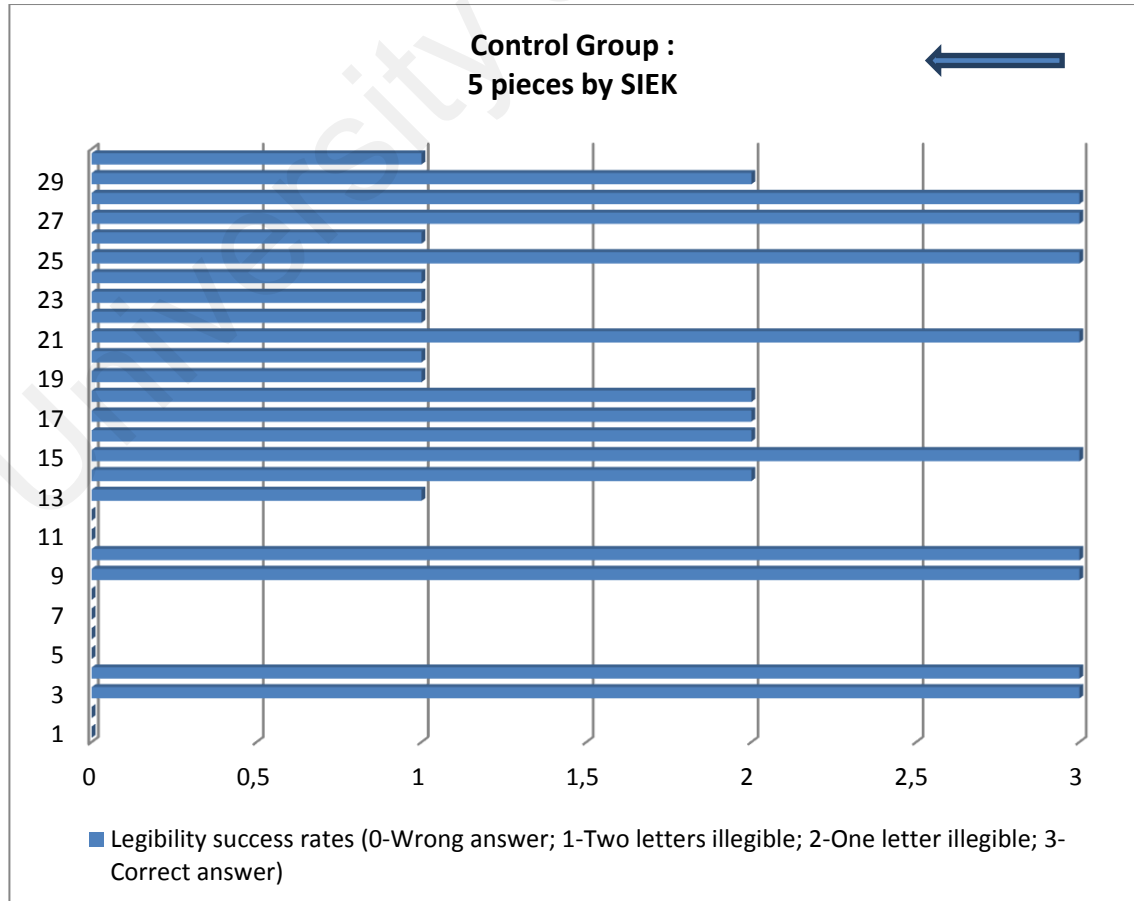


Figure 4.82 Legibility success rates in SIEK's five pieces by the control group.

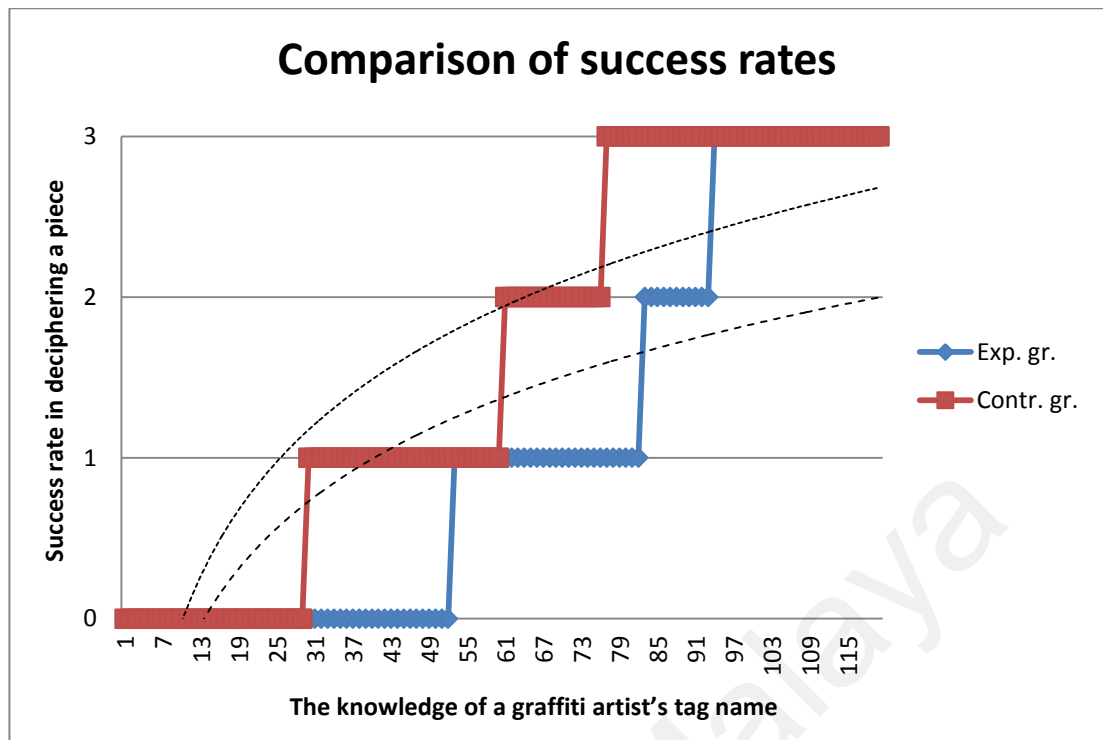


Figure 4.83 Comparison of success rates between the experimental and control group in dependency on the knowledge of a graffiti artist's tag name.

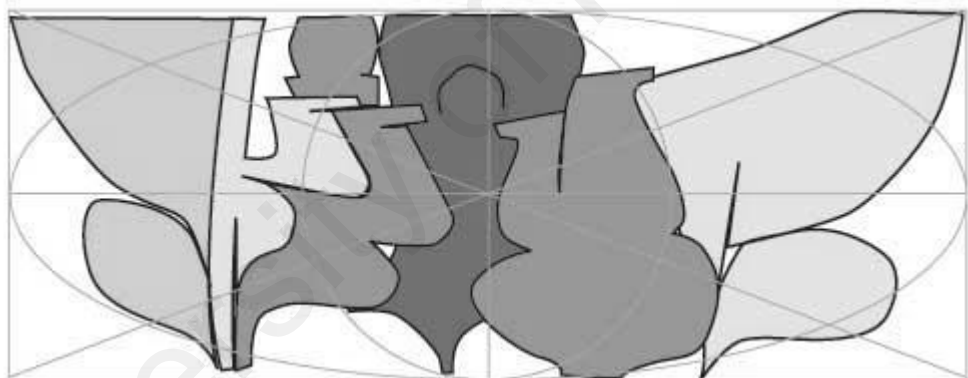


Figure 4.84 KIOUE lettering simplified and analyzed for symmetry.

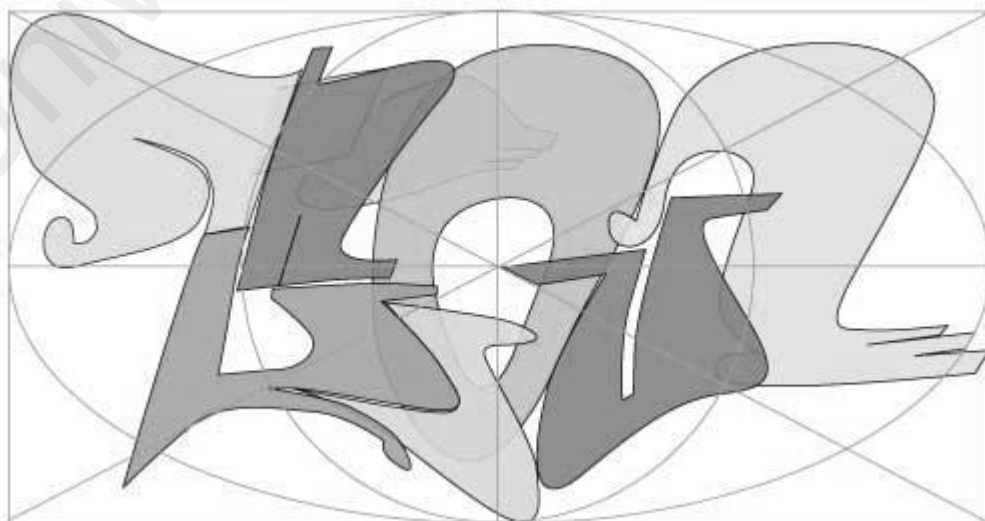


Figure 4.85 KIOUE lettering simplified and analyzed for symmetry.

4.3 Content

This subchapter generally focuses on the non-letterform oriented content of graffiti art works, as the preceding sections of this chapter focus mainly on the letterform oriented graffiti art works. The content of a graffiti art work is reflecting the inner life of its author. Further, content of graffiti art works is reflecting the cultural surrounding of the graffiti artist. Therefore the content of graffiti art works differs around the globe, but also has some overlapping themes and motifs as will be demonstrated in subsequent subsections dedicated to graffiti art works from GKL. However, I would first like to give an example of these reflections, based on the work of the graffiti artist T-KID170 from New York City, as the form of graffiti art historically developed in New York City. Graffiti art started to fully develop in the 1970's of New York City and back then all graffiti art works were mainly produced by young kids and teenagers on the sites of subway trains.⁷¹⁶ New York City was suffering from a financial crisis and the city was in urban decay.⁷¹⁷ Those days, kids in New York City were commonly confronted in their daily life with the gang problem (Figure 4.86) and with other social problems of the city.⁷¹⁸

The graffiti artist T-KID170 is among the earliest legendary graffiti artists of the 1970's of New York City.⁷¹⁹ T-KID170 grew up in the Bronx and got into a gang early in the 1970's. Later on, he was seriously wounded during a gang shootout and ended up with shot wounds in hospital. There he decided to quit gangs for good and dedicate his

⁷¹⁶ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*; Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*; Castleman, "'Getting Up': Subway Graffiti in New York"; Miller, "Aerosol Kingdom: The Indigenous Culture of New York Subway Painters"; Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978"; Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

⁷¹⁷ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*; Henry Corra, "Ny77," (2007).

⁷¹⁸ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*; Castleman, "'Getting Up': Subway Graffiti in New York".

⁷¹⁹ For more information on T-KID and on his works see: Julius Cavaro aka T-KID et al., eds., *The Nasty Terrible T-Kid 170* (Cologne: From Here to Fame, 2005).

attention to graffiti art. In 1977, T-KID painted his first subway train and soon after that, he became a well-established graffiti artist.⁷²⁰

T-KID is today for many people around the world a legendary graffiti artist as some of his works were published in the book *Subway Art* (first edition in 1984), which has sold over 500,000 copies globally.⁷²¹ T-KID is also one of the first, original b-boys from New York City and among the originators of the hip-hop culture (Figure 4.87-Figure 4.88). In June 2014 T-KID was the main celebrity of the graffiti/street art festival *Past Present Future*, which took place in Prague, Czech Republic (Figure 4.89-Figure 4.91). I had the opportunity there to ask T-KID¹⁷⁰ if he thinks ‘*that there is some content in graffiti art?*’ T-KID’s response was actually concise, emotional, pure and up to the point as I find it, as T-KID said that:

*Art is art. Art is art. I mean, ...it shouldn't be inhibited. There should be no bound. There should be no...You know, the content is up to the artist. Once again it all comes from how you feeling. What is it that you wanna to say and how do you want to express it? If you want to do guns and this and that, and say: "Hey man, you know, I live in a messed up neighborhood, people are robbing. Look!" So, you are gonna draw them. Naturally, because people that come from that kind of environment, that is what they represent. You know, people don't understand this. They think: "They just wanna draw it to be cute." But the truth in matter of fact is, this is what they, you know, this is what [the graffiti artists] surround them, you know. This is what surrounds them. Like when I drew...b-boy characters, because everybody around me was b-boying, you know. When I drew...soldiers, is because there was a war going on, you know. When I use dark colors, is because I am not feeling so good or so bright about myself. When I am using the colors that are...flow and burn is because I am feeling so...good. I am in touch with the God of my understanding and it is flowing through me, man. You know. ... You work with what you have. You inspired by what surrounds you. You know.*⁷²²

⁷²⁰ T-KID explained his life story to the public during the exhibition *Past, Present, Future* in Prague, 6 June 2014.

⁷²¹ Cooper et al., *Subway Art*.

⁷²² T-KID170.

T-KID very accurately expressed in this cited interview extract the content of a significant portion of graffiti art works' from New York City of the late 1970's and 1980's.⁷²³ One of the important points made by T-KID, in the above quote, is the matter of the surroundings, of the environment of New York City of the 1970's, where graffiti art developed. Back then, there was a lot of pressing social issues in New York City,⁷²⁴ as was excellently discussed in detail by Joe Austin in *Taking the Train*.⁷²⁵ For example, the gang problem of New York of the 1970's was a very significant issue.⁷²⁶ Naturally, graffiti artists back then often painted graffiti art works with characters holding all kinds of guns in their hands. This was a serious reflection of the surroundings, where the kids came from, and what they experienced in their environment in their own lives (Figure 4.86).

Furthermore, the New York City skyline, with the Empire State Building, dominates T-KID's works even today, as Figure 4.90 shows, as it is another cultural influence of the urban environment of New York City. T-KID further mentions, in the quote above, his b-boy characters. T-KID himself was one of the earliest b-boys in the world, and he painted characters of b-boys in his works, as it was something natural to him, something that he knew from his own life.⁷²⁷ Moreover, T-KID mentions, see the citation above, painting soldiers in his works. T-KID explained that it was a reaction to the situation in the USA: '*there was a war going on*'. On another occasion in 1981 T-KID produced a graffiti art work with a reference to the Cold War, as he added to his T-KID panel piece, on the train no. 7427, a bold slogan '*No Nukes*'.⁷²⁸

⁷²³ See for example the publication: Cooper et al., *Subway Art*.

⁷²⁴ See also the film documentary: Corra, "Ny77."

⁷²⁵ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*.

⁷²⁶ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*.

⁷²⁷ Villorente et al., *Mascots & Mugs: The Characters and Cartoons of Subway Graffiti*. p. 103.

⁷²⁸ For this particular piece see: Cooper et al., *Subway Art*. p. 18.

To briefly sum up: graffiti art works reflect the world around a graffiti artist. In the following subsections, I introduce some general results of a visual content analysis of 163 graffiti art works photographed between 2008-2012 in GKL.



Figure 4.86 Gang members. New York City in the 1970s.

Source: http://s3.amazonaws.com/rapgenius/1378422604_savage-skulls.jpg



Figure 4.87 T-KID as a b-boy. (Photo [by Martha Cooper?]: Part of exhibition 'Past Present Future' about T-KID.)
07 June 2014, Trafačka – Prague 9, Prague.



Figure 4.88 T-KID as a b-boy; on the most left. (Photo: Part of exhibition 'Past Present Future' about T-KID.)
07 June 2014, Trafačka – Prague 9, Prague.



Figure 4.89 T-KID painting at a New York City map in the courtyard of Trafačka.
07 June 2014, Trafačka – Prague 9, Prague.



Figure 4.90 A mural piece with characters, including the NYC skyline by T-KID. Part of exhibition about T-KID. 06 June 2014, Trafačka – Prague 9, Prague.



Figure 4.91 T-KID on a crane finishing his panel piece with characters on an illusionistic New York subway train. 07 June 2014, Trafačka – Prague 9, Prague.

4.3.1 Themes and Motifs in a Research Sample of 163 Malaysian Graffiti Art Works

The research sample selection (N=163) focused on graffiti art works with a theme content (see APPENDIX F: Sample for Visual Content Analysis, p. 689). One of the two main categories distinguishing the contents of graffiti art works was derived from the image access field (see p. 235) and focused on the distinction between an 'Object' and 'Scene',⁷²⁹ some graffiti art works in the research sample contained 'Both' – an object and a scene. The broad category 'Object' included figurative representations of people, images of fauna and flora, renderings of technology and fantasy, motifs of graffiti art tools, such as the spray paint can, and dark themes depicting motifs of skeletons and monsters. The 'Scene' category usually depicted open-air city scenes with architecture and city skylines, which clearly relates to the habitat of graffiti art – the open-air urban environment. Objects dominated the research sample and occurred in 71.78% of the works. Scenes were present in only 4.91% of the items, while both categories occurred in 16.56% of the works and 6.75% of the items were not⁷³⁰ assigned to any of these categories (Table 4.6).

The research sample demonstrated that in 57.06% of the cases, the theme or motif occurred by itself and in 42.94% cases the themes or motifs were represented as multiple elements in one work (Table 4.7; see Figure 4.94, p. 329).

In general, representations of human body fragments were present in 55.21% of the research sample (Table 4.8). These fragments depicted the most, in 45 cases, the human upper body, as in Figure 4.92 (Figure F.25, p. 691) and Figure 4.93 (Figure F.32, p. 692). In terms of gender, the human body related graffiti art works represented in 51 cases the male (Figure 4.92) and in 24 cases the female gender (Figure 4.93).

⁷²⁹ Jaimes et al., "A Conceptual Framework for Indexing Visual Information at Multiple Levels."

⁷³⁰ The 11 items were not assigned to any category, because their themes were derived, for example, from letterform shapes.

Representations of the female gender relate to the high usage of representations of female portraits and bodies in advertising in general. However, the women were generally not necessarily represented as passive objects of the male gaze.

The age of the people represented in the sample of the graffiti art works ranged in the majority of cases between teenage to adult (Figure 4.92-Figure 4.93); the elderly were rather seldom chosen as the subject matter (Figure 3.69, p. 188) and babies only once (Figure 4.104, p. 340).

The graffiti art culture itself is dominated by men and this suggests the reasoning for the high number of male self-reflecting paintings in the sample. The male dominance in the graffiti art culture is explained, besides others, by the risks related to the illegality of this practice and was discussed from the perspective of male identity formation by Macdonald⁷³¹ as female graffiti artists are a minority in the graffiti art culture.⁷³² This is also true in GKL, as there are historically only very few female graffiti artists: THINK [BELL], BARBIE, and SUGA52 [SHIEKO].⁷³³ Therefore, it comes as no surprise that female graffiti artists created only 3 works (1.84%) in the entire research sample.

Subsequently I introduce some themes and motifs specific for the area of GKL. However, there are also themes and motifs common in the graffiti art culture on a global scale; the following subsections firstly highlight Islamic cultural influences present in the research sample, secondly themes with a focus on local arts and crafts, thirdly global graffiti art themes and motifs, and finally other themes and motifs present in graffiti art works.

⁷³¹ Nancy Macdonald, *The Graffiti Subculture: Youth, Masculinity and Identity in London and New York* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

⁷³² Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 4-5.

⁷³³ SUGA52 is a human rights activist for transgender people, as she herself is a transgender woman. See: "Artist Folios: Shieko Reto," in *Singapore Biennale 2013*, (Singapore: Singapore Art Museum). p. 5.

Table 4.6. Works' themes in the sample were either object or scene oriented. Some contained both or non.

<i>Theme of the work s:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Scene	8	4.91
Object	117	71.78
Both	27	16.56
Non	11	6.75
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.7. The distribution of single or multiple elements in the sample.

<i>Element in the work:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Single	93	57.06
Multiple	70	42.94
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.8. The distribution of representations of human body parts in the research sample.

<i>Human body fragments :</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Human body fragments	90	55.21
Other	73	44.79
TOTAL	163	100%



Figure 4.92 A pointing hip-hop (b-boy) character by NEWBA [NBA], wearing a t-shirt, baseball cap and sunglasses.
07 January 2009, Tennis wall, Shah Alam.



Figure 4.93 A realistic representation of a model by KAY (on the left), insulting with a gesture a rival graffiti art crew in GKL. [KATUN's three-headed monster (on the right) representing the PHBKLK, ZNC and DPT crews as one body.] 18 January 2009, Jelatek LRT station, Kuala Lumpur.

4.3.1.1 Islamic Cultural Influences

As was reported above, graffiti artists, besides others, produce in their works representations of the female gender (as in Figure 4.93). Some Malaysian graffiti artists also reproduced in their works for the research sample, images of their female friends (Figure 4.94)⁷³⁴, which partly contributed to the total number of the female gender depicted in the research sample.

What is of interest is the fact that there are almost no sexually explicit or nude works among the 24 works depicting females. Further, the analysis of diverse garments and fashion accessories of the people represented in the 79 items (Table 4.9) in the research sample showed, besides others (Table 4.10), that several graffiti artists represented in their works other people and themselves in traditional local, Malaysian –

⁷³⁴ A distant view on the location is in Figure 3.51 on page 167.

Islamic – garments.⁷³⁵ Graffiti artists depicted females wearing for example a *hijab* (Figure 4.94-Figure 4.95), a *niqab* (Figure F.131, p. 703) or a *baju kurung* (Figure F.150, p. 705). Males were depicted wearing a *songkok* (Figure F.125-Figure F.126, p. 702), which is a Muslim men cap, or a *sarong*, which is a traditional type of male skirt. The choice to depict such garments is a fine statement expressing and reflecting the local culture and the graffiti artists' religious, Muslim, identity.

Further, some works in the research sample illustrated direct links to Islamic arts (Table 4.12, p. 337).⁷³⁶ Three works in the research sample were inspired by Islamic calligraphy and the graffiti artist THA-B included into six of his graffiti art works Islamic geometrical ornamentation (see for example Figure F.109-Figure F.111, p. 701). The Malaysian graffiti artists produced such works for the local Muslim audiences and therefore included into their paintings these references to Islamic art. Further, the graffiti artist NAS-EL, who authored one of the three calligraphically inspired works, duplicated a well-known Latin calligraphy, in Malaysia, reading '*Selamat Hari Raya*' (Figure 2.25, p. 105; Figure 4.143, p. 373; Figure F.122, p. 702).⁷³⁷ This mural celebrated the upcoming end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan and the following commemorative holiday of *Hari Raya Aidilfitri*, which is the *Feast of Breaking the Fast*. The commemorative holiday *Hari Raya Aidilfitri* is the equivalent to Christmas in Western countries. This commemorative holiday was celebrated in various works by local graffiti artists each year. NENOK and NUKE celebrated this commemorative holiday in 2008 by producing two characters wearing a *songkok* and playing with firecrackers, as firecrackers are, among young Malaysians, a popular way

⁷³⁵ For traditional Islamic garments see: "Crafts and the Visual Arts," in *The Encyclopedia Of Malaysia*, ed. Datuk Syed Ahmad Jamal, (Singapore: Archipelago Press, 2007). pp. 70-71.

⁷³⁶ Islamic art can be defined as '*art produced for rulers or populations of Islamic culture*'. In: Barbara Brend, *Islamic Art*, Second ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996). p. 10.

⁷³⁷ For more information about this collaborative painting produced on the 26 September 2008 see also the news and television report: Yee, "Urban Art Form."; "Vandal or Art?."

to celebrate this festive season (Figure F.125-Figure F.126, p. 702).⁷³⁸ The graffiti artist KIOUE celebrated *Hari Raya* in 2011 by painting a large-scale mural celebrating *Hari Raya Aidilfitri* (Figure 3.49, p. 167, Figure E.11, p. 643).⁷³⁹ Part of the mural was a calligraphy reading *Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri* (Figure 4.96). The mural in Figure E.11 (p. 643) also contained visual references to the traditional *ketupat* compressed rice cake packed inside a woven palm leaf pouch (Figure 4.97), which is traditionally served by Malays at open houses during *Hari Raya Aidilfitri*. *Ketupat* is a typical symbol of this festive season (Figure 4.98).

The graffiti artist KIOUE used an individual, original Latin calligraphy graffiti art style to produce not only the piece in Figure E.11 (p. 643), but also to produce in this calligraphy-inspired graffiti art style the piece in the center of Figure 4.99 and in Figure 4.100 (Figure F.127, p. 702). We see in this particular piece, long, straight, horizontal compositions of stroke-like arms – chiefly in the letterforms K and E. The whole composition of the calligraphy stylized ‘KIOUE’ piece becomes harmonious and balanced in terms of horizontal projections. KIOUE also placed on the right of the piece a small throw-up version of his tag name (for similar throw-up versions see Figure A.259-Figure A.260, p. 543). This Latin calligraphy graffiti art style imitates traditional Islamic calligraphy in Arabic script, as for example the golden calligraphies from the Hagia Sophia Museum, as depicted in Figure 4.101.

⁷³⁸ "Sparklers and Fireworks Emerge as Hari Raya Aidilfitri Approaches," *Borneo Post online*, 20 August 2011; Ng Si Hooi et al., "Firecracker Smugglers Make a Big Bang During Celebrations," *The Star*, 16 July 2014.

⁷³⁹ The work in Figure 3.49 was not part of the research sample and is used here for illustrational purposes.

To summarize, the main Islamic cultural influences present in the graffiti art works in the research sample were embodied by representations relating to Islamic arts and to local Islamic garments. Further, the graffiti artists also celebrated in their works local, Malaysian commemorative holidays such as *Hari Raya Aidilfitri*. This is a reflection of the local culture and was previously not reported in other studies from Western countries.

Table 4.9. The distribution of representations of fashion, garments and accessories in the research sample.

<i>Fashion, garments and accessories:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Fashion, garments and accessories	79	48.47
Other	84	51.53
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.10. The distribution of the 171 single elements in the 79 fashion, garments and accessories items in the research sample.

<i>Fashion, garments and accessories:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Sunglasses	7	4.09
Baseball cap	16	9.36
T-shirt	27	15.79
Bikini	1	0.58
Shirt	9	5.26
Clown nose	4	2.34
Beret	5	2.92
Hat	9	5.26
Headphones	3	1.75
Crown	1	0.58
Sneakers	7	4.09
Shoes	2	1.17
Hood	7	4.09
Sweatshirt	3	1.75
Trousers	8	4.68
Shorts	1	0.58
Glove	6	3.51
Backpack	3	1.75
Head scarf – <i>hijab</i>	7	4.09
Scarf	4	2.34
<i>Niqab</i>	1	0.58
<i>Baju kurung</i>	1	0.58
Traditional head gear	5	2.92

<i>Songkok</i>	5	2.92
<i>Sarong</i>	1	0.58
Chain	1	0.58
Bandage	1	0.58
Mask	3	1.75
Nude	1	0.58
Dress	4	2.34
Full body dress	6	3.51
Suit	1	0.58
Blindfold	3	1.75
Monocle	1	0.58
Crutch	1	0.58
Glasses	5	2.92
Jacket	1	0.58
TOTAL	171	100%



Figure 4.94 A naive realistic representation of two females by NAS-EL and FLIP. In the center is a city skyline.
08 January 2009, Kajang KTM train bridge, GKL.



Figure 4.95 A girl's half portrait in a headgear, *hijab*, authored by ANOKAYER. [Piece by MEDEA, stencil by EH?.] 27 January 2008, Pasar Seni LRT station, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.96: Detail of KIOUE's work 'Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri' (see: Figure 3.49; Figure E.11). 09 August 2011. Wangsa Maju, GKL.



Figure 4.97 Ketupat - compressed rice cake packed inside a woven palm leaf pouch.
05 September 2012, Pantai Dalam, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.98 Decorative *ketupat* packages as street decoration during festive season.
06 August 2012, Pantai Dalam, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.99: Photo of the placement of KIOUE's calligraphy inspired piece.
27 April 2010. Pasar Seni LRT station, KL.



Figure 4.100: Detail of KIOUE's calligraphy inspired piece.
27 April 2010. Pasar Seni LRT station, KL.



Figure 4.101: Islamic calligraphy on round wooden panels fixed to the interior of Hagia Sophia Museum.
26 April 2014. Hagia Sophia Museum, Istanbul.

4.3.1.2 Native Crafts and Arts and Other Local Reflections

The visual content analysis showed that 25.15% of the items in the sample contained references to local Malaysian crafts and arts (Table 4.11), including the illustrated Islamic cultural influences previously mentioned above. These particular works featured, besides others, content referring to local architectural structures, local textiles, and the shadow play to a *wau* kite or woodcarving (Table 4.12).

The late graffiti artist DON2 produced for example an illusionistic graffiti art work in the 3D graffiti art style, plainly inspired by traditional Malaysian woodcarving designs⁷⁴⁰ (Figure 4.102) and in another work, KIOUE depicted a typical Malaysian ‘*wau*’⁷⁴¹ kite (Figure F.107, p. 700). Several works in the sample were also inspired by designs derived from traditional shadow play puppet designs. I will subsequently dedicate one subsection to these shadow play inspired graffiti art works (see p. 365).

As suggested above, some graffiti art works from GKL are material expressions of the local culture, pointing out the need of some GKL graffiti artists to localize the global graffiti art culture. This feature of graffiti art in GKL was also highlighted in the foreword to the book *Graffiti KL*, written by the Director-General of the *National Visual Arts Gallery* Dato’ Mohd Yusof Ahmad, who suggested, for example, that Malaysian graffiti artists were initially influenced by a Western concept of graffiti art, but also include into their work local, traditional realities:

*However, some [graffiti artists], with a natural consciousness of local realities, purposefully forged a visual language that expresses and reflects both the personal and universal, through local lenses with local styles and nuances.*⁷⁴²

⁷⁴⁰ For Malaysian woodcarving designs see: Farish A. Noor et al., *Spirit of Wood: The Art of Malay Woodcarving* (Periplus Editions, 2003).

⁷⁴¹ For the traditional Malaysian kite designs see: "Crafts and the Visual Arts." pp. 98-99.

⁷⁴² Teh, *Graffiti KL*: Foreword (No paging).

The need for this localization was typical for the graffiti art crews TSS and TLG, who often painted graffiti art works inspired by local arts and crafts, and other graffiti art works in accordance with the Malaysian national culture policy, which emphasizes indigenous culture and Islamic components.

The two main leaders of the TSS group are the graffiti artists KIOUE and THA-B. These two graffiti artists authored works representing shadow play puppets, local sightseeing architectural structures, local textile designs and Islamic arts. The purpose of such works was to localize KIOUE's and THA-B's graffiti art works for their local audiences. Local cultural influence is even manifest in KIOUE's tag name, which is an English transcription of the Malay word '*kayu*', which translates into English as 'wood'. KIOUE and THA-B produced in collaboration several works addressing local social issues and concerns. KIOUE and THA-B also painted several murals addressing unity among Malaysian citizens and included into the compositions of their works various Malaysian ethnics (Figure F.129, p. 703). The research sample contained 14.11% of items referencing to local cultural issues, beliefs and ethnics (Table 4.13-Table 4.14).

One such mural by KIOUE and THA-B addressed the baby-dumping problem, which was for Malaysia a burning social issue in 2008.⁷⁴³ KIOUE and THA-B organized a smaller group of young graffiti artists to produce the mural in Figure 4.103 titled '*Perlindungan [Protection]*' (Figure F.110, p. 701). The aim of the mural was to draw attention to the TSS and to the baby dumping issue. The target was to issue the suggestion to protect newborn babies and young kids. KIOUE stated in an interview that people should be thankful to God for the gift of a baby instead of what was happening on a National level in Malaysia.⁷⁴⁴ KIOUE painted in this mural a representation of a small boy with a baseball cap. This realistic rendering was quite

⁷⁴³ Lim Wey Wen, "Baby-Dumping Cases Escalate," *The Star*, 06 July 2012.

⁷⁴⁴ KIOUE.

impressive in real scale and in its color shades, especially when taken into account that this mural – as many others – was painted unsanctioned at nighttime, with only limited artificial light available (Figure 4.104). It is also of interest to point out that the inspiration for the portrait in Figure 4.105 came from the popular culture. KIOUE recalled in an interview in 2010 that the portrait was a rendering of a photograph of a child of a US American celebrity – either ‘*Madonna or Britney Spears*’.⁷⁴⁵ My intense follow up research on the internet produced in the end a surprising find and I was able to locate the actual photograph of Britney Spears’ son, Sean Preston Federline (born 2005), in Figure 4.106, which was used by KIOUE as his reference (Figure 4.104) for the duplication of the boy in Figure 4.105. This mural is also one of the several examples of items in the research sample, which contains references to *specific* opposed to *generic* objects (Table 4.15).

On another occasion KIOUE and THA-B expressed their respect towards the elder generation of Malaysians, as in the work in Figure 3.69, p. 188, titled *Pengorbanan [Sacrifice]* (Figure F.111, p. 701) or in the mural *Hargai Warga Emas [Appreciate the Elderly]* (Figure F.109, p. 701). KIOUE stated during an interview in 2008 that he wanted to express his gratitude to society and not only paint graffiti art works for his own satisfaction.⁷⁴⁶ KIOUE also painted letter oriented graffiti art works in which he purposely used colors from the Malaysian national flag (Figure F.105, p. 700; Figure F.112, p. 701).⁷⁴⁷

KIOUE and THA-B also had also practical reason for localizing their works. They wanted to approach the public, the masses. For this reason they also used images of local celebrities, well known personalities (Figure F.129, p. 703) and in addition

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁶ _____.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid.

imagery from popular culture such as Transformers⁷⁴⁸ (Table 4.16-Table 4.17). Within their murals, KIOUE and THA-B often highlighted their telephone numbers and their business web address.⁷⁴⁹ In the research sample 3 works contained telephone numbers and 7 works web addresses (Table 4.18-Table 4.19); in the majority of cases the contacts were referring to KIOUE and THA-B or to the graffiti artist THEY, who is discussed next.

The other local culture oriented graffiti art group in GKL is the TLG collective, which formed around the founder of TLG, THEY, who authored 6 works in the research sample. The TLG graffiti artists met at the Malaysian Institute of Art, where they studied. The graffiti artist THEY graduated from Fashion and Textile Design and he was the curator for several graffiti art showcases in GKL. THEY combined in his graffiti art works letterforms with textile-batik designs and organic shapes inspired by the banyan tree⁷⁵⁰ as in Figure 4.107-Figure 4.108 (Figure F.151 and Figure F.155, p. 705; for a banyan tree see Figure 4.109).⁷⁵¹

Moreover, two other graffiti artists from the TLG group focused on local cultural influences in their works. BIBICHUN authored 4 works from the research sample, which were inspired by shadow play puppet designs and SNOZZE created 4 works inspired by traditional *Minangkabau* architecture. SNOZZE transformed the unique features of the *Minangkabau* architecture into letterforms (Figure 4.110-Figure 4.111). The TLG group of graffiti artists has an art educational background in contrast to many other self-taught graffiti artists in GKL. TLG's connection to the local art world is visible not only in the themes and motifs of their works, accommodating the local Malaysian cultural heritage, but in the murals this group produced for the National

⁷⁴⁸ Choong Mek Zhin, "Artists Who Use the City as Their Canvas," *The Star*, 22. January 2010.

⁷⁴⁹ Chen, "There's Beauty in Graffiti."

⁷⁵⁰ The banyan tree (Pohon Beringin [Ficus Benghalensis; Ficus Benjamina]) has a significant role in Asian mythology including Southeast Asia (see Figure 4.109).

⁷⁵¹ THEY.

Visual Arts Gallery on the exterior of its building. The TLG graffiti artists also cooperated on various projects with the National Visual Arts Gallery (Figure 4.110; Figure 4.152-Figure 4.154, pp. 378-379).⁷⁵²

Table 4.11. The distribution of representations of local arts and crafts themes and motifs in the sample.

<i>Local arts and crafts:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Local arts theme	41	25.15
Other	122	74.85
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.12. The distribution of the 44 single elements in the 41 local arts themes and motifs in sample.

<i>Local arts and crafts:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Woodcarving	1	2.27
Shadow play	5	11.36
Calligraphy	3	6.82
Islamic geometrical patterns	6	13.64
Wau kite	1	2.27
Textiles (Batik...)	10	22.73
Architecture	18	40.91
TOTAL	44	100%

Table 4.13. The distribution of representations reflecting the local culture, issue and ethnic in the sample.

<i>Local culture, issue, ethnic:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Local culture, issue, ethnic	23	14.11
Other	140	85.89
TOTAL	163	100%

⁷⁵² "Graffiti Batik Kontemporari: Malaysia Pavilion Shanghai Expo 2010."; "Lukisan Mural Dinding Balai Seni Lukis Negara," *Senikini: Malaysian Art Now #09* 2010; Haniff Ayob, "Graffiti Jam 09: Graffiti Bukan Vandalisme," *Senikini: Malaysian Art Now #06* 2009; Teh, *Graffiti KL*.

Table 4.14. The distribution of the 31 single elements in the 23 representations reflecting the local culture, issue and ethnic in sample.

<i>Local culture, issue, ethnic:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Believe in spirits	2	6.45
Firework/Firework crackers	2	6.45
Banknote image	1	3.23
Personality/Celebrity	1	3.23
Event/Story/Concern	8	25.81
Chinese horoscope	1	3.23
Ethnics: Malay	4	12.90
Ethnics: Indian	1	3.23
Ethnics: Chinese	2	6.45
Ethnics: Bumi	1	3.23
Ethnics: Western	1	3.23
Ethnics	1	3.23
Social issue	4	12.90
Local food	2	6.45
TOTAL	31	100%

Table 4.15. The distribution of specific or generic themes in the research sample.

<i>The theme or motif is:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
SPECIFIC	31	19.02
GENERIC	128	78.53
Non	4	2.45
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.16. The distribution of representations referring to popular culture (Entertainment) in the sample.

<i>Popular Culture: Entertainment</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Popular Culture: Entertainment	5	3.07
Other	158	96.93
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.17. The distribution of the 5 single works with 8 representations reflecting popular culture (Entertainment) in the research sample.

<i>Popular Culture: Entertainment</i>	<i># of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Movies	3	1.81
Actors/Celebrities	1	0.60
Mojo Jojo	1	0.60
ET	1	0.60
SpongeBob Squarepants	1	0.60
Stargate	1	0.60
TOTAL	8	100%

Table 4.18. The distribution of representations referring to advertisement (brands, logos) in the sample.

<i>Advertisement: brands, logos</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Advertisement: brands, logos	14	8.59
Other	149	91.41
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.19. The distribution of the 14 single works with 20 representations reflecting advertisement (brands, logos) in the research sample.

<i>Advertisement: brands, logos</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Brand	6	30.00
Montana	2	35.00
Adidas	1	5.00
RTM	1	5.00
Telephone number	3	15.00
Web address	7	35.00
TOTAL	20	100%



Figure 4.102 DON2's piece in a 3D woodcarving graffiti art style. Approximate width: ~625 cm; height ~200 cm. 18 September 2008, Shah Alam KTM train bridge, GKL.



Figure 4.103 The collaborative mural titled 'PERLINDUNGAN [PROTECTION]' was produced by KIOUE (baby in baseball cap), THA-B (Islamic geometrical ornamentation), BARBIE (two abstract babies), NAS-EL (an infant on the left) and SPUXS (large, realistic portrait on the right).
28 October 2008, Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 4.104 NAS-EL, KIOUE and SPUXS during the production of the 'PERLINDUNGAN [PROTECTION]' mural. October 2008, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur. (Downloaded photograph. Courtesy SPUXS, 2008.)



Figure 4.105 Detail of a baby in a baseball cap by KIOUE. (See: Figure 4.103, p. 340)
28 October 2008, Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 4.106 Britney Spears' son Sean Preston Federline as an inspiration for the baby in the mural 'PERLINDUNGAN [PROTECTION]'.

<http://images.celebritybabies.info/images/wp-content/uploads/britney-spears-kids-back-soon.jpg>
Accessed on: 30 May 2014



Figure 4.107 A 'THEY' piece inspired by batik design and the *pohon beringin*.
22 April 2012, Jelatek LRT Station, KL.



Figure 4.108 A 'THEY' piece inspired by batik design and the *pohon beringin*.
01 February 2011, Jelatek LRT Station, KL.



Figure 4.109 *Ficus Benghalensis*.

Source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6f/Ficus-benghalensis-banyan-banian.jpg>



Figure 4.110 'SNOZZE' piece inspired by the traditional *Minangkabau* architecture. A mural on the exterior of the building of the Malaysian National Visual Arts Gallery.
19 February 2011, Titivangsa, KL.



Figure 4.111 Minangkabau architecture in Negeri Sembilan in Malaysia.
Source: <http://zoommalaysia.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/minangkabau2.jpg?w=642>

4.3.1.3 Global Graffiti Art Themes

In graffiti art works, some themes and motifs are timeless. Such content then appears throughout the globe. One of the recurring themes is the ‘graffiti art theme’, which is represented especially by the most significant symbol of the graffiti art culture as a whole – the spray paint container, its nozzle and by a graffiti artist holding it in his/her hand as in Figure 4.113 (Figure F.57, p. 695).⁷⁵³ Graffiti art directly related themes and motifs were present in 12.88% of the research sample (Table 4.20-Table 4.21).

⁷⁵³ Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art.*, pp. 13, 51, 73-74; Schluttenhafner et al., *Graffiti Art: Deutschland - Germany.*, pp. 1, 2, 38, 39, 67, 71, 75, 78, 80, 84, 88, 90, 91, 94, 96-97, 102, 103, 116, 123, 138, 139, 141; Ferrell, *Styles of Crime: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality.* Figure 3-4 (between pages 100-101); Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art.", pp. 138 (Symbols in TTP); Reisser, *Daim: Daring to Push the Boundaries.*, pp. 64-65; Villorente et al., *Mascots & Mugs: The Characters and Cartoons of Subway Graffiti.*, pp. 29; Dindaş, *Turkish Graffiti: Volume 1.*, pp. 9-11, 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, 36, 38, 43, 45-47, 50-51, 55, 57, 62-66, 77, 79; Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia.*, p. 90

The graffiti artists also often depict characters derived from the hip-hop culture (Figure 4.112; Figure J.144, p. 734).⁷⁵⁴ The hip-hop culture is, generally, visually associated with a fashion style represented by baseball caps, t-shirts and sneakers (Figure 4.90, p. 321). The visual content analysis showed that the most often-occurring garments and fashion accessories of the people depicted in 79 items were t-shirts and baseball caps (see Table 4.10, p. 328 and Figure 4.113). Sneakers occurred only in 7 paintings. The lower presence of represented sneakers in graffiti art works within the research sample is explained with the common practice to depict only certain human body parts. Generally, only the upper body was represented as in Figure 4.114.⁷⁵⁵

Another globally occurring theme category is the class of works representing ‘dark themes’, which includes motifs of skulls, monsters and of other evil, dark characters.⁷⁵⁶ The high popularity and occurrence of these themes is explained with the labeling theory popularized mainly through Howard Becker’s work.⁷⁵⁷ Graffiti artists in New York City in the early historical days of the graffiti art culture were commonly labeled as vandals and outlaws. The graffiti artists started to adapt to this label imposed upon them, as in a self-fulfilling prophecy, and they started, besides others, to accommodate dark themes into their works.⁷⁵⁸ Another important concept explaining the high occurrence of dark themes in graffiti art works is related to the demonstration of pure masculinity of the graffiti artists. As was stated above (p. 323), a great majority of graffiti artists are males and the graffiti artists try to project their masculinity into their

⁷⁵⁴ Hip-hop as a culture originating in New York City consists out of diskjockeying, break dancing, rapping and graffiti art.

⁷⁵⁵ The work in Figure 4.114 was not part of the research sample and is used for illustrational purposes.

⁷⁵⁶ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*., pp. 34, 39; Schluttenhafner et al., *Graffiti Art: Deutschland - Germany*., pp. 28, 39, 47, 68, 72-75, 78-79, 81, 91, 96-97, 102, 104, 131; Ferrell, *Styles of Crime: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality*. Figure 24 (between pp. 100-101); Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*., plate 14; Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*; Villorente et al., *Mascots & Mugs: The Characters and Cartoons of Subway Graffiti*., p. 47; Dindaş, *Turkish Graffiti: Volume 1*., pp. 48, 64; Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*., pp. 43, 91, 95.

⁷⁵⁷ Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: The Free Press, 1963).

⁷⁵⁸ This was also exemplified in some sections of Jan Snopek’s work from the Czech Republic: Snopek, "Kluci Potřebují Dobrodružství: Formování Identity Na Pražské Graffiti Scéně [Boys Need Adventure: Identity Formation on Prague’s Graffiti Scene]".

graffiti art works, besides others, by the usage of fierce looking characters. Graffiti art works of female graffiti artists are generally much softer in their appearance, frequently depicting female characters (Figure 4.115).⁷⁵⁹ Dark themes were present in 19.02% of the research sample (Table 4.22), whereby the motifs of skulls/skeletons/bones and motifs of monsters and aliens were the most present (Table 4.23).

In GKL graffiti art works depicting globally present themes, such as the graffiti art theme and dark themes, were often painted by the PHB KLK and PW crews. These two groups were in line with the global graffiti art culture; they were underground, for the lack of a better word. Both the PHB KLK and the PW crew generally focused their graffiti art works on high letterform stylization, based on inspirations drawn from US American and European graffiti art styles. In addition to their letter oriented works, the PHB KLK and the PW crews often added to their graffiti art works either dark or graffiti art related themes; such as the motifs of spray paint cans in Figure 4.116 (Figure F.6, p. 689), skulls in Figure 4.117 (Figure F.50, p. 694; Figure J.7, p. 726), monsters in Figure 4.118 (Figure F.30, p. 692) or images depicting motifs associated with the hip-hop culture as in Figure 4.119 (Figure F.38, p. 693).

Table 4.20. The distribution of graffiti art themes in the research sample.

<i>Graffiti art theme:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Graffiti art theme	21	12.88
Other	142	87.12
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.21. The distribution of the 27 motifs in the 21 items with graffiti art themes in the research sample.

<i>The scene is:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Spray paint	16	59.26
Nozzle (cap)	3	11.11
Paint roller	1	3.70
Name belt	1	3.70

⁷⁵⁹ For examples of works by female graffiti artists see: Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*. pp. 60, 83, 100, 216, 228-231, 244-245, 268, 336-339, 362.

The work in Figure 4.115 was not part of the research sample and is used for illustrational purposes.

Fume mask	4	14.81
Mixing of colors	1	3.70
Paint bucket	1	3.70
TOTAL	27	100%

Table 4.22. The distribution of dark themes in the research sample.

<i>Dark theme :</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Dark theme	31	19.02
Other	132	80.98
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.23. The distribution of the 35 motifs in the 31 items with dark themes in the research sample.

<i>Local arts and crafts:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Alien/Monster	11	31.43
Skull/skeleton/bone	15	42.86
Clown	4	11.43
Dark/Gothic	2	5.71
Evil/Devil	2	5.71
Pirate	1	2.86
TOTAL	35	100%



Figure 4.112 KIOUE's disk jockeys while performing. Width: 593 cm; height: 225 cm.
03 July 2010, LOT 10 shopping mall parking, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.113 CARPET's representation of a graffiti artist holding a spray paint can in his hand.
07 February 2010, Jelatek LRT station, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.114 KATUN's realistic representation of a graffiti artist holding a spray paint can in his hand. Wall height:
2m.
07 September 2008, Secret Spot, GKL.



Figure 4.115 ROSY ONE painting her 'RELEASE YOURSELF' mural in the courtyard of Trafačka. 07 June 2014, Trafačka – Prague 9, Prague.



Figure 4.116 SIEK in front of his piece, which was part of a graffiti art themed production by PHB KKK (Figure F.6). 07 September 2008, Secret Spot, GKL.



Figure 4.117 Skull by NENOK as a central character of a PW crew production. Width: 277 cm; height: 235 cm.
08 May 2010, Shah Alam KTM bridge, GKL.



Figure 4.118 KATUN's three-headed monster next to KAY's female portrait.
17 January 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure 4.119 CARPET's hip-hop DJ in a hooded sweatshirt playing vinyls at turntables with boxes. Wall height: 2m. 07 September 2008, Secret Spot, GKL.

4.3.1.4 Other Themes

The visual content analysis aimed at finding diverse themes, motifs and other information contained within non-letterforms oriented graffiti art works from GKL. The analysis showed that there is still a rich content of themes and motifs, besides those already discussed above. Some works highlighted that certain graffiti artists project their personal hobbies into their works, such as car tuning in the case of the graffiti artist NENOK (Figure F.141-Figure F.142, p. 704; Figure F.149, p. 705), or hip-hop orientation as in CARPET's case in Figure 4.119-Figure 4.120 (Table 4.24-Table 4.25).

Motifs of 'fauna' were present in 12.88% and motifs relating to 'flora' were present in 8.59% of the graffiti art works in the research sample (Table 4.26-Table 4.29). Interesting examples of themes oriented on the animal world are pieces by NENOK and NUKE produced as a collaborative mural, which represent hybrid letterforms stylized as insect body parts and futuristic technologies (Figure 4.121-Figure 4.123). The graffiti artist SNOZZE represented on two occasions the motifs of elephants in his works (Figure F.137; Figure F.140, p. 704) and BALY enjoyed representing

animals in general as he saw in the representations of animals an environmental message to protect animals and to conserve land (Figure F.163, p. 706).⁷⁶⁰ Some representations of animals were used among graffiti artists to express similarly bold messages, as with a 'dark theme', as in the case of some rather aggressive dogs depicted in Figure 4.124-Figure 4.126 (Figure F.16, p. 690; Figure F.36; Figure F.75). Works including motifs of 'flora' in the sample were mostly related to the individual style of the graffiti artist THEY, who drew his inspiration from the local culture, as was discussed above (p. 336) and incorporated into his letterforms oriented pieces, vines of the banyan tree (as in Figure F.133-Figure F.134, p. 703).

The graffiti artists in GKL had also a preference to paint graffiti art works depicting different forms of 'technologies and fantasy'. Such themes and motifs were identified in 29.45% of the works (Table 4.30-Table 4.31). These images contained a variety of motifs ranging from wires to futuristic technologies and motifs depicting zoomorphic and hybrid characters. A lot of wiring was present in a depressive, futuristic vision of the interconnection between technology and the human race, by KATUN, in Figure F.7 (p. 689) and Figure F.12 (p. 690; or see Figure 4.127).⁷⁶¹ Human heads represented a sort of suffering cybernetic organism in these works. Other graffiti artists, such as KAY, represented for example futuristic machinery (Figure 4.128). However, there were also works representing hybrid, zoomorphic characters as a zoomorphic frog holding a spray can in Figure 4.129 (Figure F.74), which is at the same time another reference to the 'graffiti art theme' or a zoomorphic insect, a wasp, with the emphasis on the stinger of the animal in Figure 4.130 (Figure F.73).

⁷⁶⁰ BALY.

⁷⁶¹ For more detailed information refer to the paper: Novak, "Western Influences in Southeast Asian Paintings: Comparison of a Balinese Ink Painting and of Two Malaysian Graffiti Artworks."

Weapons as motifs were depicted in 10.43% of the works, which points to a very different cultural background of the graffiti art culture in GKL (Table 4.32-Table 4.33). The graffiti art culture in GKL is not related to gang violence within the society, as is the case in the USA, and the representation of weapons in the research sample was not too threatening to the observer (Figure 4.131; see also a recent graffiti art work, not included in the sample for visual content analysis, in Figure 4.132). An interesting mural in Figure 4.133 (Figure F.97, p. 699) was created by the Chinese-Malaysian graffiti artists CLOAK and BLACK FRYDAY at the *Kul Sign Festival 2012*. This collaborative work represented a scene of two robots fighting each other with rockets and lasers and a central composition of burning urban scenery.

As a matter of fact, city scenes, depicting architectural structures and urban landscapes, were present in 15.34% of the works in the research sample (Table 4.34-Table 4.35). The most significant specific modern structure represented in the research sample was the local building of the Petronas Twin Towers, as these towers were represented in 12 works (Figure 2.29, p. 107 or Figure F.102, p. 700; or Figure F.124, p. 702). One interesting spray paint sketch was created at Pasar Seni, underneath the Central Market Bridge. The work featured the Twin Towers, an LRT train and a hibiscus flower, which is the Malaysian national flower symbol. This work is a very brief, but strong statement of graffiti artists about Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia. The LRT train fluently arrives at the scene from within the hibiscus flower as can be seen in Figure 4.134.

Other scenes showed most often the sky or clouds as this is one of the most popular graffiti art background designs in general (Table 4.36-Table 4.37; Figure 2.27, p. 106 or Figure F.89, p. 699; Figure F.90, p. 699).

Table 4.24. The distribution of activities, hobbies, sport themes and motifs in the research sample.

<i>Activities, hobbies, sports :</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Activities, hobbies, sports	12	7.36
Other	151	92.64
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.25. The distribution of the 21 motifs in the 12 items with activities, hobbies, sport themes and motifs in the research sample.

<i>Local arts and crafts:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Stereo/Boxes	5	23.81
Music playing	4	19.05
DJ	3	14.05
Vinyl	2	9.52
Car tuning	3	14.29
B-boy	1	4.76
Tattoo	1	4.76
Origami	1	4.76
Skateboarding	1	4.76
TOTAL	21	100%

Table 4.26. The distribution of fauna oriented themes and motifs in the research sample.

<i>Fauna :</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Fauna	21	12.88
Other	142	87.12
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.27. The distribution of the 25 motifs in the 21 items with fauna themes and motifs in the sample.

<i>Fauna:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Insects (Dragonfly, Grasshopper...)	5	20.00
Dog	3	12.00
Worm	2	8.00
Bird	2	8.00
Fish	2	8.00
Monkey	2	8.00
Elephant	2	8.00
Tiger	2	8.00
Frog	1	4.00
Cat	1	4.00
Hornbill	1	4.00
Tapir	1	4.00
Octopus	1	4.00
TOTAL	25	100%

Table 4.28. The distribution of flora oriented themes and motifs in the research sample.

<i>Flora :</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Flora	14	8.59
Other	149	91.41
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.29. Distribution of the 15 motifs in the 14 items with floral themes and motifs in the sample.

<i>Flora:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Rose	2	13.33
Fruits	1	6.67
Flowers	2	13.33
Hibiscus	1	6.67
Palm tree	1	6.67
Liana/Vines	8	53.33
TOTAL	15	100%

Table 4.30. The distribution of technology and fantasy oriented themes and motifs in the research sample.

<i>Technology and fantasy :</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Technology and fantasy	48	29.45
Other	115	70.55
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.31. The distribution of the 90 motifs in the 48 items with technology and fantasy themes and motifs in the research sample.

<i>Technology and fantasy :</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Cybernetic organism (Cyborg)	5	5.56
Robot	3	3.33
Machinery	6	6.67
Wire	16	17.78
CCTV camera	2	2.22
Train	2	2.22
Car	4	4.44
Engine	3	3.33
Space ship	1	1.11
Futuristic	12	13.33
Technomorphic	1	1.11
Anthropomorphic	1	1.11
Zoomorphic	10	11.11
Hybrid	23	25.56
Dragon	1	1.11
TOTAL	90	100%

Table 4.32. The distribution of weapons/war related themes and motifs in the research sample.

<i>Weapons/War related:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Weapons/War related	17	10.43
Other	146	89.57
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.33. The distribution of the 20 motifs in the 17 items with weapons/war related themes and motifs in the research sample.

<i>Weapons/War related:</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Bullet/Bullets wholes	3	15.00
Knife	1	5.00
Gun	3	15.00
Gas mask	2	10.00
Chain	3	15.00
Laser	1	5.00
Barbed wire	2	10.00
Rocket	1	5.00
Sting	4	20.00
TOTAL	20	100%

Table 4.34. The distribution of city scene related themes and motifs in the research sample.

<i>City scene</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
City scene	25	15.34
Other	138	84.66
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.35. The distribution of the 72 motifs and themes in the 25 items with the city scenery content within the research sample.

<i>City scene</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Skyline	21	29.17
Street	8	11.11
Architecture	21	29.17
Sightseeing sites	10	13.89
KLCC	12	16.67
TOTAL	72	100%

Table 4.36. The distribution of other scenes content in the research sample.

<i>Other scene</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Other scene	23	14.11
Other	140	85.89
TOTAL	163	100%

Table 4.37. The distribution of the 43 motifs and themes in the 23 items with the other sceneries content within the research sample.

<i>Other scene</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Space	1	2.33
Landscape	6	13.95
Mountainous	5	11.63
Room	3	6.98
Laboratory	1	2.33
Clouds/Sky	13	30.23
Nature (fertile)	4	9.30
Water	3	6.98
Sun	2	4.65
Rocks	2	4.65
Explosion	2	4.65
Road	1	2.33
TOTAL	43	100 %



Figure 4.120 CARPET's hip-hop DJ in a t-shirt playing music (Compare with: Figure 4.119.) Piece – width: 487 cm; height: 148 cm. Character – width: 185; height: 206 cm.
07 February 2010, Imbi, KL.



Figure 4.121 A mural collaboration between NENOK and NUKE on the insect theme. [See also Figure 3.38, p. 155]
25 October 2008, Shah Alam KTM bridge, GKL.



Figure 4.122 NENOK's piece as a hybrid of insects.
25 October 2008, Shah Alam KTM bridge, GKL.



Figure 4.123 NUKE's piece as a hybrid of insects and technologies.
25 October 2008, Shah Alam KTM bridge, GKL.



Figure 4.124 SPUXS' aggressive dog.
02 February 2011, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.125 SIEK's strictly looking aggressive dog next to a TNQ30 piece.
30 January 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure 4.126 KATUN's strictly looking aggressive dog. Wall height: 2 m.
21 December 2008, Secret Spot, GKL.



Figure 4.127 KATUN's cyborgs. The right human head is featuring a hand holding a spray can. This work is a collaborative mural with the graffiti artist SIEK, whose 3D stylized piece is on the top right.
21 December 2008, Secret Spot, GKL.



Figure 4.128 KAY's futuristic robot like machinery. [On the right an industrial Caterpillar vehicle by SANDMAN from Singapore.] Wall height: 2 m.
21 December 2008, Secret Spot, GKL.



Figure 4.129 AKEN's zoomorphic frog holding a spray can.
02 February 2011, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.130 PHEANUT's [? Maybe character by AKEN] zoomorphic wasp with a sparkling sting.
02 February 2011, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.131 NEWBA's profile character pointing a gun resting on top of a NEWBA piece.
01 February 2011, Jelatek, KL.



Figure 4.132 ASWER piece and an attacker with a gun shooting a bubble background at a shielded defender.

Source: https://scontent-a-cdg.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-xpa1/t1.0-9/10384042_915375861809636_5963316769963030017_n.jpg. 2014, Shah Alam, GKL.



Figure 4.133 BLACK FRIDAY and CLOAK producing their mural featuring a robot fight for survival in the city.
25 February 2012, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.134 Petronas Twin Towers, LRT and a hibiscus flower by ? [SOPEY ?].
15 September 2008, Pasar Seni, KL.

4.3.2 Content and Purpose

The content of graffiti art works is often influenced and altered in accord with the purpose of a work. It was observed that, especially in GKL, particular graffiti artists adapted themes and motifs, which are pleasing to the general public. This is especially true about themes and motifs discussed in Chapter '4.3.1.1 Islamic Cultural Influences' and in Chapter '4.3.1.2 Native Crafts and Arts and Other Local Reflections'. In the following sections such examples are further discussed with regards to motifs derived from designs of the shadow play puppet theater, partially in the case of the graffiti artist THEY, who created in 2009 several graffiti art works with varying contents and on Gaza War murals produced in GKL.

4.3.2.1 Graffiti Art Works Reflecting Shadow Play Designs⁷⁶²

In terms of subject matter, graffiti artists commonly focus in their works on letterforms of the Latin alphabet, to replicate repeatedly their tag names in an impressive manner.⁷⁶³ The constant duplication of tag names in tags, throw-ups and pieces has the purpose of acquiring higher social status within the graffiti art culture (page 242). Yet, some graffiti artists in GKL focus entirely, or at least very often, on characters as their main subject matter.⁷⁶⁴ Inspiration for their graffiti art works is drawn from different sources, as was reported above, in the Chapter 4.3.1 and its subchapters. Several graffiti artists in Greater Kuala Lumpur, such as SUGA52, KIOUE, THA-B, BIBICHUN, THEY and SNOZZE occasionally found their inspiration for the subject matter of graffiti art works in traditional shadow play designs. In one way or the other,

⁷⁶² Even though this subchapter is original, it is significantly based, on my own, following papers: David Novak, "Similarities and Contrasts of Kelantan Shadow Play and Graffiti Art in Greater Kuala Lumpur" (paper presented at the Tradition and Modernity in Southeast Asian Puppetry, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 3. November 2011b); Novak, "Reflections of the Shadow Play Imagery in the Visual Arts: The Case of Noncommercial Graphic Designs by 'Suga52'"; Novak et al., "Comparison between Wayang Kulit Kelantan and Graffiti Art in Greater Kuala Lumpur: Similarities and Differences."

⁷⁶³ Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. p. 108; Gottlieb, *Graffiti Art Styles: A Classification System and Theoretical Analysis*. p. 6

⁷⁶⁴ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". pp. 172-179

all of these six listed graffiti artists are important for the Malaysian graffiti art culture. Nevertheless, I discuss here the graffiti art works of the graffiti artists SUGA52, KIOUE, BIBICHUN and THEY.

SUGA52 produced in the year 2006, on the occasion of the 49th Malaysia Independence Day, a representation of a shadow play puppet for the National Visual Arts Gallery Malaysia (Figure 4.135).⁷⁶⁵ This particular work was probably the first ever representation of a shadow play puppet design by a Malaysian graffiti artist. The reason for this might be the fact that SUGA52 is an artist who not only focuses on the spray paint medium, but also in the digital environment and other media.⁷⁶⁶ SUGA52 is one of the Malaysian graffiti artists, who does not create letterforms, as the first attempt (Figure 4.136) did not end well, as SUGA52 stated that: '*I think I am quite bad at writing letters*'.⁷⁶⁷ Therefore SUGA52 was only focusing on characters and inclined to search for inspiration for subject matter in diverse areas, as artists do. SUGA52's shadow play puppet representation in Figure 4.135 contains several modern features, as the puppet itself wears headphones and plays an electronic guitar (Figure 4.137 a).⁷⁶⁸ As my research showed, this work is based on traditional designs of Javanese shadow play puppets, which are also used in the Malaysian version of the shadow play known as '*wayang kulit purwa*' (Figure 4.137 b). SUGA52's stunning shadow play puppet design, in the painting for the Malaysian National Visual Arts Gallery, symbolised Malaysian

⁷⁶⁵ SHIEKO, "49th Merdeka Mural National Art Gallery ", ed. SHIEKORETO, (Kuala Lumpur 21. June 2009).

⁷⁶⁶ "Artists: Shieko Reto," Singapore Biennale 2013: If the World Changed, http://www.singaporebiennale.org/artist_shieko_reto.html; "Artist Folios: Shieko Reto."

⁷⁶⁷ It is also interesting to point out that in Figure 4.136 SUGA52 tried to produce stylistically '*those German, like blocky letters: SUGA*'. SUGA52. What comes to my mind is the German 'Dortmund' graffiti art style described by Gottlieb, but the stylization of SUGA52's letterforms is at least 'different', to say so. For the Dortmund graffiti art style description see: Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art"; Gottlieb, *Graffiti Art Styles: A Classification System and Theoretical Analysis*.

⁷⁶⁸ SUGA52.

heritage (Figure 4.135).⁷⁶⁹ SUGA52 prepared well for this graffiti art work and did extensive research beforehand, as can be discovered in the digital artworks produced by SUGA52, in Figure 4.138-Figure 4.141, which preceded the work.⁷⁷⁰

Another discussed work by a Malaysian graffiti artist, related to the shadow play, was produced by KIOUE. KIOUE produced in 2008, in the city centre of Kuala Lumpur underneath the LRT train station Pasar Seni,⁷⁷¹ in the Central Market area, his own interpretation of a shadow play puppet design, while technically ‘performing’ graffiti art for Malaysian media reporters from The Star newspapers and the NTV7 channel (Figure 4.142-Figure 4.143).⁷⁷² The graffiti art work produced during this ‘performance’, must have been photographed hundreds of times by tourists and locals alike (Figure 4.144), due to its location in central Kuala Lumpur⁷⁷³ and its aesthetical value. Further, the work must have been seen by hundreds of thousands of people, who used the public transportation hub Pasar Seni in the years 2008–2012, before the work was whitewashed some time in 2012 (Figure 4.145-Figure 4.146).⁷⁷⁴ KIOUE, similarly as SUGA52, prepared well for the mural in Figure 4.142 and mastered his subject matter ahead of the production, as can be seen in the drawings from memory in Figure 4.147-Figure 4.149. KIOUE represented the shadow play puppet in the front view. In this case, the artist did not use the typical shadow play iconography as in Figure 4.137 b), but KIOUE used his own personal style to represent the shadow puppet. The clues for the audience that the viewers are looking at a shadow play puppet representation are the typically bent arms of a shadow play puppet (Figure 4.137 b) and the thin, affixed handling sticks (Figure 4.148-Figure 4.149). KIOUE himself performed this typical arm

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁰ Novak, "Reflections of the Shadow Play Imagery in the Visual Arts: The Case of Noncommercial Graphic Designs by 'Suga52'".

⁷⁷¹ Exact Google Maps location data of the graffiti art work: 3.143639,101.695375

⁷⁷² "Vandal or Art?."; Yee, "Urban Art Form."

⁷⁷³ See the section '3.1.1.2 KL: The Klang Riverbank Walls at Pasar Seni LRT Station', on page 128.

⁷⁷⁴ For a high quality photo of the work also refer to the rear section 'Wall of Graffiti' in the book: Teh, *Graffiti KL*.

gesture in Figure 4.150. KIOUE also adorned his shadow play graffiti art work with interesting headgear, created out of letterforms, representing his tag name 'KIOUE' (Figure 4.148). The headgear is quite a typical feature of some local Malaysian costumes, as seen in Figure 4.151. The shadow play puppet was also dressed in a traditional Malaysian textile pattern.⁷⁷⁵

The best example of a Malaysian graffiti artist, producing shadow play puppets, is BIBICHUN. BIBICHUN – like SUGA52 and partly KIOUE – focuses in his graffiti art works on characters and not on the typical graffiti art letterforms oriented styles. Even though BIBICHUN is part of the GKL graffiti art scene, he does not only consider himself as a graffiti artist, as he suggested that: *'I don't quite consider myself as major in graffiti [art]. ... There [is] no more [the] separation between fine arts, streets, classic, or modern [arts].'*⁷⁷⁶ BIBICHUN, together with other graffiti artists from the TLG group seeks local Malaysian *'roots and cultural backgrounds'* for the subject matter in his graffiti art works.⁷⁷⁷ BIBICHUN has been especially concentrating on human figures and local animals in his works; his repertoire also contains shadow play puppets (see Figure F.138), which he paints in the typical side profile. BIBICHUN, with several other graffiti artists, was commissioned, in 2010, by the Malaysian National Visual Arts Gallery to produce murals on the exterior walls of the *Balai Seni* building in Kuala Lumpur.⁷⁷⁸ BIBICHUN created seven different *'side-view faces'* of shadow puppets on the exterior walls of the Malaysian National Visual Arts Gallery, as in Figure 4.152-Figure 4.154. Even though BIBICHUN produced many of these shadow play images, interestingly, he has never watched any shadow play performances, except

⁷⁷⁵ KIOUE.

⁷⁷⁶ BIBICHUN.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁸ Some photographs of the murals are in the publications: Teh, *Graffiti Kl*; "Lukisan Mural Dinding Balai Seni Lukis Negara."

for a television documentary.⁷⁷⁹ The inspiration for BIBICHUN's shadow play puppet images is obtained from common sources, such as websites (Figure 4.155-Figure 4.161)⁷⁸⁰ and basic books on shadow puppetry.⁷⁸¹ BIBICHUN's shadow play inspired graffiti art works are often executed in two colours, where the stroke, the line, is a contrast color to its underlying base. Even though there is no specific story in BIBICHUN's shadow puppet graffiti art works, the images of these puppets are always beautiful and aesthetically pleasing. BIBICHUN also collaborated on a shadow play themed mural with the graffiti artist THEY (Figure 4.162). The collaborative mural in Figure 4.162 was produced by these two graffiti artists during the *Kul Sign'10 Festival*.⁷⁸² As a matter of fact, THEY and BIBICHUN also collaborated, with two other Malaysian artists, on the batik-inspired rooftop of the Malaysian Pavilion at the *Shanghai World Expo 2010* in China (Figure 4.163-Figure 4.164).⁷⁸³

In the collaborative mural in Figure 4.162 we see a graffiti art piece in the lower horizontal half reading '*THEY*'. THEY's piece is another example of this artist's pieces, which are inspired by batik textile designs and the banyan tree (see Chapter '4.3.1.2 Native Crafts and Arts and Other Local Reflections'; Figure 4.107-Figure 4.109). This particular piece in Figure 4.162 is further adorned by a shadow play puppet character by THEY, on the left of his piece, and by two other shadow play puppets by BIBICHUN in the upper horizontal half of the mural. THEY produced a very similar mural, with the theme of shadow play, in Figure 4.165, titled '*"PURSUIT" OF HAPPINESZ*'.

⁷⁷⁹ BIBICHUN.

⁷⁸⁰ The reference images in Figure 4.155-Figure 4.161 were provided to me by BIBICHUN via email on the 6 April 2013.

⁷⁸¹ BIBICHUN.

⁷⁸² mahathir masri, "They - Graffiti for Meeting of Style 2010 Kl Malaysia ", (14 December 2010).

⁷⁸³ "Graffiti Batik Kontemporari: Malaysia Pavilion Shanghai Expo 2010."

The above reported murals, by BIBICHUN and THEY, decorated the exterior walls of the architectural structure of the *National Visual Arts Gallery* in Kuala Lumpur in the years 2011–2013.

To sum up, it was demonstrated that on several occasions Malaysian graffiti artists used the imagery of shadow play for their graffiti art works. It can be stated that the main purpose was to relate, through the usage of this content, graffiti art works to a wider, Malaysian audience. Shadow play, known in Malaysia as *Wayang Kulit*, is considered as a significant part of the Malaysian cultural heritage and is known to the majority of Malaysians.⁷⁸⁴



Figure 4.135 Detail from the production of a shadow puppet design in the large scale painting 'Merdeka 1957-2006'. 2006, Titiwangsa, Kuala Lumpur. (Courtesy SUGA52, 2009.)

⁷⁸⁴ Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof, *Issues in Traditional Malaysian Culture* (Singapore: Trafford, 2013).



Figure 4.136 Piece 'SUGA' and a character 'inside a hoody, wearing a hoody' by SUGA52. 2005 [?], Bandar Tasik Selatan LRT, GKL. (Courtesy SUGA52, 2009.)



Figure 4.137 a, b: SUGA52's guitar playing shadow play puppet design in comparison to a Javanese shadow play puppet of the character Bhima (Puppet from Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof's private collection).



Figure 4.138 SUGA52's modern interpretation of shadow play: 'Are you guys ready?' '1, 2, 3, 4!' (Courtesy SUGA52, 2013.)

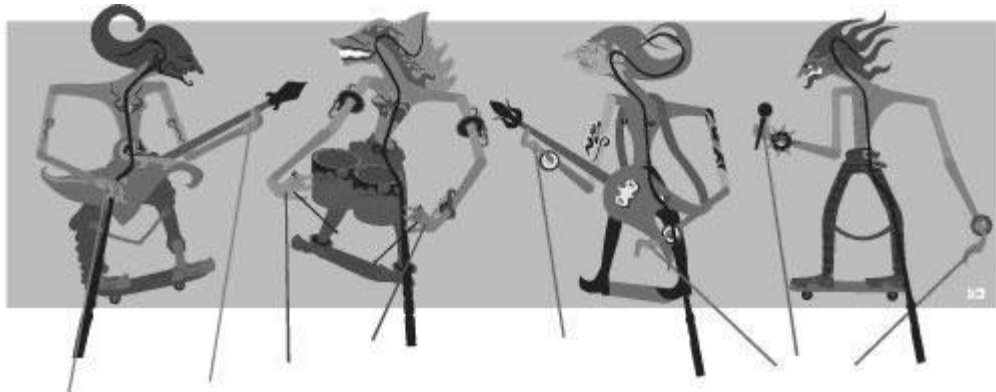


Figure 4.139 SUGA52's modern interpretation of shadow play. [*'Are you guys ready?' '1, 2, 3, 4!'*] (Detailed version.)
(Courtesy SUGA52, 2013.)



Figure 4.140 SUGA52's modern interpretation of shadow play: 'Breakbeat sound'.
(Courtesy SUGA52, 2013.)

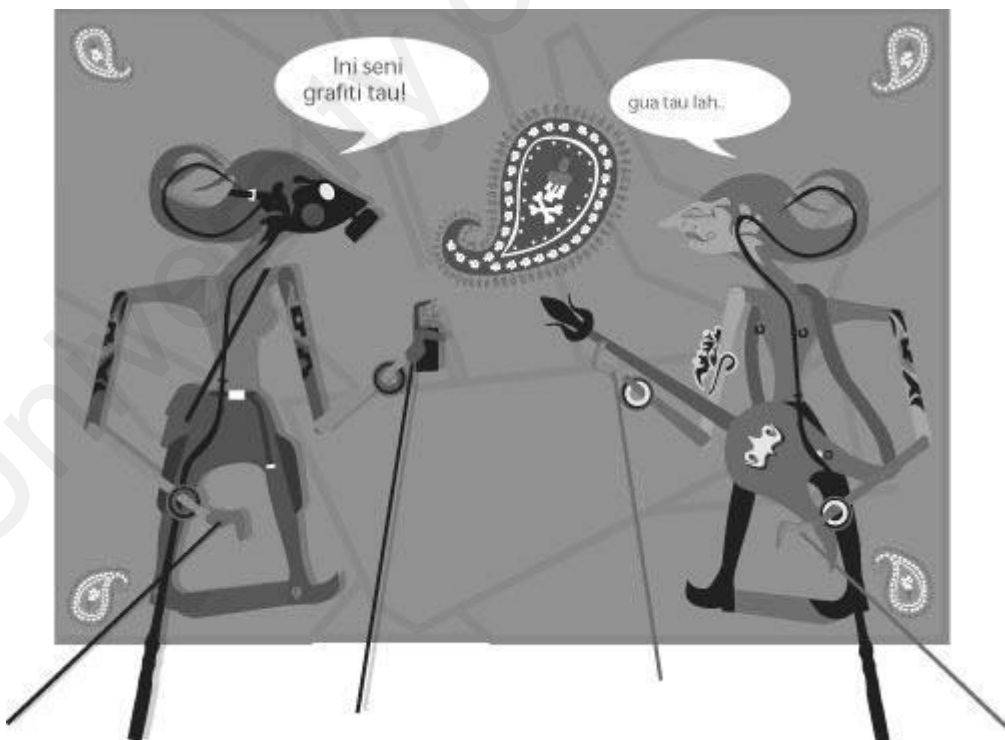


Figure 4.141 SUGA52's modern interpretation of shadow play: 'Ini seni grafiti tau'; 'Gua tau lah' [*'This is graffiti art, you know!', 'I know'*].
(Courtesy SUGA52, 2013.)



Figure 4.142 KIOUE in front of his work and reporters waiting to take a group photograph of the graffiti artists.
26 September 2008, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.143 KIOUE and the NTV7 crew.
26 September 2008, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.144 KIOUE shadow play puppet design graffiti art work being once again photographed.
13 September 2011, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.145 The shadow play puppet design graffiti art work 41 months later, still at its original location.
23 February 2012, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.146 The shadow play puppet design graffiti art work from Figure 4.142 has been whitewashed. 14 December 2012, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.147 KIOUE while sketching the letterform E, in his tag name 'KIOUE'. Page size: 24.7 cm; 18.8 cm; pencil on paper. 24 September 2008, Sunway, GKL.



Figure 4.148 KIOUE while slowly finalizing his sketch. Page size: 24.7 cm; 18.8 cm; pencil on paper.
24 September 2008, Sunway, GKL.



Figure 4.149 Another sketch by KIOUE and THA-B elaborating on the shadow play theme.
26 September 2008, Pasar Seni, GKL.



Figure 4.150 THA-B and KIOUE imitating the gestures of *wayang kulit* puppets.
24 September 2008, Sunway, GKL.



Figure 4.151 Photo of headgears in a reproduction in the corridor of the *National Textiles Museum*.
17 February 2011, Dataran Merdeka, KL.



Figure 4.152 BIBICHUN's shadow play puppet images on the exterior wall of the building of the Malaysian National Visual Arts Gallery. The wall segment is ca. ~5.73 m wide. [See also the works by NAY2 and SNOZZE].
19 February 2011, Titiwangsa, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.153 BIBICHUN's shadow play puppet image in between other '*Stacked up side-view faces*' on the side wall of the building of the Malaysian National Visual Arts Gallery.⁷⁸⁵
19 February 2011, Titiwangsa, Kuala Lumpur.

⁷⁸⁵ For the production process and for other details see BIBICHUN's blog entry: <http://bibichun.blogspot.com/2011/02/project-that-took-way-too-long-to.html#links>



Figure 4.154 BIBICHUN's shadow play puppet image in a tree by NAY2, next to piece by THEY. Exterior wall of the building of the Malaysian National Visual Arts Gallery. 19 February 2011, Titiwangsa, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.155 PRATIPA



Figure 4.156 PANYARIKAN



Figure 4.157 PRABAKESA



Figure 4.158 KALA PRAONA



Figure 4.159 PETRUK



Figure 4.160 PUTUT SUPAWALA



Figure 4.161 PRABAWA



Figure 4.162 A collaborative mural by BIBICHUN and THEY. Shadow play puppet designs in the upper half of the mural by BIBICHUN; the bottom half by THEY, including the 'THEY' piece; Spray and emulsion paint on wall. 02 February 2011, Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.163 Malaysia Pavilion at *Shanghai Expo 2010* – construction process.
Accessed on: 06 June 2014 at: http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_sBx1l8XJ7uU/S92t6ULU-YI/AAAAAAAAEKU/NnrS1ULkN7o/s400/malaysian-pavilion-world-expo-foto-set-blogspot.jpg.



Figure 4.164 Malaysia Pavilion at *Shanghai Expo 2010*.

Accessed on: 06 June 2014 at:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/32/Malaysia_Pavillion_at_2010_Shanghai_Expo.jpg.



Figure 4.165 The mural "*PURSUITS OF HAPPINESS*" (in the left segment), by THEY, on the exterior of the National Visual Arts Gallery in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Width of the segment: 592 cm; Spray and emulsion paint on wall. 19 February 2011, Titiwangsa, KL.

4.3.2.2 Themes and Motifs in THEY's Graffiti Art Works

In the previous section I introduced and discussed some content in graffiti art works of the graffiti artist THEY. In the present section I expand the portfolio of THEY's works and introduce some of his graffiti art works from the years 2007–2009.

THEY's graffiti art works often expressed his stance on different topics from his environment and from his daily life (the quotation by T-KID, page 317 (footnote 722)). To do so, THEY often used pictorial symbolism and statements in the form of written comments next to his works (similarly as did some participants in Lundy's study⁷⁸⁶).

THEY was famous in the mid-2000s for producing many of his iconic white characters around GKL. These were characters striking different poses, expressed through body language (Figure 4.166-Figure 4.172). THEY initially used to 'wheat paste' this character in the streets of GKL as a street artist (Figure 4.173).⁷⁸⁷ THEY's iconic character was often holding various objects in his hands such as: the spray paint, pencil, brush, a weapon, sports gear and other tools. The character had a slight resemblance to the iconic character of the graffiti artist ORKIBAL (Figure 4.174-Figure 4.175), especially the Cyclops like eye signified by the X, but this was rather a coincidence, as THEY explained that:

Actually, we know each other [with ORKIBAL] since 2005. I just like noticed: "Oohh, ORKIBAL, the character is like that", you know. It is pretty like the same. ... Actually ORKIBAL and me we don't know each other when we started [doing graffiti art]. First I met THA-B, after that I just met ORKIBAL, something like that. On the street ORKIBAL was tagging, doing characters and pasting stickers. That time I was doing huge pieces of wheat paste. I used to do massive pieces of my wheat paste, that time." ... So, after that we meet up, I was just like: "Our characters are similar". The difference was, my character was white [in] color and his was colorful."⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁶ Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers".

⁷⁸⁷ 'Wheat paste' is a street art technique to glue posters to surfaces in public space.

⁷⁸⁸ THEY.

(a) Graffiti Art production by TIGER, THEY and EVE

THEY was among the first Malaysian graffiti artists to produce graffiti art works at the Klang Riverbank walls in Jelatek (Figure 3.18, p. 139; see the top of the concrete wall still intact in Figure 4.176). It was, besides others, with the visiting graffiti art tourists TIGER and EVE (Figure 4.177). THEY, according to his own statement from 2009, was at the time of production of this particular piece working together with PHOBIA in the store on the 6th floor of the Sungai Wang mall.⁷⁸⁹ THEY met the two visiting graffiti artists, TIGER and EVE, coincidentally within the same week. Both wanted to paint graffiti art works in Kuala Lumpur and so THEY took both of them to Jelatek (Figure 4.178). THEY explained the situation as follows:

That time I was still at Sungai Wang. I had a shop with PHOBIA...And then I met TIGER – he is from Italy – and EVE – from New Zealand, eehh sorry Australia. ... We meet up in the same week. It is something like EVE just like came over and met me, and after that we were planning to go bombing the next day. Then after that I met TIGER, I said there is this Australian guy. Why don't we [paint together]...what they wanted from me, was to find for them some space for bombing, you know. So, it's the two of them, so it was easier for me to go to Jelatek with them. It was easier to combine it [and go paint with the both of them]. ... So, we meet up and we planned the [graffiti art] production [in Figure 4.178]. We started about 4 o'clock in the afternoon and we end about 6:30, 7 [pm] like that. Just do it. We bought colors and started to paint.⁷⁹⁰

The wall at Jelatek in this particular location is around 245 cm high and THEY did not need to use any ladder, to paint his tall character, depicted in Figure 4.176.

Eehh, actually the wall is not that [high], so I can reach [the top]. I think it is about 8 feet, but anyway I had my box. I just used that to reach the top.⁷⁹¹

After the two graffiti artists TIGER and EVE left Malaysia, THEY remained in contact with TIGER, but not with EVE. THEY explained:

Yeah, we are still [in contact with TIGER], not with EVE. Because EVE is kind of [a] bomber, so he doesn't have any [web] page you know. Even if he has, he didn't give [it to] me. Actually, I got his email, but we didn't contact [me]. ...

⁷⁸⁹ THEY dated the painting into 2005. However, EVE visited Malaysia in 2007 as is illustrated in Figure 4.179. On one earlier reference to the Sungai Wang shop owned by PHOBIA see: Chan, "The Writing on the Wall."

⁷⁹⁰ THEY.

⁷⁹¹ Ibid.

*Yeah, he is a bomber. ...He is a real bomber from Australia and his age is about, around 30 plus, 32, 33. He is a crazy guy, you know.*⁷⁹²

From the above quote, it is possible to read that EVE was in THEY's perception a prolific author of graffiti art works. This statement is probably true, as I photographed in 2008, in Figure 4.179, another piece by EVE in the heart of George Town, in Penang.

To summarize, we can see that this collaborative mural in Figure 4.178 was produced as a sort of a socialization bond among graffiti artists from various corners of the world. Italian and Australian graffiti artists visited Kuala Lumpur and were interested to produce graffiti art works within the city. The graffiti artists TIGER and EVE wanted to learn from THEY, to quote from the *Spot Theory*, about his '*knowledge of the city in which the [graffiti] writer paints*', as THEY, as a local knew appropriate locations for the production of graffiti art works and THEY was familiar with the local '*neighborhood policing tendencies*,' and '*lines of visibility*'.⁷⁹³ The local graffiti artist's character and piece, THEY's in this case, were positioned in the middle of the collaboration. THEY's character was clad in a baseball cap and holding a spray paint in his left hand. These two symbols designated the character as a graffiti artist. The other two graffiti artists emphasized in their works letterforms and therefore we can see that the purpose of their graffiti art works was to 'leave behind', a stylized mark to be seen especially by other participants in the graffiti art culture in Kuala Lumpur.

⁷⁹² Ibid.

⁷⁹³ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 49.

(b) The theme of 'Home' by THEY

In January 2008, the graffiti artist THEY produced at the Klang Riverbank walls at LRT Pasar Seni area a large-scale graffiti art work with the theme 'Home' (Figure 4.180). THEY painted this graffiti art work solo, but before finishing the graffiti art work in Figure 4.180, the graffiti artist DAMIS came to paint next to him (see the DAMIS work on the left side of Figure 4.180). THEY also tried to adjust his graffiti art work to fit with the two already present graffiti art productions, produced earlier, by the TSS crew (Figure 2.23 and Figure 2.24). THEY explained:

Actually, [THE SUPER SUNDAY] they had a gap in between their productions and then while I was doing it, before I finished, DAMIS came, and DAMIS did his artwork too. I try to minimize the damage [in the other graffiti art works] and I tried to play with the same colors, you know what I mean - to make it like a collaboration production. That is what I tried to do. Because like you can see, THE SUPER SUNDAY used scheme colors, like green kind of - I tried to match to that. Anyway, [THE SUPER SUNDAY] they did this artwork like a month before that - one or two months before that and anyway, I asked them for permission: "I will occupy that gap"; you know [see Figure 4.181]. Just like that. I wanted to do the size [of my graffiti art work] really huge. It's quite huge actually. It's about 9 feet to 10 feet. ... I brought ladder. About a 2 feet ladder.⁷⁹⁴

The graffiti art work of the graffiti artist THEY, in Figure 4.180, is a rather personal one. THEY elaborated in this graffiti art work on his personal matters and shared these with the public. The white character is wearing a red baseball cap with an exclamation mark on it. Next to the baseball cap is a speech bubble with a heart symbol: '♥'. The fingers of the character's right hand are bent, into a gesture, and in the left hand is the character holding a cooking tool used, besides others, to turn *roti canai* breads in Indian restaurants in Malaysia.⁷⁹⁵ THEY explained during an interview in 2009, that it was bit complicated to find a way to appropriately visually represent the cooking tool in Figure 4.180, as THEY stated that:

⁷⁹⁴ THEY.

⁷⁹⁵ Roti Canai is a popular, originally Indian, type of bread like dish in Malaysia.

*I tried to look it like it, you know. But anyway, I don't care. That tool is visually not so characteristic like a hammer or something like that. When people look, at a hammer, they see and they know: "Oohh it's a hammer." But like kitchen tools and other things for cooking nobody knows. Even me, I didn't know how to do it to look like it. I tried to make it look more like an artwork, to add something because of the other piece and the space. Anyway, I don't care.*⁷⁹⁶

What is interesting is the last sentence in the above quotation, as THEY suggested that it is good enough to be at least a little bit accurate, not necessarily exact, in the representation of things in graffiti art works. In the subsequent section about Gaza War murals, it will be shown that precision is not really that necessary in graffiti art works, as some graffiti artists produced incorrect Palestinian flags (see the report below footnote 855, page 417). However, the theme of the graffiti art work in Figure 4.180 was the reminder about moving into a new home. The black silhouette of a house is bearing the stylized tag name 'THEY', the stylized tag name of THEY's brother 'MISTAWHY' and the stylized letters 'JD' of THEY's girlfriend's name. The piece is according to THEY about moving into a new house and therefore the house is in the focal point of this mural.

*Actually, my girlfriend went back to her country – to New Zealand. It was a few days before she comes back and at that time I also shifted few months ago to a new house. So, this artwork is also actually about shifting to a new house. Home sweet home, you know. It is also my first piece I did for my girlfriend. Actually before I shift into this house, I hadn't any. So, I slept on the street about a month in my car. [Laughing]. That is why home sweet home. That is the story, about it, when I slept one month in my car.*⁷⁹⁷

THEY's character was expressing joy and love about the situation with the speech bubble bearing the symbol of a heart. The character was also holding a cooking tool in his hand, corresponding to the theme 'Home' (Figure 4.180). The work was also a sort of advertisement for THEY, similarly as for the TSS graffiti artists KIOUE and THA-B (Figure 4.181), as THEY included into the graffiti art work his internet website.

⁷⁹⁶ THEY.

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid.

(c) THEY's Blockbuster Piece

THEY painted in the third week of August 2008, at the Pasar Seni Riverbank wall, along with other graffiti artists, a 'THEY' piece (Figure 4.182). THEY explained:

*I did it with a few [other] guys. Me, VLT and SPACE MOGOT. And after that, later, BIBICHUN came late at night [to paint with us].*⁷⁹⁸

In August 2008, the Riverbank walls at the Pasar Seni LRT station had already been whitewashed for several months by the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (compare Figure 4.181 with Figure 4.182). Nevertheless, graffiti artists still painted at this location, commonly at night time (see also page 284). THEY painted that day, in August 2008, a blockbuster style piece and used a sketch for this graffiti art work (Figure 4.183-Figure 4.184). THEY's main intention was to produce a 'huge' piece, so it can be recognized and legible to observers from the LRT and bus hub Pasar Seni (see Figure 3.9, p. 133). THEY explained his ambitions in the following way:

*Actually I wanted to do it as [a] blockbuster [piece], because it was at the [Pasar Seni] riverbank and you have there the distance, so for me was the size important there. So, for the first step just I sketched blockbuster style and after that I made it to a piece - to a huge piece [as in Figure 4.183-Figure 4.184]. So, I consider it a blockbuster.*⁷⁹⁹

THEY used the Japanese, imported, *Scotch* fat caps, which were in 2008 used by Malaysian graffiti artists, to produce wide strokes of spray paint. The graffiti artists THEY intended to achieve large, solid letterforms (Figure 4.185) and therefore he used these described nozzles, caps.⁸⁰⁰ The colors – local Pylox brand spray cans – were according to him his own, favorite choice.

These colors [I used in the piece in Figure 4.185] are mine scheme colors. Actually, throughout this artwork, piece, I tried to use more than five tones. Five different colors, you know. So, these are my scheme colors, you know for fill-in, for everything. In terms of my artwork on the street, I like to use these colors, you

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁰ These technical tools were in Malaysia in 2008 rare. Generally, there were no professional spray paint brands present in Malaysia at all and the special *Japanese Scotch* caps were rare too. On the special tools used among Malaysian graffiti artists those days see: Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley".

*know. So, from pink, fuchsia and sunrise yellow, black of course, sea blue - kind of like sweet colors, but it is kind of hot.*⁸⁰¹

To summarize, the piece in Figure 4.185 had the purpose of an ‘eye catcher’. THEY wanted the public in central Kuala Lumpur to see his piece and used appropriate means for this purpose: large scale, eye-catching colors and rather simple semi-legible letterforms. THEY also wanted to attract the attention to the piece through a character, which is in a way playfully leaning with its right hand against the ‘THEY’ piece (Figure 4.185). The character is wearing a baseball cap in a checkered design and a speech bubble above the character’s head is featuring a heart symbol: ‘♥’. On the right side of the character is written the slang word ‘YO!’, which is very typical for the hip-hop culture (Figure 4.185). Therefore, this character signifies THEY as a participant of the hip-hop culture. Above the center of the THEY piece is the graffiti artist’s web address: ‘WWW.ARTTHEY.COM’ (Figure 4.185). The purpose of the web address is advertorial, for that reason it should be readable to everybody and the legibility of the web is therefore also extremely good (Figure 4.185).

(d) THEY’s ‘Line Clear’ Piece

THEY painted in the Central Market area of KL, in early 2009, together with DAMIS and KIOUE, a piece with the subject matter ‘LINE CLEAR’ (Figure 4.186). This piece bears the wording ‘LINE CLEAR’, instead of the typical subject matter of a person’s own tag name (Figure 4.187). THEY explained in an interview in the year 2009, that the purpose of the piece was to create a connection between the location, where the piece was situated, and his piece (Figure 4.188). The location of this graffiti art work is a place, where homosexual men meet at night.⁸⁰² In THEY’s perception, this

⁸⁰¹ THEY.

⁸⁰² That is probably true, as one day before I conducted an interview with THEY, on the 25 February 2009, I was taking photographs at a neighboring wall, next to the location in Figure 4.188 and an man started talking to me, while I was shooting

act is probably something not very appreciable, as he painted into the speech bubble next to the character a skull (Figure 4.187). In the Malaysian society, based on Islamic Sharia law applicable for Muslims, homosexuality is a taboo. Therefore, THEY's piece is saying 'LINE CLEAR', a reference to this impropriety. In THEY's interpretation is the phone in the characters hand ringing and the 'gays' say to each other '*It is safe here! Line Clear*'. THEY explained:

*The LINE CLEAR [sentence] is [used] like for: "It is safe here!", because actually this place [where the piece is located at] is where the gays always meet, it is their spot at night, so you know. ... That place is a dirty place for me. I mean it is not that dirty, but it is something about KL. It happens everywhere, but I just try to use my language to play with the situation, and my artwork, and with the place I put my artwork. In Asia, in my country something like homosexual stuff is like taboo. I think it is everywhere. I just put LINE CLEAR, because it is KL language. People will say it. If we are bombing, we will ask, like: "Is it clear there?" I mean: "Can we do graff there?"*⁸⁰³

The purpose of the work 'LINE CLEAR', in Figure 4.187, was to connect the location of THEY's graffiti art work with an urban area story. THEY provided to his piece a site-specific story. Instead of the so typical repetition of a tag name subject matter, as in the case of KIOUE's or DAMIS' pieces (Figure 4.186), THEY provided great depth to his graffiti art work (even though some Westerners might consider it slightly homophobic). The piece refers to a site-specific story from within Kuala Lumpur. The purpose of the work was to communicate, in a rather ironic way, to others, what is going on in this particular location of Kuala Lumpur.

photographs. I was told, that he observed at 3 am some people painting the graffiti art works I was photographing in the afternoon. After THEY explained to me, the next day, that the location was a homosexual men-meeting point, this above referred conversation first made sense to me. This was the reason, why the man saw the graffiti artists painting at night.

⁸⁰³ THEY.

In conclusion, to the present subsection it can be stated that the graffiti art works produced, in 2008–2009, by the graffiti artist THEY partially showed what diverse meaning and content is contained within, to the public, random looking graffiti art works. Four discussed works produced by THEY illustrated the process of socialization among graffiti artists (Figure 4.176-Figure 4.178), a reference to a personal situation in the graffiti artist's life (Figure 4.180), advertorial qualities of a graffiti art work (Figure 4.182-Figure 4.185) and connection of a graffiti art work to an urban location (Figure 4.186-Figure 4.187).



Figure 4.166 THEY's Transformers themed mural character in the KLCC cinemas.
14 August 2008. KLCC, KL.



Figure 4.167 THEY's 'Art not Vandal' themed mural character near the MIA in Melawati.
21 November 2008. Melawati, GKL.



Figure 4.168 THEY's characters and his overlapping quick piece.
29 January 2008. Pasar Seni, KL.



Figure 4.169 THEY's character on a canvas (before alteration).
07 February 2009. Graff Jam '09 – Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 4.170 THEY's character on a canvas (final version).
07 February 2009. Graff Jam '09 – Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 4.171 THEY's sketch for the canvas *Cari Makan*.
07 February 2009. Graff Jam '09 – Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure 4.172 THEY's character: 'My City My Soul'.
03 February 2009. Central Market, KL.



Figure 4.173 Rests of THEY's wheat pasted character on a wall near his old studio in Gombak.
21 November 2008. Taman Koperasi Polis-Gombak area [?], GKL.



Figure 4.174 ORKIBAL's minimalist character (in the center). Tag by SUGA[52] ONE; character on left by a member of the Digital Malaysia Project (DMP) – probably by MUID.
20 September 2008. Pudu, KL



Figure 4.175 ORKIBAL's minimalist characters (in the center). A very elaborate piece by SONA on top left. 20 December 2008. A corner in the Jonker street, Melaka.



Figure 4.176 TIGER's character & piece and THEY's character with a spray paint can. Source unknown: Image retrieved in 2008–2009 from Myspace profile.



Figure 4.177 The three graffiti artists TIGER, THEY (sitting on a box) and EVE at Jelatek. Source unknown: Image retrieved in 2008–2009 from Myspace profile. TIGER's and EVE's faces altered to ensure anonymity.



Figure 4.178 Pieces and characters by TIGER, THEY and EVE at Jelatek, KL. Source unknown: Image retrieved in 2008–2009 from THEY's [?] Myspace profile.



Figure 4.179 EVE's piece from 2007, Penang. [See the date '2007' in the central bottom.]
07 October 2008. George Town, Penang.



Figure 4.180 THEY's 'Home' piece.
27 January 2008. Central Market, KL.



Figure 4.181 The Pasar Seni riverbank wall before THEY 'added' his 'Home' piece into the gap between two graffiti art productions by the TSS crew.
Source unknown: Retrieved from internet in 2008–2009.



Figure 4.182 THEY's, and other graffiti artist's, graffiti art work, as seen from the LRT terminal at Pasar Seni.
27 August 2008. Pasar Seni LRT station, KL.



Figure 4.183 THEY while finishing his blockbuster piece at nighttime.
Source unknown: Retrieved from internet in 2008–2009.



Figure 4.184 THEY's sketch for the blockbuster style piece.
01 March 2009. Balai Seni – Titiwangsa, KL.



Figure 4.185 THEY's finished blockbuster piece during day time.
15 September 2008. Central Market, KL.



Figure 4.186 THEY's 'Line Clear', MISTAWHY's stencils and KIOUE's & DAMIS' pieces in the Central Market area.
 Pieces – LINE CLEAR, width: 194 cm; height: 94 cm. KIOUE, width: 320 cm; height: 99 cm. DAMIS, width: 260 cm;
 height: 96 cm.
 03 February 2009. Central Market, KL.



Figure 4.187 THEY's character with a mobile phone and a speech bubble with a skull saying 'Line Clear'. [On the
 right MISTAWHY's stencils.]
 03 February 2009. Central Market, KL.



Figure 4.188 Opposite view from THEY's 'Line Clear' piece (Figure 4.186).
03 February 2009. Central Market, KL.

4.3.2.3 Gaza War Murals

This subchapter discusses some unusual features of the graffiti art culture related to political activism and religion, focusing on several murals from Kuala Lumpur and also partially on a mural from Singapore.⁸⁰⁴ Therefore this research is also one of the few studies to at least partially focus on the political side of graffiti art works (see literature review: *Passivity and No Politics in Graffiti Art*, page 91). The focus is on graffiti art works, murals, that refer in their content to the Gaza War (or were produced in reaction to it), and which were produced in Malaysia and Singapore.

The idea to focus attention on this topic formed, in one way or another, during the last major clash on 13 January 2009 between the Israelis and Palestinians in the Gaza War, in the Middle East.⁸⁰⁵ Back then I was gathering data for my previous research

⁸⁰⁴ Results from this present subchapter were partially published: David Novak, "Reflections of Islamic Culture in Malaysian Graffiti," in *Graffiti, Converts and Vigilantes: Islam Outside the Mainstream in Maritime Southeast Asia*, ed. Tomáš Petrů (Vienna: Caesarpres, 2015b).

⁸⁰⁵ The Gaza War is also known as *Operation Cast Lead*. Meanwhile there were already two other major clashes between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza. In the year 2012, Israel conducted the *Operation Pillar of Defense* and currently, in July 2014, the raging battle in Gaza is known as *Operation Protective Edge*.

about the history of the graffiti art culture in Kuala Lumpur⁸⁰⁶ and I suddenly discovered, in the centre of the Malaysian capital, several spontaneously produced graffiti art murals authored by local graffiti artists, as moral support for the Palestinian people in Gaza (Figure 4.189-Figure 4.193). It was astonishing to see the politically oriented graffiti art murals in the very modern city centre of the Malaysian metropolis Kuala Lumpur (Figure 4.189), while knowing that the graffiti art culture is under normal circumstances fairly apolitical with regards to the subject matter of graffiti art works (see literature review: *Passivity and No Politics in Graffiti Art*, page 91; *Restricted content in Malaysian Graffiti Art*, p. 112). This was the initial moment that triggered my interest to focus on this issue more closely. On 17 January 2009 another batch of similar graffiti art works occurred at the same location in Kuala Lumpur (Figure 4.194-Figure 4.196). The Gaza War ended the very same day, at 00:00 GTM on 18 January 2009. In the following weeks and months I did not encounter, in GKL, any other examples of graffiti art works with references to the Gaza War. The only other graffiti art mural relating to the Gaza War was produced on the 14 February 2009, while three Malaysian graffiti artists participated in a pro-Palestinian charity exhibition named *Pameran Amal Palestine [Charity Exhibition for Palestine]*, organized by the National Visual Arts Gallery Malaysia (Figure 4.197). Nevertheless, months later I discovered that similar graffiti art works, to the ones in Kuala Lumpur (Figure 4.189-Figure 4.196), were also produced in Singapore.⁸⁰⁷ Surprisingly, the mural in Singapore (Figure 4.199) caused some controversies (see interview with SLACSATU, page 762).

All these highlighted observations and realizations above lead to many questions. In this present chapter I would like to use the gathered data and insights, to answer the

⁸⁰⁶ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley".

⁸⁰⁷ bringdapaint, "For the Children of Gaza," (YouTube, 12 January 2009).

research question for this present subsection: *What triggered the interest of graffiti artists to create political graffiti art works referring to the Gaza War?*

The graffiti art murals discussed here were analysed in their form, content and meaning. Besides ethnographic observations I used interviews, pixel analysis and a 14-item survey questionnaire (see pages 610; 715) to analyse and gather data. Interviews were conducted in person and virtually (online), with the following graffiti artists: BURP (MAL), CLOG02 (SGP), KIOUE (MAL), SCOPE (SGP), SKETCH (SGP), SLACSATU (SGP), SYCO03 (SGP), THEY (MAL), and TRASE (SGP).

At the outset of this subchapter it is of major importance to first recall and sum up some of the events surrounding the Gaza War, which led in the first place to the production of the graffiti art murals in Kuala Lumpur (Figure 4.189-Figure 4.197) and Singapore⁸⁰⁸.

The official conflict between the State of Palestine and the State of Israel is more than six decades old and is still globally one of the most significant and most watched conflicts in the world today. One of the recent major clashes between the Israelis and the Palestinians was 'The Gaza War' in December 2008–January 2009.⁸⁰⁹

Prior to the Gaza War, in mid-June 2008, Israel and the Palestinian Hamas leadership signed a six-month ceasefire agreement.⁸¹⁰ This ceasefire agreement should have stopped the firing of rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel. However, the firing of rockets continued. This resulted in the non-renewal of the cease-fire in December 2008. The American political scientist Leonard Binder (born 1927) listed in the paper *Christmas in Gaza: An Adventitious War?*, the following six reasons for the end of the

⁸⁰⁸ The Gaza War mural created in Singapore in early January 2009 is visible in the online multimedia available at the YouTube service: *ibid*.

⁸⁰⁹ For the more recent clashes, see footnote 805, page 399.

⁸¹⁰ Isabel Kershner, "Israel Agrees to Truce with Hamas on Gaza," *The New York Times*, June 18 2008.

period of calm between the Israelis and the Palestinians preceding the Gaza War: 1. firing of rockets into Israel, 2. closing of crossings to Gaza by Israel, 3. smuggling of arms through tunnels from Egypt to Gaza, '4. *the bombing of the tunnels* 5. *the targeted killings of Hamas leaders and rocketers* 6. *and other acts of war, terror, and mayhem.*'⁸¹¹ One such example of several incidents, of the breach of cease-fire, was the Israeli raid, killing six Hamas gunmen in early November 2008, reported in *The Guardian* newspaper by Rory McCarthy.⁸¹²

The Palestinian Hamas organization declared on 18 December 2008, the end of the cease-fire with Israel. The firing of rockets from Gaza, targeting Israeli territory, increased in the following days.⁸¹³ Professor Binder reported that after the end of the cease-fire 'Hamas operatives fired some 80 missiles, rockets, and mortar shells daily into Israel'.⁸¹⁴ This finally led to the Gaza War, first starting with the mobilization of the *Israel Defense Forces*.

The Israeli military operation, code-named *Cast Lead*, started the Gaza War on the 27 December 2008. The Israel Defense Forces' overwhelming power against the inferior Palestinian urban resistance fighters resulted in the end of an unequal war, on the morning of 18 January 2009, with the deaths of 1.300 Palestinians and 13 Israelis. The large number of Palestinian civilian casualties led to heavy international criticism of Israel.⁸¹⁵

⁸¹¹ Leonard Binder, "Christmas in Gaza: An Adventitious War?," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21, no. 3 (2009). pp. 516-517.

⁸¹² Rory McCarthy, "Gaza Truce Broken as Israeli Raid Kills Six Hamas Gunmen," *The Guardian*, 05. November 2008.

⁸¹³ "Timeline of Israel-Hamas 2008 Ceasefire," Middle East Progress, <http://middleeastprogress.org/2009/01/timeline-of-israel-hamas-2008-ceasefire/>.

⁸¹⁴ Binder, "Christmas in Gaza: An Adventitious War?." p. 517.

⁸¹⁵ Similarly as is the case currently, on the 01 August 2014, during the *Operation Protective Edge*.

Images of the Gaza War disseminated around the world, on television screens and published in newspapers, were especially terrifying, as these images often contained imagery of suffering Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip.⁸¹⁶ One of the most internationally criticized incidents, during the Gaza War, was the Israeli shelling of a UN school in the Jabaliya refugee camp in Gaza, on 6 January 2009. In this incident, 43 Palestinians died and the majority of those were children.⁸¹⁷ This event was strongly criticized by the international media.

After the end of the Gaza War, the United Nations investigations' concluded

*'that [the Israeli] military planners deliberately followed a doctrine which involved "the application of disproportionate force and the causing of great damage and destruction to civilian property and infrastructure, and suffering to civilian populations."'*⁸¹⁸

To sum up, the Israeli military operation into the Gaza Strip, *Cast Lead*, caused the deaths of 1.300 Palestinians and 13 Israelis. Many of these casualties were civilians and many of these were women and children.

Next, I am analysing the graffiti art works, murals, which referred in their content to the Gaza War, in their form, content and meaning. Analysis and interpretation of conducted interviews shall also shed light onto the following research question examined in this present subchapter: *What triggered the interest of graffiti artists to create political graffiti art works referring to the Gaza War?*⁸¹⁹ At the end of this subchapter the results from the conducted small sample survey are further presented and discussed.

⁸¹⁶ On the children casualties of the Gaza War see for example the report of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights: Palestinian_Centre_for_Human_Rights, "Targeted Civilians: Apchr Report on the Israeli Military Offensive against the Gaza Strip," http://pchr.org/files/Reports/English/pdf_spec/gaza%20war%20report.pdf. pp. 57-63.

⁸¹⁷ Shani Orgad, "Watching How Others Watch Us: The Israeli Media's Treatment of International Coverage of the Gaza War," *The Communication Review* 12, no. 3 (2009). p. 253.

⁸¹⁸ "Un Mission Finds Evidence of War Crimes by Both Sides in Gaza Conflict," UN News Centre, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=32057#>.

⁸¹⁹ It is quite unusual that graffiti artists express direct political opinions with regards to current issues (see literature review: *Passivity and No Politics in Graffiti Art*, page 90; *Restricted content in Malaysian Graffiti Art*, p. 111).

As was suggested in the preceding sections of this thesis, graffiti art works are generally self-centred, as the graffiti artists seek to attract attention to their letterform oriented compositions, which mainly repeatedly represent the subcultural name of a graffiti artist (Figure 4.193; Figure 4.196). Nevertheless, some participants of the graffiti art culture, unusually often in Malaysia,⁸²⁰ also concentrate on the communication of a message, for example as is the case of the work represented in Figure 4.191.

The collaborative mural in Figure 4.191, created in the spray paint medium, was produced by the Malaysian graffiti artists FLIP and NAS-EL⁸²¹. These two graffiti artists clearly painted a mural referring to the Gaza War (see the subject matter in Figure 4.191). The main objects of the composition are two female portraits with a head scarf, on the left and the right side of the mural. The woman on the left was painted by FLIP in tones of grey and shows nearly sculptural qualities in its illusionist representation. This woman's head is slightly tilted backwards, her eyes are closed and she is crying. The other woman's portrait, on the right, was produced by NAS-EL and is more expressionistic in its style, naive, but sincere. This woman's face is dominated with a large nose and with wide opened, emotionally appealing eyes watching, literally fixing the observer with her gaze. The lower half of her face is not visible underneath the Palestinian flag bearing the inscription *SAVE [Palestine]*. The composition of the mural in its centre is divided by scenery depicting a burning city landscape, and by a rocket in the upper central part of the composition. The rocket bears the *Star of David* on its body and is decorated with two white bird wings. The rocket is undeniably the cause of the crying-woman's suffering. The woman on the right is an instant witness of this dreadful moment, before the impact of the rocket, but it seems, as if she cannot do

⁸²⁰ Novak, "The Development of Graffiti Art in Malaysia: With Focus on the Klang Valley". pp. 172-179.

⁸²¹ For the graffiti artist NAS-EL see: Teh, *Graffiti KL*. NAS-EL.

anything else, besides mutely watching the unfolding disaster. This spontaneous graffiti art work in Figure 4.191, produced during the on-going Gaza War, commented on the suffering of the Palestinian civilians during the Israeli military operation *Cast Lead*. The work genuinely reminds the audience of the realities of war, whereby one side often claims to ‘fight’ with weapons to install peace, but this peace initiative brings about death and suffering to both sides in the name of a future peace. It seems that the two authors of this graffiti art work had humanitarian motivations on their minds, while creating this emotionally laden mural.

The collaborative mural in Figure 4.195, produced by the Malaysian graffiti artists BURP⁸²² and THEY, has a very similar message, as the just discussed graffiti art work above (in Figure 4.191). In the work in Figure 4.195, on the left side, BURP stylistically represented the torso of a male character holding passively in his hand a small Palestinian flag. Underneath the head of the figure is the inscription *FREE*. The typographical representation of the red slogan *FREE* is dripping, suggesting the liquid consistence of the *FREE [Palestine]* script, evoking in the viewer the imagery of dripping blood drops. BURP’s message embedded into the mural suggests to the audience, to help, to free Palestine. The centre and the right side, in the mural reproduced in Figure 4.195, are occupied by two cartoonish, iconic characters painted with enamel and spray paints by the institutionally established Malaysian graffiti artist THEY⁸²³. The central character, painted in cold, light blue tones, represents a devil with a trident in its hand and with a *Star of David* placed in the devil’s large, round eye. The devil’s mouth is wide open, while he is chewing with his teeth on a yellowish, dripping slogan spelled *PIECE*, but phonetically reading *peace*.⁸²⁴ On the right side of the

⁸²² For the graffiti artist BURP see: *ibid.* BURP.

⁸²³ For the TLG crew see: *ibid.* *Thalangjang Movement*.

⁸²⁴ The slogan *PIECE* is a misspelling error of the word *PEACE*, but the graffiti artist THEY did not correct it during the production of the mural once he got aware of it. THEY decided to just leave the graffiti art work as it was. THEY.

composition is THEY's one-eyed white iconic character⁸²⁵ pointing with his finger at the devil. Above the one-eyed white iconic character is a speech bubble reading *GILE*, translating as 'mad' from the Malaysian language. THEY's white enamel and black spray paints were technically applied onto the wall in such a way, that they caused a lot of dripping. These intentional drips evoke tension in the observer and heighten the expressivity of the mural and correspond with BURP's dripping typographical slogan *FREE*, on the mural's left side. To summarize, THEY commented with his cartoonish, playful and likeable characters on the Gaza War and pointed at the madness of this war. BURP 'suggested' to his audience, to help to free Palestine. The graffiti artist BURP produced the graffiti art work in Figure 4.195 as a reminder to the general public, not to forget, especially, the deaths of the children and women killed during the Gaza War. BURP reminded himself during an interview, in the year 2012, how shocked he and everybody else were, after the outbreak of the Gaza War. BURP also indicated during the interview, how important it was to him to show his own religious solidarity with the suffering people in Gaza.⁸²⁶ The other Malaysian author of the mural in Figure 4.195, THEY, saw in the Gaza War significant problems between the states of Israel and Palestine. THEY envisaged, that the history, in the form of the Gaza War, would be repeated over and over again, as he stated that: *'maybe next year it will happen again and it will happen again and it will happen again. Nobody can do [anything] about it'*. Therefore, THEY painted at least his graffiti art work in Figure 4.195, as he suggested, what else can be done by an outsider like him: *'You just can talk about it.'*⁸²⁷ In fact, THEY was right in his prediction. The Gaza War was repeated in the year 2012, as

⁸²⁵ THEY white character was introduced in the previous subsection on page 381, and was mentioned also in the article: Zhin, "Artists Who Use the City as Their Canvas."

⁸²⁶ BURP.

⁸²⁷ THEY.

Israel conducted the *Operation Pillar of Defense* and currently, in July 2014, there is a new battle raging, known as *Operation Protective Edge*.⁸²⁸

These two works in Figure 4.191 and Figure 4.195 are rather genuine, authentic commentaries on the Gaza War, as they highlight the suffering of the civilian Palestinian population, affected by this armed confrontation, and comment on the war conflict. Neither of these works significantly promoted the graffiti artists' tag names. However, the two graffiti art works in Figure 4.193 and in Figure 4.196, produced by the Malaysian graffiti artist KIOUE, are in their compositions to some extent different. The focus in these two murals, especially in Figure 4.193, is on the graffiti artist's stylized tag name – *THE KIOUE*. The highly illegible letterforms are stylized in a very skilfully executed dimensional (3D) graffiti art style⁸²⁹ and to an observer, unfamiliar with the legibility of graffiti art lettering styles, are not decipherable (on KIOUE's letterform oriented graffiti art works see pages 624-627; see also the legibility research experiment on page 302). The graffiti artist KIOUE mastered the spray paint technique, since his beginnings in the year 2000, nearly to perfection and executed both graffiti art works (Figure 4.193; Figure 4.196) with the exactness of a master painter – especially the letterforms and the extremely well done calligraphy tags, which are present in both murals, are very skilful and elaborate. Both works are accompanied with figurative representations of Palestinian resistance fighters, who have some proportional distortions. The upper body of the resistance fighter in Figure 4.193 accomplishes the upper-right segment of the overall composition. The resistance fighter is 'determinedly' holding in his hand an upside down Palestinian flag, with the easily readable inscription 'SAVE ME' and the fighter fixes his eyes on the observer. The other resistance fighter in Figure 4.196 is placed in the centre of the composition and is in addition to his

⁸²⁸ The Malaysian graffiti artists from the TAO crew, MADS, SMASK, AKENT, CLIMATE and PHEANUT, painted on Saturday the 26 July 2014, a graffiti art production titled *Stop the War*, dedicated to the suffering people of Gaza (Figure 4.200).

⁸²⁹ Gottlieb, *Graffiti Art Styles: A Classification System and Theoretical Analysis*.

determined attitude, armed with a machine gun. The right side of the composition in the mural in Figure 4.196 offers a kind of an elusive *window* (a car's side mirror) and provides the observer of the work with a look at the situation in the streets of Gaza City, during the Gaza War. The scenery shows an ambulance, a medic in a white coat and dead people lying in the streets. This segment of the composition evokes a strong emotional response in the audience. The central and right sections of the composition in Figure 4.196 are accompanied by advertisement-like handwritten script lettering. The very legible website address above the fighter, and above the window, is redirecting the observer to *The Super Sunday Concept Store* enterprise, run by the artists KIOUE and THA-B (Figure 4.192), only approximately 200 m away from the mural's location.⁸³⁰ References to *The Super Sunday Concept Store* are further made in the calligraphy tags underneath the window in Figure 4.196 and underneath the fighter in Figure 4.193. THE KIOUE's graffiti art works in Figure 4.193 and Figure 4.196 could be interpreted as authentic graffiti art works reflecting on the Gaza War, but the works also evoke the impression that they are pre-planned advertisements, of the artist himself and of his commercial enterprise. KIOUE concentrated in his two graffiti art works, in Figure 4.193 and in Figure 4.196, on the stylistic execution of his tag name '*THE KIOUE*'. In both cases he added to his tag name a character of a Palestinian resistance fighter, which in his opinion symbolized '*the clash*' during the Gaza War. KIOUE dedicated his works to Palestine. For example, the Palestinian resistance fighter in the centre of Figure 4.196 was adorned with a green-white ribbon and a bow. According to KIOUE's explanation, the ribbon specified his work as a gift to the people of Gaza, as KIOUE wanted to express his support of the people in Gaza.⁸³¹

⁸³⁰ On the *The Super Sunday Concept Store* see for example the website:
<https://foursquare.com/v/the-super-sunday-concept-store/4de0befbe4cd846e4090746b>.

⁸³¹ KIOUE.

The last mural discussed here, produced in Kuala Lumpur relating to the Gaza War was painted during the pro-Palestinian charity exhibition named *Pameran Amal Palestine* [Charity Exhibition for Palestine] at the National Visual Arts Gallery Malaysia on 14 February 2009. The collaborative mural, in Figure 4.197, named *Dinding Palestin: Lobang Baek!!* [Palestine Wall: The Good Hole!!] was produced at the entrance area to the National Visual Arts Gallery Malaysia, by the Malaysian graffiti artists KIOUE, THEY, and DAMIS. The left half of the composition in the graffiti art work in Figure 4.197 was occupied by a realistic portrait of an older woman, with a head scarf, to represent the elderly people of Palestine. KIOUE, the author of the portrait, further explained that this production did not aim to express sadness and therefore the mural was painted in cheerful colours.⁸³² KIOUE also painted the mural's background illusions of cracking stones. The right upper half of the mural's composition in Figure 4.197 represents dimensional (3D) letterforms produced by DAMIS – representing only the artist's shortened tag name 'DMS'. The right lower half of the composition features overlapping letterforms reading *PEACE*, painted by the graffiti artist THEY. The letterforms were outlined with a thicker, black outline and small, reddish drips were positioned on top of the slogan *PEACE*. The letterform 'P', in this particular slogan *PEACE*, has on the left side of the letterform's stem a triangular form, indicating the starting point of a comic-like speech bubble graphics (for the sketch see Figure 4.198). This collaborative graffiti art work expressed the desire for peace between the Palestinian people – represented by the older woman saying through the speech bubble '*PEACE*' – and the Israelis, whose flag is indicated in the slogan *PEACE*, in the overlap of the letterforms 'A' and 'C'. This mural was under

⁸³² Ibid.

institutional patronage and correlates with the intention of the event, which was a *Charity Exhibition for Palestine*.

As was shown by the examples of murals from Kuala Lumpur, some graffiti artists felt individual needs to express themselves, with regards to the events surrounding the Gaza War. The need for individual expression was also felt by Singaporean graffiti artists, as is discussed next. Graffiti art in Singapore is very restricted and the creation of graffiti art without permission bears severe consequences in this island country.⁸³³ Nevertheless, there is a designated area for graffiti artists in the city centre of Singapore, near the famous Orchard Road – at the Somerset skate park (Figure 3.56, p. 171). The Singaporean graffiti artist Madzlan Endut aka SKETCH⁸³⁴ (born 1975) and the graffiti artist KILAS produced at the Somerset skate park, in early January 2009, the graffiti art work *How Many More Must Die?*⁸³⁵ The graffiti art work's subject matter was the innocent children dying in the Gaza War. The painting was produced, at the smaller of the two longish walls, in the skate park in Figure 4.199. The composition of the graffiti art work, *How Many More Must Die?*, was formed out of two thirds of the Palestinian flag and another third, on the right side, occupied by KILAS' sketched images of three sad children with closed eyes and by two insects-like, hovering, hybrid animals with gas masks. There were red bubbles and organic shapes surrounding the sketched beings. SKETCH added into the white, central strip of the Palestinian flag a black, spray painted calligraphy inscription saying *How Many More Must Die?* The production of the graffiti art work is compressed in a video clip published on the YouTube website under the title *For the Children of Gaza*.⁸³⁶ The emotionally vibrant video clip was cut, edited, to the song *Prophets of Rage* by the US American rap group Public Enemy. This

⁸³³ Writer, "Swiss Man Receives Prison Sentence, Canning in Singapore Graffiti Case."

⁸³⁴ Omar, "Conform or Be Whitewashed."

⁸³⁵ bringdapaint, "For the Children of Gaza."

⁸³⁶ Ibid.

graffiti art production, dedicated to the innocent child victims of the Gaza War, and the aim to produce another similar graffiti art work, *Our Paint for Your Pain*, which was intended to be produced on 17 January 2009, caused quite severe consequences for the local Singaporean graffiti artist involved, and for all other graffiti artists in Singapore.⁸³⁷ The humanitarian intentions of the graffiti artists were interpreted by the local authorities as politically motivated and subsequently the graffiti art works caused the whitewashing (Figure 4.199) and the closure of the only legal, permitted graffiti art walls in Singapore for weeks to come.⁸³⁸ The Singaporean graffiti artist SLACSATU⁸³⁹ explained, during a personal interview in the year 2012,⁸⁴⁰ that prior to the mentioned incident, the Singaporean graffiti artists usually used to paint at the Somerset walls every weekend, but after the incident they sought to paint the walls maybe only once in 3-4 months (see interview with SLACSATU, page 762). The Singaporean graffiti artists, SCOPE⁸⁴¹ (born 1976), SLACSATU and Sufian Hamri aka TRASE⁸⁴² (born 1980), explained further that one of the reasons which led the Singaporean graffiti artists to the decision to seldom paint at the Somerset walls was the frustration about the need to present the official authorities in charge of the wall, with preliminary sketches and written proposals of the intended graffiti art works, ever since the Gaza War incident.⁸⁴³ During my last personal informal talk with SLACSATU, in the year 2013, I was informed that the walls in Somerset (Figure 4.199) can again be used more freely, as a creativity outlet, after four years of limitations.

⁸³⁷ Omar, "Conform or Be Whitewashed."; Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*. p. 99.

⁸³⁸ SKETCH; SYCO03.

⁸³⁹ For the graffiti artist SLACSATU see also: Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*. pp. 102-103.

⁸⁴⁰ SLACSATU.

⁸⁴¹ For the graffiti artist SCOPE see also: Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*. p. 353; Sanada et al., *Graffiti Asia*. pp. 100-101.

⁸⁴² For the graffiti artist TRASE see also: Ganz, *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents*. p. 363; David Sun et al., "'I Do Graffiti in Legal Places'," *The New Paper* 09 June 2012.

⁸⁴³ SCOPE; SLACSATU; TRASE.

The Singaporean graffiti artist SCOPE stated, that he wanted to take part in the production named *Our Paint for Your Pain*⁸⁴⁴ on the 17 January 2009 ‘to do a commemoration’ for the Gaza War victims and SCOPE continued to state that it had ‘got nothing to do with politics or even religion.’⁸⁴⁵ TRASE from Singapore provided a very similar response, to the same event as SCOPE: ‘[Me] and a couple of guys wanted to paint a mural as a memorial for the children who were killed in the battle between the [P]alestinians and [I]sraelis.’⁸⁴⁶ The other Singaporean graffiti artist, SKETCH, stated that he produced the work *How Many More Must Die?*⁸⁴⁷ ‘for the Palestinian kids in Gaza.’⁸⁴⁸ SKETCH further emphasised that he was rather too harshly ‘accused [by the local authorities] of doing something political.’ The statements expressed here by the cited Singaporean graffiti artists show that their aims were more humanitarian than political.⁸⁴⁹ However, such humanitarian intentions are very easily blurred, when the subject matter of a graffiti art mural is so expressive and refers to an internationally disputed and very sensitive topic such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East.

As was illustrated above, the graffiti artists BURP, THEY, KIOUE, SCOPE, TRASE and SKETCH expressed quite similar motivations for the production of their works relating to the Gaza War. These highlighted motivations mentioned above can be summarized into the following three points:

⁸⁴⁴ Omar, "Conform or Be Whitewashed."

⁸⁴⁵ SCOPE.

⁸⁴⁶ TRASE.

⁸⁴⁷ bringdapaint, "For the Children of Gaza."

⁸⁴⁸ SKETCH.

⁸⁴⁹ It needs to be stated that there is only a very fine line between humanitarian or political intentions of the graffiti art works, as the ‘definitions’ depends on each individual person making such a judgment.

- (a) Commemoration of the victims in the Gaza War – especially of the civilian casualties (women and children).
- (b) The solidarity with and the support of the suffering Palestinian people.
- (c) The expression of personal emotions with regards to the Gaza War.

It is of further interest to point out that all graffiti artists, who created the murals discussed above, were without exception all Muslim in faith.

After I gathered and evaluated the qualitative results reported above for my research, I decided to conduct an additional survey among international graffiti artists, in May 2012, to investigate the ‘agreement’ among graffiti artists on topics related to *politics*, *graffiti art*, and *religion*. This was done with the help of a survey, based on a 7-point Likert scale questionnaire. Opinions relating to politics, graffiti art, and to the personal importance of religion to graffiti artists were explored in eight questions (for the questionnaire see Appendix page 715; for the research sample see page 227). The results of the survey are presented below in Table 4.38. The analysis of the data focused on central tendencies summarized in median and mode scores.⁸⁵⁰

⁸⁵⁰ *Median* is the middle number in an arranged list of data and the most common number in a data set is the *mode*.

Table 4.38. Survey results (7-point Likert Scale): Graffiti art experts on topics of politics, graffiti art, religion.

<i>Question and central tendency</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>
(Q7.) <i>Pacifism is the opposition to war and violence. I consider myself a pacifist.</i>		
4 – Neutral	5.5	4
5 – Somewhat true of me	(N=34)	26% (9)
6 – True of me		
(Q8.) <i>I think that graffiti art works should express political views.</i>		
4 – Neither agree or disagree	4	4
	(N=34)	32% (11)
(Q9.) <i>I create my graffiti art works generally for the public. I do not create graffiti art works generally for other graffiti artists.</i>		
4 – Sometimes, in about 50% of the chances when I could have	5	4
5 – Frequently, in about 70% of the chances when I could have	(N=33)	30% (10)
(Q10.) <i>The artistic execution of the letter styles is more important for me than a message to other people.</i>		
5 – Somewhat agree	5	6
6 – Agree	(N=34)	26% (9)
(Q11.) <i>My religion is important to me.</i>		
7 – Extremely important	7	7
	(N=34)	56% (11)
(Q12.) <i>I am a human rights activist.</i>		
4 – Neither agree or disagree	4	4
	(N=34)	26% (9)
(Q13.) <i>I believe that it is important to keep track of political developments.</i>		
4 – Neutral	5	4
5 – Moderately important	(N=33)	27% (9)
(Q14.) <i>I am watching the developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.</i>		
5 – Somewhat agree	5	6
6 – Agree	(N=34)	24% (8)

The results of the survey rather support my suggested claims above, made at the outset of this subchapter (and on page 91), about the apolitical attitudes (Table 4.38: Q8) and about pacifism (Table 4.38: Q7) among graffiti artists. However, the most significant statistical result of the survey was in relation to the personal importance of religion to the participants of the survey (Table 4.38: Q11). The median and mode score to the statement ‘*My religion is important to me*’ established at the most extreme score of 7, as ‘*Extremely important.*’ This score is the most significant statistical result of the survey and shows, how important religion is to the participants of the survey. However, this result deserves even more attention, especially in relation to the sample’s religious structure. The sample (N=34) was formed by 20 Malaysian Muslims, by 4 Singaporean Muslims, by 2 Turkish Muslims, by 1 Filipino Muslim and by 7 participants of other faiths. If the sample is divided into two subgroups, Muslims (N=27) and believers of

other faiths (N=7), the median and the mode score among the 27 Muslims remains the same: '7 – *Extremely important*.' However, the 7 participants of other faiths scored a median of 2, suggesting that religion is only of '*Low importance*' in their lives; the mode score dropped among the 7 participants of other faiths even to as low as 1, making religion in their lives not important at all.⁸⁵¹ Even though, the sample size (N=34) is undeniably too small to make any general conclusions from this survey, the results highlight the importance of religion to the Muslim graffiti artists (N=27), of which five were directly or indirectly connected to the graffiti art murals analyzed with content referring to the Gaza War.⁸⁵²

In relation to the results, suggesting a high importance of religion to graffiti artists of the Islamic faith, it is important to highlight that many Malaysian and Singaporean Muslim graffiti artists quite often incorporate their Islamic cultural heritage into their works. The graffiti art works then often feature Islamic architecture, Islamic calligraphy, Islamic traditional garments (Figure 4.191 and Figure 4.197), Islamic geometrical patterns (Figure 4.192), Islamic illumination and other manifestations of Islamic culture (for more details on this subject matter see the subchapter 4.3.1.1 Islamic Cultural Influences, p. 325). One such direct manifestation is visible in the work of THA-B in Figure 4.192. THA-B embellished his tag name '*THA-B*', in Figure 4.192, with Islamic ornaments (further see page 334). It is also highly remarkable to note that the Malaysian graffiti artist, of Cambodian origin,⁸⁵³ KIOUE (works in Figure 4.193; Figure 4.196-Figure 4.197), stopped painting realistic paintings of living beings for approximately one year, due to his religious beliefs – the portrait representing the Palestinian woman in the mural in Figure 4.197 was the last figural painting by KIOUE for the following

⁸⁵¹ The low importance of religion to the general populations of Western countries was also reported in: Jason Palmer, "Religion May Become Extinct in Nine Nations, Study Says," BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-12811197>.

⁸⁵² For all the participants of the survey see page 226.

⁸⁵³ Grace Chen, "Graffiti King and the Myvi Se," *New Sunday Times*, 06 June 2010.

year! KIOUE explained, during an interview in the year 2010, that he struggled with the decision to stop painting representations of living beings. However, he did so, as it is discouraged by orthodox Islamic teachings. KIOUE decided after only a year to paint figural representations again. KIOUE further stated that he had had a difficult time deciding, how to use his given God talent correctly, during that particular period of time in 2009–2010.⁸⁵⁴

It was shown, how important religion is for Muslim graffiti artists. Religion – Islam in this case – was probably also one of the motivations of the graffiti artists in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to produce the discussed graffiti art murals. Bearing in mind that the Gaza War, is seen by many Muslims as a Zionist aggression against the Palestinian people. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is, particularly in Malaysia, perceived as an injustice against the Palestinians. Professor Osman Bakar (born 1946) pointed out in the paper *The Impact of the American War on Terror on Malaysian Islam* that ‘*Malaysia may be far from the scene of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict..., [but the issue is] very much at the heart of its international concerns.*’⁸⁵⁵ Therefore the Gaza War was also highly visible in the Malaysian media and this in turn led to the production of the murals in Figure 4.190-Figure 4.196, after all, normally Malaysian graffiti artists do not paint graffiti art works referring to other global humanitarian disasters. However, it needs to be stated once again that to some Malaysian graffiti artists, the Gaza War aside of their personal concerns, was also an opportunity highlight their tag names, as is suggested in the *Spot theory*: ‘*Above all, graffiti writers seek recognition, and in order to get the recognition they crave, they need people to see their graffiti [art works].*’⁸⁵⁶

⁸⁵⁴ KIOUE.

⁸⁵⁵ Bakar, "The Impact of the American War on Terror on Malaysian Islam." p. 109.

For other papers relating to Islam in Malaysia see: Vejai Balasubramaniam, "Embedding Ethnic Politics in Malaysia: Economic Growth, Its Ramifications and Political Popularity," *Asian Journal of Political Science* 14, no. 1 (2006); Hamid, "Politically Engaged Muslims in Malaysia in the Era of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (2003-2009)."; Houben, "Southeast Asia and Islam."

⁸⁵⁶ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 48.

As a matter of fact, these murals were painted at a highly visible location, despite the fact that, three murals from Figure 4.190 show an upside down Palestinian flag, indicating a lack of knowledge of the right order of the stripes on the Palestinian flag. These three murals also had as a subject matter the tag names of the particular graffiti artists. One of these murals was produced by KIOUE (Figure 4.193) where the tag name occupied 55% of the composition and the second largest element of the composition was the incorrect flag of Palestine (see Table 4.39).

Table 4.39. Distribution of contents (motifs) and percentage of the proportions of single elements in each of the four examined graffiti art works.

	Figure 4.191	Figure 4.193	Figure 4.195	Figure 4.196
(i.) Artist's tag name	-	The KIOUE 55%	-	The KIOU 33%
(ii.) Humans	2 Woman 61%	Protester 12%	Man(&devil) 58%	Fighter 18%
(iii.) Palestine flag (Mistakes in the representation of the flag)	Correct 9%	Incorrect 19%	Correct 2%	-
(iv.) Star of David	On rocket (9%)	-	Devil's eye 2%	-
(v.) Aggression	Rocket 9%	-	Devil (37%)	Fighter (18%)
(vi.) Resistance	-	Protester (12%)	-	Fighter (18%)
(vii.) Suffering	Crying woman (40%)	-	-	Ambulance, medic, ... 27%
(viii.) Destruction	Houses 9%	-	-	-
(+) Others (Visual elements of the works, such as): background, signatures, statements...	12%	14%	38%	22%
TOTAL:	100%	100%	100%	100%

The strong reaction of the Singaporean authorities towards a 'fairly harmless'⁸⁵⁷ mural, commemorating the many civilian deaths among children during the Gaza War, can only be explained when taking into consideration the kind of threats, that accompany the radicalization of Islam. The Singaporean government had tried to eliminate radical Islamic ideas in the country, as was discussed by Muhammad Haniff Bin Hassan and Kenneth George Pereire in the paper *An Ideological Response to Combating Terrorism - the Singapore Perspective*.⁸⁵⁸ The pro-Palestinian graffiti art works were probably perceived by the authorities as potentially threatening to Singapore's multi-racial and harmonious⁸⁵⁹ social order. Such a reaction of the official authorities can also be related to the statement of the sociologist Howard S. Becker (born 1928), who wrote in the book *Art Worlds*: '*The interest the state pursues through its intervention in the arts have to do with the preservation of public order – the arts being seen as capable both of strengthening and of subverting order...*'⁸⁶⁰

In conclusion it can be stated that the present subsection has shown that graffiti artists in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore produced similar graffiti art murals, with references to the Gaza War, in order to promote themselves, in order to morally support the Palestinian people during the Gaza War, in order to highlight the suffering of the people in Gaza City during the war, in order to promote the establishment of the Palestinian State, and in order to condemn the violence committed against civilians – especially against innocent women and children. Nearly all of these murals were self-financed by the graffiti artists and were aimed at the general public.

⁸⁵⁷ I am aware of the historical genocide committed on Jewish people during the course of history. However, I use here the word combination 'quite harmless', as such a mural would have been gone, painted over, probably within a week as graffiti art works change rapidly. Especially in Singapore, where there was no other graffiti art location to produce graffiti art works at (see the SLACSATU interview on page 761, as SLACSATU explained: '*Yeah, in Somerset. Usually we paint there every weekend, but nowadays I think maybe once every 3-4 months.*'). The same Gaza War inspired graffiti art murals were in Kuala Lumpur painted over, within few weeks, with strictly letterforms oriented graffiti art works.

⁸⁵⁸ Muhammad Haniff Bin Hassan et al., "An Ideological Response to Combating Terrorism - the Singapore Perspective," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 17, no. 4 (2006).

⁸⁵⁹ Aurel Croissant et al., "Culture, Identity and Conflict in Asia and Southeast Asia," *ASIEN*, no. 110 (January 2009).

⁸⁶⁰ Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (London: University of California Press, 1984). p. 180.

What is a rather surprising outcome of this study is the observation that graffiti art works relating to the Gaza War were censored in Singapore, even though, which is most surprising, that these murals were produced at permitted graffiti art locations in Singapore. However, this censorship might correlate with the foreign policies of Malaysia and Singapore towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict discussed here. These foreign policies can be expressed for example by the votes in the United Nations General Assembly on 29 November 2012.⁸⁶¹ The United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution 67/19 to promote the status of Palestine to a non-member observer state in the United Nations. From 193 members, 5 countries were absent during the UN vote, 9 voted against, 41 abstained including Singapore, and 138 countries including Malaysia approved the promotion of Palestine to a non-member observer state in the United Nations. Therefore it might not come as a complete surprise that the Singaporean authorities censored the public expressions discussed here, even though that they were legally produced, and that the National Visual Arts Gallery Malaysia provided institutional patronage for the graffiti art mural at its own institution. At this point I would like to cite once more Howard Becker: *'The state ... affects what artists do and produce by directly intervening in their activities. Intervention takes various forms: open support, censorship, and suppression.'*⁸⁶²

This subchapter further showed that religion was of extreme importance to the authors of the graffiti art murals and that the production of these murals was a contributor to the motivation of highlighting the suffering of the Palestinians during the Gaza War. It might also be of interest to state that I did not encounter any such pro-Palestinian murals in 2009 in Prague, Czech Republic.

⁸⁶¹ "General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly to Accord Palestine 'Non-Member Observer State' Status in United Nations," United Nations: General Assembly (GA/11317), November 29, 2009, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2012/ga11317.doc.htm>.

⁸⁶² Becker, *Art Worlds*, p. 180.

Additionally this subchapter illustrated the strong potential of graffiti art murals, as some murals (Figure 4.197-Figure 4.199) were identified by governmental institutions as possessing the potential to subvert or strengthen public order. This example demonstrates that graffiti art has the prospective to be treated as a form of public art and not just as a simple form of vandalism.



Figure 4.189 Graffiti art murals with reference to the Gaza War at the 64.8 m long 'Blue wall', at the Imbi Plaza in the city center of Kuala Lumpur.
13 January 2009, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.190 Graffiti art murals with reference to the Gaza War at the 'Blue wall', at the Imbi Plaza in the city center. 13 January 2009, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.191 FLIP's and NAS-EL's 'SAVE [Palestine]' graffiti art mural. 13 January 2009, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.192 THA-B's and THE KIOUE's 'SAVE ME' collaborative graffiti art mural.
13 January 2009, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.193 THE KIOUE's 'SAVE ME' graffiti art mural.
13 January 2009, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.194 Graffiti art murals referring to the Gaza War.
17 January 2009, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.195 BURP's 'FREE [Palestine]' and THEY's 'PIECE' graffiti art murals.
17 January 2009, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.196 THE KIOUE's '*FREE GAZA*' graffiti art mural.
17 January 2009, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.197 KIOUE, DAMIS and THEY collaborated on the graffiti art mural titled '*DINDING PALESTIN: LOBANG BAEK!!*' [Palestine Wall: The Good Hole!!].
21 February 2009, Titiwangsa, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.198 Sketch by THEY for the collaborated graffiti art mural titled '*DINDING PALESTIN: LOBANG BAEK!!*' [Palestine Wall: The Good Hole!!].
21 February 2009, Titiwangsa, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 4.199 Censored graffiti art walls at the Somerset skate park in Singapore in March 2009.
Height of wall: 186 cm.
11 March 2009, Somerset, Singapore.



Figure 4.200 The Malaysian graffiti artists, from the TAO crew, painted a graffiti art production titled 'Stop the War', dedicated to the suffering people of Gaza (footnote 828, page 408).
26 July 2014, Jelatek, Kuala Lumpur.

4.4 Exact Measurements of Sizes of Graffiti Art Works: Results

The research conducted on the average width and height of graffiti art pieces revealed that in the research sample of 162 (N=162) pieces an average piece (for the sample see pages 726-742) measured 473 cm in width by 194 cm in height.⁸⁶³ The largest piece in the sample measured 1,045 cm in width by 270 cm in height (Figure J.77, p. 730). The smallest piece was 228 cm width by a height of 70 cm (Figure J.191, p. 737). Further, the research showed that the average ratio of a piece displayed a width and height of 2.448. The smallest ratio was 0.935 (Figure J.217, p. 739) and the largest ratio in a piece was 4.148 (Figure J.235, p. 740).

The research on the sizes of graffiti art works focused on pieces. Along with the measurements of 162 (61%) pieces, I also collected another 106 (39%) measurements,

⁸⁶³ Some of these results were already reported in: Novak, "Methodology for the Measurement of Graffiti Art Works: Focus on the Piece."

subdivided into tags (10%), throw-ups (16%) and characters (13%). These additional measurements are considered to represent supportive descriptive data. Another study focusing exclusively on these other three graffiti art forms would be needed, in order to collect enough data for a representative sample. The results showed that the average size of a tag (or of a group of tags by one author) was 107 cm in width by 67 cm in height. The largest tag measured 205 cm in width by 145 cm in height (Figure J.96, p. 731). Contrary the smallest tag measured 39 cm in width and 23 cm in height (Figure J.59, p. 729). The average dimension of a throw-up was established as 261 cm in width by 129 cm in height. The smallest throw-up measured 97 cm in width by 49 cm in height (Figure J.204, p. 738). The largest throw-up measured 503 cm in width by 187 cm in height (Figure J.198, p. 738) reaching the average size of pieces. Finally, the results showed that the average size of a character was 234cm in width by 190cm in height. The smallest character was 48 cm width by 49 cm in height (Figure J.205, p. 738). Contrary the largest character measured 593 cm in width by 225 cm in height (Figure J.144, p. 734). Results of the average sizes of all four graffiti art forms are presented in Figure 4.201 and in Table 4.40.

Table 4.40. Results for the research on exact sizes of graffiti art works. Width and height in cm.

Results:	Sample size	Average width	Average height	Average ratio
Average width of a piece	N=162	473	-	-
Average height of a piece	N=162	-	194	-
Average ratio of a piece	N=162	-	-	2.448
Average width of a tag	N=28	107	-	-
Average height of a tag	N=28	-	67	-
Average ratio of a tag	N=28	-	-	2.031
Average width of a throw-up	N=43	261	-	-
Average height of a throw-up	N=43	-	129	-
Average ratio of a throw-up	N=43	-	-	2.152
Average width of a character	N=35	234	-	-
Average height of a character	N=35	-	190	-
Average ratio of a character	N=35	-	-	1.232

The ratios are the results from the research sample (not the ratios of the average results).

Figure 4.201 represents, in visual form, overall average results of all four graffiti art forms in relationship to the human body. The values discovered in the average sizes of graffiti art works support the general observation of the four graffiti art forms from literature. The tag is described as a quite small and quick signature.⁸⁶⁴ Figure 4.201 clearly shows that the determined average size of a tag, 107 cm in width and 67 cm in height, corresponds with the purpose of a tag, which is 'quickly mark' a surface without being seen, as the activity of tagging is generally illegal and strongly connected to vandalism. The throw-up is generally used as an illegal, bubble styled, letter oriented graffiti art work, which is produced with fast, coordinated body movements.⁸⁶⁵ This supports the determined average dimension of a throw-up, of 261 cm in width by 129 cm in height, as the graffiti artists need to be fast and coordinated, in their body movements, while quickly producing unobserved throw-ups (see Figure 1.14, p. 24). The tag and throw-up are vandalism oriented graffiti art forms and the aim of these two forms is to spread the tag name and mark a surface to state the graffiti artists' visual presence in public space. Therefore, the tag and throw-up is smaller in comparison to the piece and character as is discussed next.

As was stated throughout this thesis, the piece and the character are generally regarded as art that is contrary to tags and throw-ups, which are closely associated with graffiti art vandalism. The piece and the character are probably also considered as art due to the invested time and effort, in order to produce these larger paintings. It takes more time to create a large-scale painting, such as a piece or character (see for example the largest character in Figure J.144, p. 734; Figure F.63p. 696), in comparison to the smaller, quickly executed tags and throw-ups (Figure 4.201). The piece, in Figure J.26

⁸⁶⁴ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*; Jacobson, "The International Dictionary of Aerosol Art."; Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*; Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*.

⁸⁶⁵ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*; Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*.

(p. 727; see also the Figure 2.25, p. 105), has a width of 387 cm and a height of 174 cm. The graffiti artist MILE09 produced this particular work in around 180 minutes (3 hours).⁸⁶⁶ Nevertheless, a longer production time does not necessarily disqualify the tag or the throw-up of the possession of artistic merits, as eastern Chinese and Japanese calligraphy is created with fast, controlled brush strokes and is still considered high art.⁸⁶⁷ It is rather the statement, the purpose of tags and throw-ups, which makes it an illegal, anti-social statement. It is the act of disobedience to the established social rules, which disqualifies the tag and throw-up as an artwork.

The results additionally showed that the dimensions of an average piece were 473 cm in width by 194 cm in height. The width of pieces mostly ranged between 300 cm and 700 cm and the height ranged between 150 cm and 250 cm, as is depicted in the graph in Figure 4.202. Values above and below this spread seem to be rather outstanding cases. To make a comparison, the average size of a piece is in a broader sense similar to the size of a personal car. This can be exemplified in the instance of one of the best-sold cars worldwide– the Volkswagen Beetle. This car measures over 400 cm in width and around 150 cm in height (Figure J.269, p. 743). This comparison of the dimensionality of an average piece to the size of a personal car is quite an adequate illustration, as the car measurements are performed in a similar way, as I did in this present study. The pieces were measured, as are the measured specifications of cars, from the most extreme horizontal and vertical points (see page 225). This instance is used to better anchor the proportionality of pieces in the minds of , uninitiated readers to graffiti art.

⁸⁶⁶ I was physically present during the production of the piece, since the beginning until the end. The work was produced in September 2008 and was documented by media reporters too. This graffiti art work is also reproduced in the book: Teh, *Graffiti K1*.

⁸⁶⁷ For interesting examples of graffiti art as of a form of urban calligraphy see the publication: Mai et al., *Writing: Urban Calligraphy and Beyond*.

In Figure 4.202 also of interest are the values of heights of pieces, because the heights are relatively constant. The overall minimum height in the research sample was 70 cm (Figure J.191, p. 737) and the maximum was 272 cm (Figure J.88, p. 731). However, the overall minimum value of width was 157 cm (Figure J.217, p. 739) in contrast to the maximum value of 1,045cm (Figure J.77, p. 730). The higher consistency of the height in pieces has a simple and practical reasoning: physical limitations of the human body, and relates to anthropometry. Pieces are rather longish, because the graffiti artists produce their works while standing with their feet on the ground.⁸⁶⁸ The graffiti artists' hands can reach only as far and high as the graffiti artists can stretch their bodies as is indirectly indicated in Figure 4.201. These observations also explain the rather longish shape of a piece, with the average width and height ratio of 2.448, whereby the ratios of pieces ranged commonly in between 1.6 to 3.3. Nevertheless, sizes of graffiti art works are in some cases limited by the surface they are produced on. The smallest tag, throw-up, character and piece (Figure J.59; Figure J.204; Figure J.205; Figure J.191) were all produced at locations, where the architectural structure did not allow, in terms of height, a larger scale. However, the graffiti artists evidently wanted to produce their graffiti art works at these locations and therefore they reduced the height of their graffiti art works accordingly to the surfaces, but maintained the longish ratio of their tag (1.696), throw-up (1.980), piece (3.257) and a squarer like ratio of the character (0.980).

Besides anthropometrical limitations, I see an historical reasoning behind the determined average size of a graffiti art piece. As was highlighted in earlier sections of this thesis, graffiti art evolved on the subway trains in New York City (see page 115).⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶⁸ Graffiti artists use occasionally ladders to reach for higher grounds, but it is rather exceptional then common.

⁸⁶⁹ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*; Chalfant et al., "Style Wars."; Cooper et al., *Subway Art*; Miller, "Aerosol Kingdom: The Indigenous Culture of New York Subway Painters"; Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*; Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

Early evolutionary stages took place especially on the New York City Transit Authorities' (MTA) subway cars of the type R-33.⁸⁷⁰ The R-33 subway cars were approximately 1,514 cm wide and the doors had a height of 189 cm.⁸⁷¹ The first pieces occurred on these trains between 1971-1972.⁸⁷² These earliest pieces were commonly placed by graffiti artists on the 'panels' beneath the subway cars' windows and in between the doors. The distance between two doors was 521 cm.⁸⁷³ This indicates that the approximate size of the earliest pieces ever produced was around 500 cm in width and 120 cm in height.⁸⁷⁴ In 1972 graffiti artists, from New York City, started to paint larger pieces on the sides of subway cars: top-to-bottom. To fill up the over 1,500 cm exterior width of the side of a subway car, graffiti artists producing top-to-bottom pieces often teamed up with one or two other graffiti artists.⁸⁷⁵ This teaming up leads to the conclusion that the early top-to-bottom pieces were around 500cm wide and 200cm high, if three graffiti artists teamed up. What does this say about the current sizes of graffiti art works 40 years later? I suggest that the graffiti art forms tag, piece, throw-up and character established on the sides of the subway cars in New York City and from there they spread in the 1980s around the globe (see chapter 2.0.1 Historical Dissemination of Graffiti Art, especially page 48).⁸⁷⁶ Graffiti artists in other global areas copied the established models of the graffiti art forms from New York City and

⁸⁷⁰ The New York City subway train type R-33 was identified on the web site NYCSUBWAY (NYC Subway resources, 2013) based up on comparison with photographic evidence from Jack Stewart's (2009) publication *Graffiti Kings*; photographs of the red trains on pages 40-63. In early 1970s 'the Transit Authority painted all the cars in the system ... silver with a broad blue stripe' in the attempt to erase graffiti art from the outsides of the subway cars (Stewart, 2009, p. 55).

⁸⁷¹ The width of the car R-33 is 49'7-7/8" feet and the height of the door is 6'2-1/2" feet: "Nyc Subway Resources: R-33," NYCSUBWAY, www.nycsubway.org/perl/caption.pl?img/cars/sheet-r33.jpg.

⁸⁷² Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

⁸⁷³ The distance between two doors on a R-33 car was 17'1" feet: "Nyc Subway Resources: R-33."

⁸⁷⁴ This conclusion is based on photographic evidence provided in Jack Stewart's (2009, pp. 60-61; 62; 65; 67; 70-73) research.

⁸⁷⁵ Historical evidence is provided again in photographs by Stewart (2009, pp. 68-69; 80-81; 136; 139; 150-151).

⁸⁷⁶ Wiese, *Graffiti Dortmund: Die Kunst Der Sachbeschädigung [Graffiti Dortmund: The Art of Damage to Property]*; Schluttenhafner et al., *Graffiti Art: Deutschland - Germany*; Chalfant et al., *Spraycan Art*.

continued the tradition.⁸⁷⁷ This imitation of the forms from New York City by overseas graffiti artists not only included the aesthetics of graffiti art works,⁸⁷⁸ but also the dimensionality of graffiti art works. This explains the similar dimensionality of pieces on walls in Greater Kuala Lumpur 40 years later after this art form evolved on the sides of subway cars in New York City (see illustrative Figure 4.203 and an original subway car from 1978 in Figure 4.204).

To summarize, I just argued that the size of a piece is influenced by anthropometrical limitations of body height and that the current average size of a piece had already been established in New York City of the first half of the 1970s, on the R-33 subway cars, which had a major influence on the dimensionality of a piece till the present day.

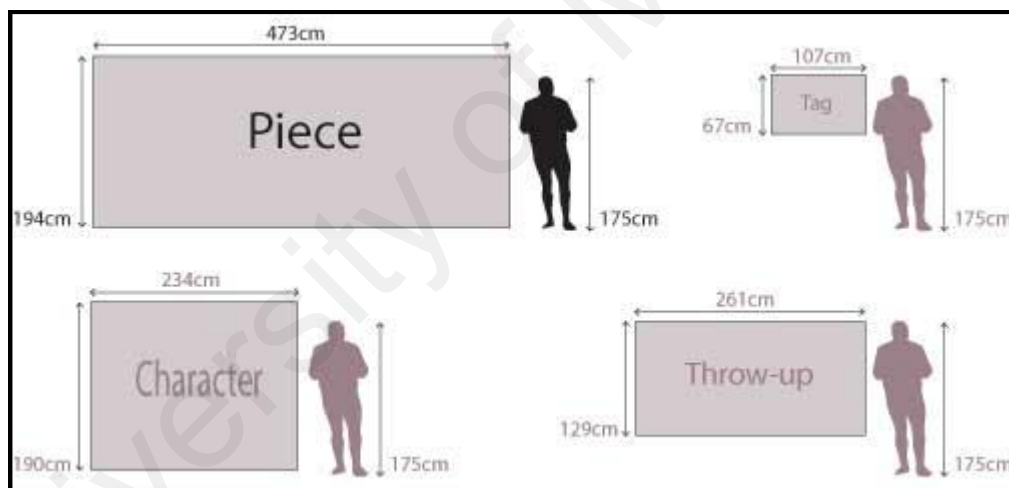


Figure 4.201 Results: Size of an average piece and supportive data in form of the average sizes of a tag, character and throw-up in comparison to the body height of a person measuring 175 cm.⁸⁷⁹

⁸⁷⁷ The dissemination of graffiti art around the globe was strongly influenced by popular media (Ferrell, 1996; Austin, 2001; Snyder, 2009; Kramer, 2009), especially by the movies Lathan, "Beatstreet."; Cooper et al., *Subway Art*; Chalfant et al., "Style Wars."; Ahearn, "Wild Style." and by the book *Subway Art* (Cooper and Chalfant, 1984).

⁸⁷⁸ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art".

⁸⁷⁹ The proportions of the sizes of graffiti art works and of the human body are in correct ratio-relations as I used a graphic software to produce the rectangular shapes in points, whereby 1point = 1centimeter.

Figure published in: Novak, "Methodology for the Measurement of Graffiti Art Works: Focus on the Piece." p. 45.

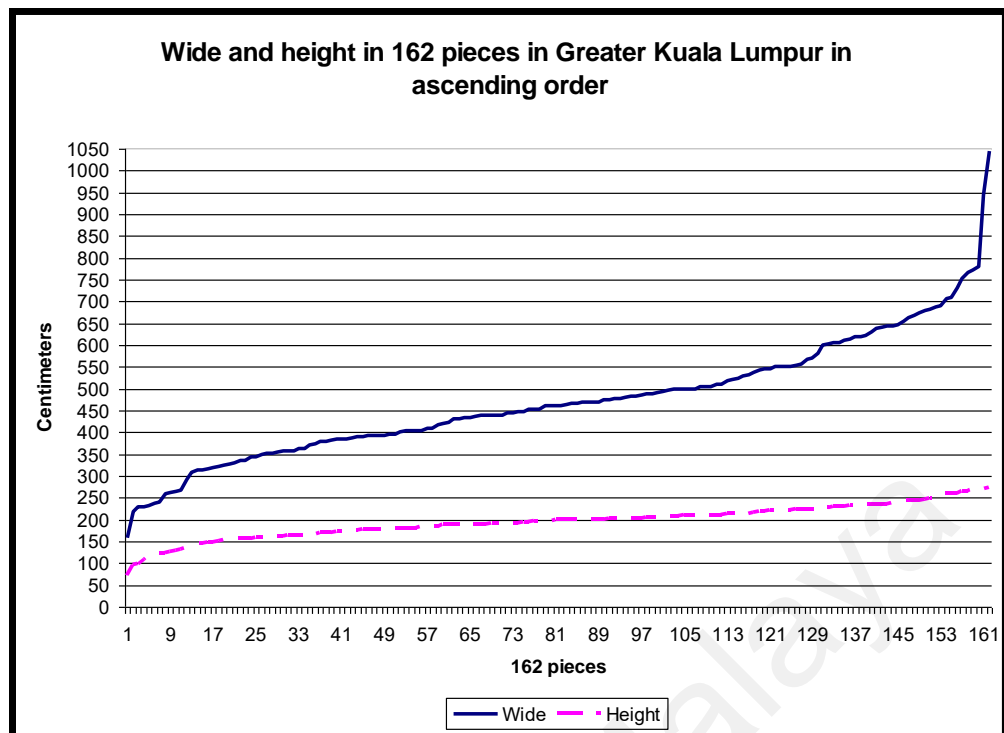


Figure 4.202 Width and height of all measured 162 graffiti art pieces in the area of Greater Kuala Lumpur in ascending order.



Figure 4.203 The results of the average width and height of the four graffiti art forms tag, piece, throw-up and character projected on an image of the New Yorker subway train. (For a tag see Figure 2.37, p. 118)



Figure 4.204 New York City subway car #7927, year 1978: OI throw-up; ALL JIVE[161] top-to-bottom; a character; IN throw-up; ALL JIVE161 tag.

Source: (Stewart, 2009) pp. 198-199: Figure (Extract) 226.

4.4.1 Average Sizes of Pieces by Individual Graffiti Artists

The research in regard to the sizes of pieces also explored the average width and height in graffiti art pieces of graffiti artists, who produced at least six (6) pieces within the research sample. In the sample were nine (N=9) graffiti artists, who created six or more pieces – DAMIS, KEAS, KIOUE, WASER [WAZER, ASWER, BEATS], KOS, BLOB [POKE], BONKS, NUKE [DESYR, SEBAT, CYPHER, BEATS] and RASH [KICKS, DOPE, PRAPS]. The results of the average width and height in the pieces of these nine graffiti artists are presented in Table 4.41 below.

Table 4.41. Results on the average sizes of pieces of individual graffiti artists. Width and height in cm.

Results:	Graffiti artist	No. of pieces	Average width	Average height
Average size of a piece by a graffiti artist, in at least six of his pieces.	<i>KOS</i>	N=6	437	202
	<i>RASH</i>	N=6	579	215
	<i>DAMIS</i>	N=7	388	183
	<i>KEAS</i>	N=7	437	175
	<i>KIOUE</i>	N=7	425	191
	<i>BLOB</i>	N=8	415	217
	<i>BONKS</i>	N=10	487	188
	<i>WASER</i>	N=12	441	187
	<i>NUKE</i>	N=16	538	209
Total	N=9	N=79	461	196

The average sizes of their pieces did not significantly differ from the overall total average size of pieces highlighted in this research – 473 cm in width, 194 cm in height. Further, the ratios of their pieces are in accord with the overall results. However, I find it attention grabbing that the graffiti artist NUKE produced 16 pieces (10%) from the overall research sample of 162 pieces. The average size of NUKE’s graffiti art works, pieces, is 538 cm in width by 209 cm in height, which is above the average. It is important to highlight that this particular graffiti artist plays a significant role, as one of the leaders, of the Malaysian graffiti art culture.⁸⁸⁰ It seems that the potential importance of a graffiti artist relates to the dimensionality of the works produced by the graffiti artist. Graffiti art is a form of expression emphasizing predominantly their own identity

⁸⁸⁰ Only the graffiti artist RASH had a larger average dimensionality in his six pieces – 579 cm in width and 215 cm in height.

by repeatedly creating the tag name of a graffiti artist. Newcomers are commonly dismissed by the subculture until they learn the unwritten rules of the graffiti art culture. Works of newcomers are commonly smaller in scale, but with acquired self-confidence, their graffiti art works grow in scale. Jack Stewart reported in his research an early top-to-bottom piece, by SAVAGE from 1972 New York, and remarked: '*It was a tentative piece, as though the writer were still afraid to go all the way from the top to the bottom of the car*'.⁸⁸¹ In between the lines it is possible to read that as confidence grows so does the size of graffiti art works. This is also illustrated with the largest piece in the research sample in Figure J.77, page 730, which was produced by the graffiti artist JABA, who is a very well-known graffiti artist on the global level (see the interview extract on page 750).⁸⁸² Further, this is also in accord with the largest piece produced in the whole world. In 1997, after one year of painting on the riverbank walls in Los Angeles, the graffiti artists SABER (born 1976) completed the so-called largest graffiti art work in the world, measuring 76 m in width by 17 m in height.⁸⁸³ SABER is amongst the most regarded graffiti artists in the graffiti art culture and the size of his piece just underlines this significant position within the graffiti art culture.

4.5 Summary

This present chapter presented and analyzed the results of this study. This present thesis aimed, besides others, to research questions with regard to the appearance of aesthetically preferable tags, throw-ups, pieces and characters. The research showed that twenty graffiti artists (ASE, ASKOE, ASWER, BIOR, BLACK FRIDAY, BOND, CARPET, ESCAPE, JABA, KEAS, KIOUE, KOS, MIRA2, MR. WANY, NEWBA,

⁸⁸¹ Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s.*, p. 77

⁸⁸² JABA's works are featured, besides others, in the publication: Walde, *Street Fonts: Graffiti Alphabets Form around the World.* p. 120.

⁸⁸³ The work measured 250 ft by 50 ft (Saber (artist), 2013). The work was removed in 2009 as discussed by: Kurt Iveson, "The Wars on Graffiti and the New Military Urbanism," *City: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action* 14, no. 1-2 (2010). Photographs of the piece are reproduced in Iveson's (2010, p. 125) research article and in Powers' (1999, p. 117) book.

NUKE, POIS, SIEK, SYCO03 and VLADIMIR518) participating in this particular study, with regards to the appearance of aesthetically preferable graffiti art works, reached a 24%–44% strong consensus. The participating graffiti artists pinpointed 28 graffiti art works as outstanding (see Table 4.2, p. 251). Further, this consensus indicated how graffiti artists approach the evaluation process about tags, throw-ups, pieces, and characters. It was discovered that the long-term proliferation of a tag name in local and global public spaces increases the graffiti artist's reputation within the graffiti art culture and the likelihood that the produced graffiti art works by such a graffiti artist will be deemed, by other graffiti artists, as aesthetically pleasing. Further, it was indicated that the evaluation of graffiti art works, by graffiti artists, strongly focused on graffiti art works with characteristic, original, individual styles. Therefore, it seems, that the most outstanding graffiti art works need to be produced by well-known graffiti art personalities, with a high proliferation of their works in local and global public spaces. An interesting additional result about graffiti art works is that throw-ups are considered in terms of their technique and appearance as the most difficult graffiti art form. Contrary, graffiti artists showed a sort of 'dislike' to the form of characters and also therefore graffiti artists prefer letterform oriented graffiti art works. This is remarkable, as the general public does not like the form of throw-ups, and partially other letterform oriented graffiti art works, but approves of characters. In addition, it was discovered that there is a transitional graffiti art form, the category of quick pieces, which is situated in between the forms throw-up and piece.

Another two objectives of this present study focused on the content of graffiti art works. It was emphasized many times, throughout this thesis, that the main subject matter of graffiti art works are diverse letterforms oriented compositions. These compositions focus generally on the tag name as the main subject matter. However, it was also illustrated that graffiti art works have likewise other types of content, besides

letterforms, with specific themes and motifs. One main problem for the aesthetic evaluation of letterform oriented graffiti art works, by non-graffiti artists, is the legibility of graffiti art works, as many letterform oriented graffiti art works tend to be illegible, to uninitiated graffiti art observers – art historians included. It was discovered that the knowledge of tag names, of currently active graffiti artists, as potential authors of graffiti art works, contributes significantly to a higher success rate in the ‘deciphering’ process of letterform oriented graffiti art works. Therefore, the process of ‘deciphering’ illegible letterform oriented graffiti art works should start with the knowledge of possible tag names, of potential authors of such works. Further, in terms of ‘deciphering’ of letterforms oriented graffiti art works, the observer should be aware of graffiti art styles, which are used for the stylization of letterforms in graffiti art works. This knowledge of graffiti art styles should include the earliest graffiti art styles used in New York City of the 1970’s, continue with the knowledge of European graffiti art styles from the 1980’s, and include the knowledge of contemporary global trends in graffiti art styles. The knowledge of as many graffiti art styles as possible is significantly helpful in the ‘deciphering’ process of illegible graffiti art works. Due to these results, it can be stated that the skill of ‘seeing’ the content of letterform-oriented graffiti art works can be acquired through practice. Nevertheless, graffiti art works also contain themes and motifs not relating to letterforms. The form of characters contains a rich source of non-letterforms oriented content, representing diverse themes and motifs. The visual content analysis of graffiti art works from GKL showed that graffiti artists in GKL often produced graffiti art works with content, which reflects the local, Malaysian culture – in the form of local arts and crafts or Islamic cultural influences. However, some themes and motifs in graffiti art works from GKL were the same as in nearly all other countries – especially themes relating to the graffiti art culture itself or dark themes featuring motifs of skulls and monsters.

Finally, this present thesis tried to suggest some possible improvements in the data gathering process about graffiti art works, with focus on the discovery of exact sizes of graffiti art works, with focus on the graffiti art form piece. This objective pursuit in this present study might be of interest in the near future, if this marginalized urban art form should be taken more seriously by some art historians. Graffiti art is a site-specific urban art form and data about graffiti art works need to be collected mainly through fieldwork. It was suggested that the data gathering process about graffiti art works could be significantly enriched with additional information about particular, focused graffiti art works, documented through photography, as photography is nearly the only means of preservation of graffiti art works. Measurements of sizes, of graffiti art works, contribute significantly to the transmission of visual information about graffiti art works. This is quite an important issue, as observers of a photograph might not be aware of the full scale of a graffiti art work. Therefore, the method for the measurement of sizes was also provided in the preceding chapter.

In summary, it can be stated that this present chapter presented valuable research results on the aesthetics of graffiti art works and on their evaluation. Further, the presented results uncovered the content of graffiti art works to uninitiated observers, including the insight into the legibility of letterform oriented graffiti art works and an insight into common content of non-letterforms oriented graffiti art works from GKL. Finally, this present chapter also provided the first results of a precise study of sizes of graffiti art works.

5 CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The objectives of the present study were achieved. My central thesis was that the graffiti art culture has its own very, unique, art criticism and aesthetics, and that it is necessary to understand the represented content within the graffiti art forms tag, throw-up, piece and character, to further evaluate this current form of, often illicit, urban visual expression. I proposed that the ‘content’ of graffiti art works – ‘(1) *subject matter*, (2) *elements and composition*, and (3) *underlying or symbolic meanings or themes*’⁸⁸⁴ – needs to be explored in all four forms of graffiti art (tags, throw-ups, pieces and characters), as only all these four forms of graffiti art form together the urban phenomenon known as ‘graffiti art’, or as ‘Writing’. Therefore, the four subchapters of the fourth chapter of this present thesis researched evaluational processes and aesthetical preferences of graffiti artists, the content of letterform and non-letterform oriented graffiti art works and the exact sizes of graffiti art works.

I aimed to provide, to uninitiated graffiti art readers, insights into the often ‘hidden’ content of graffiti art works. These objectives of the present study were met (see pp. 58-118; 237-436) and this present research, focusing on graffiti art works, could potentially add to the body of academic research on this contemporary global urban phenomenon. The thesis is, more or less, descriptive as were the studies conducted by the researchers Craig Castleman and Jack Stewart.⁸⁸⁵ Theoreticians might profit from this present research and make their own conclusions about the graffiti art phenomenon.

To conduct this present study, I used traditional research methods, and also newly constructed ones. Some might prove advantageous to other researchers as well. The

⁸⁸⁴ Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Art*. p. 98.

⁸⁸⁵ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*; Castleman, "'Getting Up": Subway Graffiti in New York"; Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978"; Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

major contribution of this present study is the focus on graffiti art works from the urban area of Greater Kuala Lumpur since any major research has yet to be conducted, even though graffiti art has been present in Malaysia for 15 years. Therefore, the content of the present thesis is unique and original, especially in relation to Malaysia, but the present thesis is also original in comparison to research conducted until the present day in Western countries, as the Malaysian graffiti art culture is unique.

To conclude, the four set research questions of this present study (p. 19) throughout the thesis were answered, as indicated in the subsequent subsections.

5.0.1 Evaluation and Aesthetical Preferences of Graffiti Artists with regards to Graffiti Art Works

This present thesis disclosed how graffiti artists evaluate graffiti art works. The research showed that a positive evaluation of graffiti art works, by other graffiti artists, is significantly influenced by the proliferation of a particular 'tag name', of a graffiti artist, in public spaces – on a local and global scale. If a graffiti artist's graffiti art works are widely spread in local, national and global geographical areas,⁸⁸⁶ the evaluation of these graffiti art works, by other graffiti artists, will probably be more positive, as the results of the present thesis have suggested. The placement, the production of graffiti art works in 'spots' deemed as attractive, visible or even daring might heighten the possibility of positive evaluation.⁸⁸⁷ Secondly, the present study showed that graffiti artists evaluate graffiti art works based on the originality of individual style, which was used for the stylization of a graffiti art work. Aesthetical preferences of twenty graffiti artists disclosed that letterform oriented graffiti art works by internationally well-known graffiti artists were often selected as aesthetically preferable. This came as a slight

⁸⁸⁶ Virtual space of the internet and other mass media also help to diffuse graffiti art works of graffiti artists and they too significantly contribute to the rise in status of a graffiti artist within the graffiti art culture

⁸⁸⁷ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 48.

surprise, as it was expected that graffiti artists rather prefer graffiti art works in original, individual stylizations than graffiti art works produced simply by internationally well-known graffiti artists. However, this result has also indicated that the participants in this present research, as experts, were familiar with the portfolio of graffiti art works of these internationally well-known graffiti artists and with their creative potential.

The investigation, with regards to the evaluation of graffiti art works and with regards to aesthetical preferences of graffiti artists in relation to graffiti art works, was conducted based on observations, interviews and with the help of the photo elicitation method. Graffiti artists reached a consensus about 28 graffiti art works and indicated some reasons, direct and indirect, leading to their consensus.

These present findings expand, especially the former studies of Craig Castleman, Jack Stewart and Ivor Miller, who researched the beginnings of the graffiti art culture on the subway system trains' in New York City of the 1970's and early 1980's.⁸⁸⁸ However, the current findings are based on graffiti art works produced in contemporary Southeast Asian Malaysia and these graffiti art works discussed here were produced by local and international graffiti artists. Also the interviewed graffiti artists for the present study were not only Malaysians, but also of other nationalities, indicating that graffiti art in the last decades has become a worldwide phenomenon. Graffiti art works discussed in this present study were produced on various mobile or static surfaces, legally, illicitly, under patronage or by self-financing these works. This current situation with regards to the graffiti art culture is very different than 30-40 years ago, when Castleman, Stewart and Miller conducted their studies, as graffiti artists back then produced their graffiti art works primarily in New York City on the sites of subway

⁸⁸⁸ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*; Castleman, "'Getting Up': Subway Graffiti in New York"; Miller, "Aerosol Kingdom: The Indigenous Culture of New York Subway Painters"; Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978"; Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

trains and even stole the spray paints used for the production of such graffiti art works.⁸⁸⁹ The present findings also supported the accuracy of the *Spot theory*.⁸⁹⁰ This theory 'is not intended as a thoroughgoing theoretical model of graffiti [art]',⁸⁹¹ but proven to be applicable to other topics linked to graffiti art, as this theory is derived from day to day practice of participants in the graffiti art culture.

5.0.2 Approaches to Legibility of Letterform-oriented Graffiti Art Works

The present research suggested how to approach illegible letterform oriented graffiti art works, to 'decipher' successfully such works. It was illustrated that the legibility of letterform oriented graffiti art works depends on the knowledge of graffiti art styles, in which graffiti artists stylize letterforms of the Latin alphabet, on the knowledge of the graffiti artists' individual 'tag names', and that the 'deciphering' success rate of illegible letterform oriented graffiti art works is higher if the observer can rely on connoisseurship. In addition, the present study on the legibility of letterform oriented graffiti art works described important elements visually enhancing and expending letterforms, represented in graffiti art works. The conducted legibility research experiment showed that tags are of significant help, if they are present in pieces, to heighten the 'legibility' of the 'camouflaged' letterforms 'hidden' within pieces.

The descriptive research part concerning the legibility of graffiti art works was conducted based on the constructed visual catalogue of graffiti art works form GKL (p. 503). Many important elements and techniques used for the construction of letterform oriented graffiti art works were descriptively introduced and exemplified. The

⁸⁸⁹ Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*; Castleman, "'Getting Up': Subway Graffiti in New York"; Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978"; Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*.

⁸⁹⁰ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory."

⁸⁹¹ Ibid. p. 49.

experimental part concerning the legibility of 20 graffiti art works (pieces) was based on the constructed legibility research experiment. In total twelve Czech graffiti artists participated in the legibility research experiment.⁸⁹² Further, observations and interviews were used as an additional source for the gathering of data on the legibility of letterform oriented graffiti art works.

These current findings expand the general knowledge about the ‘real’ letterform oriented content of graffiti art works and Jack Stewart’s research about the aesthetics of graffiti art in New York city of the 1970’s.⁸⁹³ Indirectly this present study might also expand Margo Thompson’s research, as she examined the issues surrounding the non-recognition of early New Yorker graffiti artists, by the art world. This present study enables uninitiated researchers in graffiti art and critics to possibly gain an insight into the anatomy of the often-illegible graffiti art works, especially to the form of pieces favored by graffiti artists. However, foremost in this present research, is the legibility of letterforms in graffiti art works, expanding the first of Lisa Gottlieb’s 13 facets, ‘*legibility*’, in her graffiti art styles classification system.⁸⁹⁴

5.0.3 Content of Graffiti Art Works besides Letterforms

The present study analyzed and exemplified what content graffiti art works do have in Malaysia besides letterforms. The performed visual content analysis of, generally, non-letterforms oriented graffiti art works was focusing mainly on characters and showed that there are some typical local, Malaysian, themes and motifs, present in graffiti art works, produced by Malaysian graffiti artists in GKL. Such presence of ‘Malaysian’ content in graffiti art works is very pleasing to observe, as it reflects the fairly positive and unconflictual attitude of a segment of Malaysian graffiti artists,

⁸⁹² The legibility research experiment needs to be understood as a research in the discipline of visual arts.

⁸⁹³ Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978".

⁸⁹⁴ Gottlieb, "Applying Panofsky's Theories of Iconographical Analysis to Graffiti Art: Implications for Access to Images of Non-Representational/Abstract Art"; Gottlieb, *Graffiti Art Styles: A Classification System and Theoretical Analysis*.

towards the Malaysian culture and society. Further, such content is original. The applied visual content analysis, and the presentation of results, especially emphasized the introduction of such locally anchored themes and motifs. The local content present in graffiti art works from GKL represents a partial reflection of the Malaysian culture and society. Contrary, the present study also illustrated that there are themes and motifs in Malaysian graffiti art works, that represent the quite common content of non-letterforms oriented graffiti art works on a global level. Such globally present content is then often expressed through themes and motifs relating to the 'dark' and 'graffiti art' thematic. Furthermore, it was indicated that the content of graffiti art works also relates to the purpose of a graffiti art work. Some graffiti art works, inspired by the shadow play thematic, were intended as instruments leading towards a more positive perception of the general Malaysian public towards graffiti artists and towards their graffiti art works. It was further shown that the random looking graffiti art works, produced by the graffiti artist THEY, have a deeper meaning once an observer is in the state to understand such meaning. Finally it was displayed that the purpose of graffiti art works with the Gaza War thematic (2008–2009) aimed to appeal to the general public's consciousness and the content of these graffiti art works intended to draw attention towards a humanitarian crisis taking place in the Middle East.

The visual content analysis was performed with the help of a research instrument constructed in the outset of this study and the sample for the visual analysis was containing only graffiti art works by a relatively wide selection of Malaysian graffiti artists. The conceptual framework for the construction of the research instrument was derived from the field of image access, which is part of the Information, Computer and Library sciences. graffiti art work

These reported findings above expand the research conducted by Susan A. Lundy in Oakland, USA.⁸⁹⁵ Lundy studied the practices and motivations of graffiti artists, in Oakland, with diverse cultural backgrounds, and illustrated the diverse content present in their graffiti art works – mainly in pieces. However, this present thesis is presenting original findings, as this study presents findings from a Sunni Islam dominated country and the research sample focused on a wide range of content.

5.0.4 Exact Sizes of Graffiti Art Works

The fourth research question explored the exact sizes of graffiti art works. Based on a representative sample of measurements of sizes of pieces, the average size of a piece in Malaysia was established at 473 cm in width by 194 cm in height. Supplementary measurements suggest that an average tag has the dimensionality of 107 cm in width by 67 cm in height, a throw-up 261 cm in width by 129 cm in height and character 234 cm in width by 190 cm in height.

The measurements, of exact sizes of graffiti art works, were performed in GKL with a newly constructed and proposed method. This method suggests to omit the background of a graffiti art work and focus on the collection of width and height of a graffiti art work from its established most extreme horizontal and vertical points.⁸⁹⁶ This method was constructed for this research purpose and will need to be seen if it will be embraced by other researchers too.

These reported original findings above expand the general knowledge about the graffiti art phenomenon. The exact measurements of sizes of graffiti art works contribute to the transmission of visual information about graffiti art works reproduced in photographs. This is quite an important issue, as viewers of a photograph are

⁸⁹⁵ Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers".

⁸⁹⁶ Novak, "Methodology for the Measurement of Graffiti Art Works: Focus on the Piece."

generally not aware of the full scale of a reproduced graffiti art work. Further, this characteristic of graffiti art works is significant for graffiti art prevention campaigns, for urban planners and architects, and potentially for curators, as it is of advantage to 'know' the approximate average sizes of graffiti art works to 'plan' successfully.

5.1 The Graffiti Art Dilemma of Contradictions

Graffiti artists generally produce art free of political ideology, even though such reflections in some rather exceptional cases can be traced.⁸⁹⁷ Graffiti artists produce graffiti art works in their own or their peers' interest and the produced graffiti art works generally represent reflections of their own lives.

Graffiti artists represent a real authentic contemporary avant-garde, as graffiti artists oppose the dictate of the consumer-oriented mainstream culture⁸⁹⁸ and produce art-for-art's-sake, as graffiti art works are generally self-financed, ephemeral and are exhibited freely in shared public spaces around the globe. This is a new form of free art distribution, independent of official galleries, a new form of urban '*aesthetic resistance*', opposing the '*aesthetics of authority*'⁸⁹⁹ and as a matter of fact graffiti art opposes capitalism all together, even though graffiti artists do not mind to 'sell' their specific talents and skills to produce, besides others, large scale murals for the corporate sector in order to make a living.

Graffiti art was never really embraced by the art world, as it does not give potential for real commercialization, because of graffiti art's linkage to site-specific locations

⁸⁹⁷ Of course, the act of graffiti art production in itself can be viewed as politically motivated, but the content of graffiti art works is rather non-political as the focus is on letterform creativity.

⁸⁹⁸ Novak, "Reflections of the Shadow Play Imagery in the Visual Arts: The Case of Noncommercial Graphic Designs by 'Suga52'".

⁸⁹⁹ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 48.

within the urban environment. Besides that, graffiti art is rather a threat from the perspective of governance, as it provides a platform for free, uncensored expression.⁹⁰⁰

Authentic graffiti artists are even willing to take very high risks for the sake of art-for-art's-sake, such as imprisonment and immense fines, while carrying on with their favorite art form.⁹⁰¹ The *Spot theory* highlighted that:

*Writers who repeatedly paint...high-profile spots are often the best known and most respected writers in the graffiti community—and are equally likely to be well known to the general public, the media and frustrated law enforcement agencies.*⁹⁰²

The US American graffiti artist Jason Williams (born 1977) aka REVOK, who authored the most aesthetically preferred graffiti art work in Figure 4.49 (page 273) was jailed in Los Angeles for 44 days and fined 24,000USD, in relation to the production of graffiti art works.⁹⁰³ In addition, the authors of the other four most favored graffiti art works, as determined in this present research, Danielle Bremner (born 1982) aka UTAH and Jim Clay Harper aka ETHER (Figure 4.42-Figure 4.43; Figure 4.47-Figure 4.48; pp. 271-273), were detained for graffiti art related offences in 2008 by the US American law enforcement.⁹⁰⁴ Further:

*In April 2009, Bremner [aka UTAH] was sentenced to six months at New York's Rikers Island facility and ordered to pay \$10,000 in restitution to the city's Metropolitan Transit Authority. After her release from Rikers, she served another six months in a Boston prison for similar offenses and was released in January.*⁹⁰⁵

⁹⁰⁰ Lundy, "Aerosol Activists: Practices and Motivations of Oakland's Political Graffiti Writers".

⁹⁰¹ Schluttenhafner et al., *Graffiti Art: Deutschland - Germany*; Stewart, "Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978"; Stewart, *Graffiti Kings: New York City Mass Transit Art of the 1970s*; Dennis Romero, "Revok, Famed L.A. Graffiti Artist, Arrested at Lax, Held on \$320,000 Bail," in *LA Weekly Blogs*, (LA Weekly, 2011a); Dennis Romero, "Revok: How a Street Artist Ended up with Higher Bail Amount Than Alleged Rapists, Molesters " in *LA Weekly Blogs*, (LA Weekly, 2011b); Matthew Newton, "Art Crime: Graffiti Wars," The Crime Report: Your Complete Criminal Justice Resource, <http://www.thecrimereport.org/archive/art-crime-graffiti-wars>.

⁹⁰² Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." pp. 52-53.

⁹⁰³ Dennis Romero, "Revok, Graffiti Artist Featured in Moca's 'Art in the Streets' Exhibition, out of Jail " in *LA Weekly Blogs*, (LA Weekly, 2011).

REVOK's graffiti art work in Figure 4.49 (page 272) lasted at its original location several months, but was finally whitewashed before the location of this graffiti art work completely disappeared behind a newly build hotel in 2014 (Figure 5.37-Figure 5.39).

⁹⁰⁴ Dareh Gregorian et al., "Duo Spray-Canned," *New York Post*, 22 August 2008; Newton, "Art Crime: Graffiti Wars."

⁹⁰⁵ Newton, "Art Crime: Graffiti Wars."

Here, I would like to emphasize that these confrontations with the law enforcement were all in the USA, whereby the US American government executes very hard and strict law enforcement on graffiti art related vandalism. However, as it was shown by preceding researchers this strong anti-graffiti art policy did not result in the eradication of this art form.⁹⁰⁶ Contrary, this approach only heightened the tensions between the authorities and the graffiti artists.⁹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, this example closely illustrated that three graffiti artists, REVOK, UTAH and ETHER, whose five pieces (Figure 4.42-Figure 4.43; Figure 4.47-Figure 4.49; pp. 271-273), were according to this research selected as the most favorite graffiti art works, served jail sentences and faced significant monetary fines for their graffiti art related offences. These facts illustrate a completely new sort of extreme, radical historically as yet unencountered case of art-for-art's-sake.

5.1.1 Graffiti Art: Authenticity, City Image, Public Art

In this subsection of the last chapter, I would like to point out some important practical observations that are important to me, that were made during my research and I dare to present a little additional information, for the sake of the discussion of my current research results. I suggest that the 'authenticity' of graffiti art works negatively affects the quality of life of people living in cities and that through a more tolerant approach towards graffiti art, as a possible form of public art, the quality of life in cities might slightly improve. My observations are based on a six-year long (2008–2014) continuous research of graffiti art in Greater Kuala Lumpur, and on similarly long and similarly focused observation from Prague and on an one week long, focused research of graffiti art in Istanbul, in April 2014 (Figure 5.1).

⁹⁰⁶ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*; Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005".

⁹⁰⁷ Newton, "Art Crime: Graffiti Wars."

In relation to graffiti art works, in the past, it was often argued that legally produced graffiti art works are not authentic representations of this urban culture. The art historian Margo Thompson noted, besides others, with regards to the authenticity of graffiti art works on canvas, at the outset of her study about the acceptance of graffiti art works by the art world of the 1980's:

On canvas, however, the tag [, the letterform oriented graffiti art work,] seemed less a matter of faith than a trademark reproduced on demand, and this threatened the authenticity attributed to illegal graffiti. In the studio, [graffiti] writers no longer worked only for themselves and their peers, but for a broader public. Furthermore, the paintings were evidence that they now wanted to please this audience, whereas their tags [, letterforms oriented graffiti art works,] in the subways [of New York City] aggressively claimed the space in a way that many perceived as menacing.⁹⁰⁸

Thompson pointed out that graffiti art works on canvas might not have been perceived as 'authentic' and that the graffiti artists tried to please the 'broader public', which also might not have been 'authentic' with regards to the graffiti art culture. The results of my present study showed that graffiti art nowadays is a global urban phenomenon and not a problem of New York City any more, as it was in the 1970's and early 1980's. Academic discussions will surely continue to focus on the issue of 'authenticity', but more attention could also be directed towards the practical problems of everyday life of the general public living in urban areas altered by graffiti art works.

As the results of the present study illustrated, graffiti artists make their judgments, about other graffiti art works, based on outstanding individual styles present in graffiti art works, and based on the proliferation of graffiti art works in the public/global urban spaces. This was highlighted in the preceding sections of this thesis, whereby it was illustrated that the pieces of the internationally well-known graffiti artists REVOK, UTAH and ETHER from USA were selected, along with the graffiti art works of other internationally well-known graffiti artists, such as DEMS333 from Spain (Figure 4.21,

⁹⁰⁸ Thompson, *American Graffiti*. p. 16.

p. 256; Figure 4.37, p. 269), SLACSATU from Singapore (Figure 4.22, p. 256), NASTY from France (Figure 4.24, p. 257), ROID from Britain (Figure 4.28, p. 259), ARES from France [?] (Figure 4.29, p. 260) and JABA from Colombia (Figure 4.36, p. 269), as aesthetically pleasing examples of letterform oriented graffiti art works. The prolific production of graffiti art works in public spaces significantly contributes to the rise of status of a graffiti artist within the local and global graffiti art culture. However, this rise in status of an ‘*authentic*’ graffiti artist, within the graffiti art culture, does not bring any benefits to the general public living in urban areas altered with graffiti art works. It is rather perceived as nuisance. It is questionable if whether an aggressive anti-graffiti campaigns might improve the quality of life of people living in cities.⁹⁰⁹ It could be stated that the ‘war on graffiti’ rather failed, as graffiti art has existed for 45 years in the USA and been disseminated meanwhile to the whole world (see pages 46-55).⁹¹⁰ However, it was observed that the local graffiti art culture in Malaysia, in GKL, after a decade of its existence had been slowly, partially and carefully embraced by the local art world, local public administration and by the local corporate sector. This renders the graffiti art culture in GKL ‘less authentic’, nevertheless this approach seems to be more beneficial to Malaysian citizens living in GKL and also to visiting foreign tourists, as graffiti art was partially incorporated into the ‘city image’ as a form of ‘public art’.⁹¹¹ Next I will very briefly demonstrate that the capital of the Czech Republic, Prague, has a ‘very authentic’ graffiti art culture, but that Czech citizens living in Prague rather suffer for this ‘authenticity’.

⁹⁰⁹ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*; Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory."; Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005"; Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*; Wilson et al., "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety."

⁹¹⁰ Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*; Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory."; Kramer, "A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005"; Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*; Wilson et al., "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety."

⁹¹¹ Novak, "Graffiti Art as Public Art and the City Image: A Comparison of Prague and Kuala Lumpur"; Novak et al., "Comparison between Wayang Kulit Kelantan and Graffiti Art in Greater Kuala Lumpur: Similarities and Differences."

According to the influential urban planner Kevin Lynch (1918–1989) the public image of a city seems to be formed by the overlapping ‘*of many individual images*’.⁹¹² Lynch’s influential concept, from his publication *The Image of the City*, about people’s perceptions of the city, is based on the following five element types forming the city image: *paths*, *edges*, *districts*, *nodes*, and *landmarks*.⁹¹³ People form their image of a city by using the five aforementioned element types and by associating certain images to these categories. The image of GKL is, with regards to graffiti art, rather positive. Main *paths*, *edges*, *districts*, *nodes* and *landmarks* are only ‘*reasonably*’, if at all, altered with graffiti art works (see also page 243). Further, there are no graffiti art works being produced in, on and within the public transportation system in GKL (Figure 5.2-Figure 5.6). The local, Malaysian population is not overly disturbed by graffiti art works in the city, and if by chance they are, then they tend to be rather more artistic than vandalism as was illustrated in the preceding chapters of this present study.

⁹¹² Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (The M.I.T. Press, 1990; reprint, 20). p. 46.

⁹¹³ Ibid. pp. 47-48.

In Prague, Czech Republic, the situation is quite different. It can be stated that the ‘*image of Prague*’ is suffering because of the vast amount of tags and throw-ups present in nearly all the five element types forming the city image (*paths, edges, districts, nodes, landmarks*).⁹¹⁴ The high number of tags and throw-ups form a negative perception of graffiti art in the eyes of the general public in Prague (Figure 5.7-Figure 5.22). The public is frequently confronted with the less artistic (considered vandalism) forms of graffiti art (tags and throw-ups) and rarely has the chance, the patience, to examine high quality graffiti art works, such as pieces and characters, produced by the same, skilled graffiti artists, who produced the ‘vandalism’ oriented forms of graffiti art in Prague’s public spaces.

Further, it was observed that the global metropolis Istanbul, in Turkey, is positioned somewhere between GKL and Prague. Graffiti art started to develop in Turkey at approximately the same time as in GKL and in the second half of the first decade of the third millennium the Turkish graffiti art culture started to become less anti-social, less destructive and tried to find a compromise between producing ‘authentic’ graffiti art works, and ‘not offending’ the Turkish general public.⁹¹⁵ Istanbul is relatively graffiti art free, the public transportation is rather clean (Figure 5.23), but ‘authentic’ graffiti art works ‘decorate’, especially, the main city center, the Taksim area (Figure 5.24-Figure 5.34). However, the large amount of tags and throw-ups along the İstiklal Avenue, does not somehow feel offensive or threatening. Many of the throw-ups decorating the pull-down grates of shops and house fronts are colorful and can rather be classified as pieces. Many of the graffiti art works in Figure 5.24-Figure 5.34 were produced by the Turkish graffiti art crew ‘BOK’, from Istanbul. I had the opportunity to lead a group interview with several of these graffiti artists and I learned

⁹¹⁴ See also the publication: Overstreet, *In Graffiti We Trust*.

⁹¹⁵ crew; FUNK; ÖMER.

that even though the production of graffiti art works at these locations is not allowed, it can somehow be tolerated. The result is a hip area, which reminded me of Gregory Snyder's research results from New York City.⁹¹⁶

As this present thesis introduced to its readers the evaluational process used by graffiti artists and the content of graffiti art works, the present study has also indirectly introduced the dynamics of the current global graffiti art culture. The most aesthetically preferable graffiti art work was identified as the piece by REVOK in Figure 4.49 (page 273). This piece was produced at a 'heaven spot', high above the street level in Bukit Bintang, opposite Berjaya Times Square (Figure 5.35-Figure 5.39).⁹¹⁷ It can easily be claimed that probably no one from the general public knew that the REVOK piece in Figure 5.35-Figure 5.39 was produced by the well-known graffiti artist Jason Williams aka REVOK, whose '*work was [besides others] included in Art in the Streets, an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) in Los Angeles, and Street Cred, an exhibition at the Pasadena Museum of Contemporary Art.*'⁹¹⁸ In addition, other graffiti art works, by internationally well-known graffiti artists, which were present in the urban area of GKL, and were selected as aesthetically preferable examples of graffiti art works, were probably dismissed by their audiences as 'scribbling'. Further, it is worth mentioning that the graffiti artists NASTY (Figure 4.24, p. 257) and UTAH (Figure 4.42, p. 271) both participated, besides others, in the exhibition *Le TAG au Grand Palais* at the Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées in Paris; other international graffiti artists, whose works were selected as aesthetically pleasing in this present research, also participated in other art exhibitions, as is illustrated in Table 5.1.

⁹¹⁶ Snyder, *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*.

⁹¹⁷ Ferrell et al., "Spot Theory." p. 51.

⁹¹⁸ "Past Exhibitions," Jonathan LeVine Gallery,

<http://jonathanlevinegallery.com/?method=Exhibit.ExhibitDescription&ExhibitID=6F4D47A7-F3C3-3646-2C944405F129FD92>.

It seems that it might be of interest in generally to reconsider a little, the very negative approach towards the graffiti art culture, as it was done with quite satisfying results in Malaysia. It might be of interest to introduce this art form, possibly even very briefly, into the educational curriculum; the publication *Graffiti School* is a very good teaching book.⁹¹⁹ Foremost it might be worth considering the inclusion of graffiti art works more often and officially sanctioned into the public space as public art, at major *paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks*. As graffiti art works will most probably not disappear from the city image, it might be more beneficial for people living in cities to understand these works a bit and to possibly enjoy the ‘nicer’ examples of this urban art form.

Table 5.1. Selection of group and solo exhibitions by internationally well-known graffiti artists related to the results of this present study.

Graffiti Artist:	Exhibition:	Date:
DEMS333 (born 1979)	<i>VENGANZA</i> , Celal Gallery, Paris	16 February – 16 March 2013
	<i>VNANIMVS</i> , Backside Gallery, Marseille	17 January – 21 February 2013
	<i>MURCIELAGO</i> , Vicious Gallery, Hamburg	26 May – 23 June 2012
	<i>Veneno 44</i> , Iam Gallery, Madrid	19 April – 02 June 2012
	<i>ULTRARED</i> , AF Gallery, Cologne	16 July – 10 September 2011
Rozaimie Sahbi (born 1980) aka SLACSATU	<i>Singapore Biennale</i> , Bras Basah Bugis Precinct, Singapore	26 October – 16 February 2014
	<i>Off the wall</i> , Artspace @ Helutrans, Singapore	19 – 26 November 2011
Alexandre Hildebrand (born 1974) aka NASTY	<i>Made in France</i> , GCA Gallery et Geoffroy Jossaume, Nice	14 June – 26 July 2014
	<i>URBAN HACKING Group Exhibition</i> , Midtown POP, Hong Kong	30 May – 29 June 2014
	<i>Nasty</i> , Montana Gallery, Montpellier	22 September - 24 November 2012
	<i>Made in the City</i> , Galerie Celal, Paris,	20 June – 21 July 2012
	<i>French Connection Invasion</i> , Fabien Castanier Gallery, Culver City	12 May – 24 June 2012
	<i>Nasty@KlayClub</i> , Klay, Paris	22 May – 31 July 2011
	<i>The Cream of the Crime</i> , Galerie Bailly Contemporain, Paris	09 – 25 September 2010
	<i>Graffiti Art</i> , Galerie Bailly Contemporain, Paris	25 September – 06 November 2009

⁹¹⁹ Ganter, *Graffiti School: Student Guide*.

	<i>Le TAG au Grand Palais, Le Grand Palais des Champs Elysées, Paris</i>	27 March – 03 May 2009
	<i>Nasty expose, Galerie Bailly Contemporain, Paris</i>	16 January – 14 February 2009
ROID (born 1982)	<i>More Than Ever, TopSafe, London</i>	31 May - 03 June 2012
	<i>Self Est, Kind of - Gallery, Sydney</i>	17 November 2011
	<i>Perseverance, Known Gallery, Los Angeles</i>	20 August - 12 September 2011
	<i>Kingbrown Exhibition, Kult Gallery, Singapore</i>	27 September – 18 October 2013
Didier Mathieu (born 1974) aka JABA	<i>Off the wall, Artspace @ Helutrans, Singapore</i>	19 – 26 November 2011
	<i>Overlords II, ALICE Gallery, Brussels</i>	12 October – 25 November 2006
	<i>CLAWMONEY DUETS, BOB BAR, New York</i>	24 January – 03 March 2013
Danielle Bremner (born 1982) aka UTAH	<i>THE C.O.P GUIDE TO ETIQUETTE</i>	12 August – 04 September 2011
	<i>Strychnin Gallery, Berlin</i>	
	<i>Probation Vacation, Fourth Wall Project Gallery, Boston</i>	22 – 30 January 2011
	<i>T.A.G Les lettre de noblesse, (Auction), Palais de Tokyo, Paris</i>	14 – 15 February 2010
	<i>Le TAG au Grand Palais, Le Grand Palais des Champs Elysées, Paris</i>	27 March – 03 May 2009
	<i>Probation Vacation, Fourth Wall Project Gallery, Boston</i>	22 – 30 January 2011
Jim Clay Harper aka ETHER	<i>T.A.G Les lettre de noblesse, (Auction), Palais de Tokyo, Paris</i>	14 – 15 February 2010
	<i>Art Truancy, Jonathan LeVine Gallery, New York</i>	15 May – 14 June 2014
	<i>MAD SOCIETY, Known Gallery, Los Angeles</i>	09 – 24 December 2012
Jason Williams (born 1977) aka REVOK	<i>GILGAMESH, Known Gallery, Los Angeles</i>	28 July – 11 August 2012
	<i>SCOPE International Contemporary Art Fair, Jonathan LeVine Gallery, Basel</i>	12 June – 17 June 2012
	<i>Triumph and Tragedy, Vicious Gallery, Hamburg</i>	03 December 2011 – 21 January 2012
	<i>Perseverance, Known Gallery, Los Angeles</i>	20 August - 12 September 2011
	<i>Street Cred, Pasadena Museum of Contemporary Art, Pasadena</i>	15 May – 04 September 2011
	<i>Art in the Streets, Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) in Los Angeles</i>	17 April – 08 August 2011

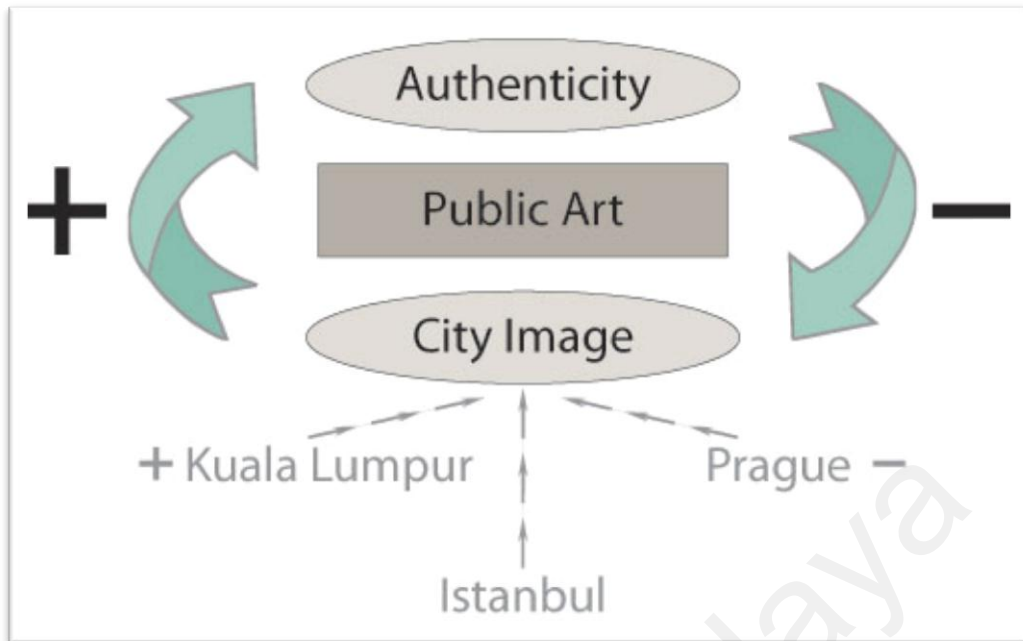


Figure 5.1 Graffiti Art: Authenticity, Public art, City Image (Kuala Lumpur, Istanbul, Prague).



Figure 5.2 Official signage in LRT stations: No smoking; No eating and drinking; No littering; No chewing gum; throwing; No inflammable substances; No trespassing. [No mentioning of graffiti.]
10 April 2013, Bangsar LRT station, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 5.3 The interior of a LRT station.
10 April 2013, Bangsar LRT station, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 5.4 The interior of a LRT station.
10 April 2013, Bangsar LRT station, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 5.5 The interior of a LRT train.
20 March 2010, LRT train, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 5.6 The interior of a LRT train.
10 April 2013, Bangsar LRT station, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 5.7 Various marker tags on doors and spray paint tags on walls.
16 March 2009, Prague.



Figure 5.8 Various marker and spray paint tags on exterior of buildings.
30 April 2009, Holešovice, Prague.



Figure 5.9 Enourmous T2B and IKS tags near the Florenc metro station.
06 May 2009, Těšnov, Prague.



Figure 5.10 Various marker and spray paint tags on doors.
27 October 2012, Vinohrady, Prague.



Figure 5.11 Various marker and spray paint tags on the exterior of a closed down shop.
27 October 2012, Vinohrady, Prague.



Figure 5.12 EKI!, POST and GEE throw-ups.
17 February 2014, Tešnov, Prague.



Figure 5.13 OSIE throw-up.
17 February 2014, Tesnov, Prague.



Figure 5.14 Marker and spray paint tags on door.
27 October 2012, Prague.



Figure 5.15 Various marker tags in a tramway carriage.
27 October 2012, Prague.



Figure 5.16 Various marker tags on door.
17 February 2014, Prague.



Figure 5.17 Various tags on a barrier.
17 February 2014, Prague.



Figure 5.18 A spray painted tag and throw-up on door.
17 February 2014, Prague.



Figure 5.19 Various tags on door.
17 February 2014, Prague.



Figure 5.20 Various marker tags on door.
17 February 2014, Prague.



Figure 5.21 Various tags on a barrier.
17 February 2014, Prague.



Figure 5.22 Interior of the tramway carriage no. 7191 featuring various marker tags.
20 February 2014, Prague.



Figure 5.23 Clean metro train no. 1126 Y.
28 April 2014, Aksaray, Istanbul.



Figure 5.24 Quick piece by LEO [BAD OF KINGS = BOK crew].
30 April 2014, Galata tower area, Istanbul.



Figure 5.25 Quick pieces by LEO! and HURE. [BOK crew.]
30 April 2014, Galata tower area, Istanbul.



Figure 5.26 Quick piece by HERO!. [BOK crew.]
30 April 2014, Galata tower area, Istanbul.



Figure 5.27 Piece by PUNCH. [BOK crew.]
30 April 2014, Tünel station area, Istanbul.



Figure 5.28 Piece by PUNCH. [BOK crew.]
30 April 2014, Tünel station area, Istanbul.



Figure 5.29 Piece by LEO! and a throw-up by PHEO. [BOK crew.]
30 April 2014, Tünel station area, Istanbul.



Figure 5.30 A very large, continuous, probably sanctioned, mural production by OMERIA and other graffiti artists.
30 April 2014, İstiklal Avenue (Tünel station area), Istanbul.



Figure 5.31 Quick pieces by DSK, PUNCH, RASH, MECK and character.
30 April 2014, İstiklal Avenue (Tünel station area), Istanbul.



Figure 5.32 Quick pieces by DSK, ZONE, OHB and KAOS.
30 April 2014, side street of İstiklal Avenue, Istanbul.



Figure 5.33 Quick piece PUNCH. [BOK crew.]
30 April 2014, İstiklal Avenue, Istanbul.



Figure 5.34 Quick pieces by SCR and TFB.
30 April 2014, İstiklal Avenue, Istanbul.



Figure 5.35 THA-B, REVOK and KIOUE while finishing their masterpieces.
September 2008, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur. (Courtesy THA-B, 2008.)



Figure 5.36 REVOK while finishing his masterpiece.
September 2008, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur. (Courtesy THA-B, 2008.)



Figure 5.37 THA-B's, REVOK's and KIOUE's pieces on a roof edge.
10 September 2008, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 5.38 THA-B's, REVOK's and KIOUE's pieces underneath a newly attached mega billboard.
13 January 2009, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 5.39 THA-B's, REVOK's and KIOUE's pieces underneath a newly attached mega billboard.
13 January 2009, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.

5.2 Recommendations for Further Research

Further research on graffiti art might focus on the possible inclusion of graffiti art into public space. As this present research highlighted, graffiti art is a site-specific art form linked to urban space. It would be worth exploring possible options and locations for the inclusion of graffiti art works into the public space. This is of interest for further research, as graffiti art works seem to persist in the city image even though public administration consistently attempts to eradicate this illicit form of public expression. This possible future research direction can be led by the final sentence in Joe Austin's study *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*:

“What kind of city do people want to live in?”⁹²⁰

A very important research, with regards to the Malaysian graffiti art culture, would be relating to sociological reasons leading to the current state of affairs in Greater Kuala Lumpur. I find this would be a highly interesting research area. Such a research should

⁹²⁰ First used by Jamie Bryan in “Ganga Graffiti: The Legacy of STAY HIGH 149,” *High Times* (August 1996): 52; cited by: Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*. p. 271.

be conducted at best by a local researcher fluent in the locally spoken languages – Bahasa Malaysia, English and possibly in some of the other main dialects spoken in Malaysia by the Chinese and Indian minorities. The focus should explore the reasons leading up to relatively low amounts of vandalism related graffiti art works in Greater Kuala Lumpur.

Another possible research direction might be the exploration of the possibility of the inclusion of graffiti art into the art historical canon and into the educational curriculum. This is a very courageous future research recommendation, as it implies the legalization of vandalism and its glorification. However, as contemporary trends show, graffiti art attracts more and more attention not only from researchers all over the world, but also from the art world and the general public. Times change.

The previous possible future research direction also relates to the formulation of a general graffiti art theory. This topic would probably also represent a very interesting research area.

Lastly, it is of interest to research other concepts, besides the ‘war on graffiti’, representing possible solutions to the graffiti art problem confronting all urban areas around the world. Every country is confronted nowadays with graffiti art and every country and city applies slightly different approaches to this issue. The problem solution in Singapore, Sao Paolo and Yogyakarta are very different. Comparative studies on different geographical locations might yield very interesting research results.

5.3 Summary Statement of Results in: Evaluation, Legibility, Content and Sizes of Graffiti Art Works in Greater Kuala Lumpur

This subchapter presents a concise summary of results of this present thesis, in bullet form, with regards to the four research questions.

❖ Evaluation of Graffiti Art Works by Graffiti Artists

1) Graffiti artists evaluate graffiti art works:

(a) Based on proliferation of a graffiti artist's tag name in local, national and global public spaces.

(b) Based on an original individual style of a graffiti artist.

2) Aesthetical preferences of graffiti artists with regards to tags, throw-ups, pieces and characters:

(a) Twenty participating graffiti artists reached a 24–44% consensus on aesthetically preferable examples of tags, throw-ups, pieces and characters. The participants pinpointed a total of 28 graffiti art works as aesthetically pleasing.

(i) The research showed that the form of tags represents, in the perception of graffiti artists, the basic building block of graffiti art.

(ii) The research showed that the form of throw-ups represents, in the perception of graffiti artists, the technically and stylistically most difficult form of graffiti art.

i. Further, the research showed that there is a transitional category of 'quick pieces' in between the graffiti art form throw-up and tag.

(iii) The research showed that the form of pieces represents, in the perception of graffiti artists, the most elaborate and cherished form of graffiti art.

(iv) The research showed that the form of characters represents, in the perception of graffiti artists, the most disliked and unpopular form of graffiti art, generally produced to please the public.

❖ **Approach to the Legibility of Letterform-oriented Graffiti Art Works**

(a) Acquiring knowledge about graffiti art styles, used for the stylization of letterform-oriented graffiti art works.

(i) The present research introduced and described some stylistic approaches and single elements used by graffiti artists for ‘camouflaging’ the text in letterform oriented-graffiti art works.

(b) Acquiring knowledge about graffiti artists’ individual ‘tag names’, as these ‘tag names’, nicknames, help to possibly identify the subject matter of a graffiti art work.

(i) The ‘deciphering’ success rate of illegible letterform oriented graffiti art works is higher if the observer can rely on connoisseurship.

(c) The letterform oriented content of pieces, representing the ‘tag name’ of a graffiti artist as its subject matter, becomes easier to ‘decipher’ if the author signed his piece with his tag name.

❖ **Content of Non-letterforms-oriented Graffiti Art Works**

(a) This present study disclosed themes and motifs present in Malaysian graffiti art works, reflecting the local Malaysian culture – in the form of local arts and crafts or in the form of Islamic cultural reflections.

- (i) Purpose of such themes and motifs, incorporated into the graffiti art works, was to please and to communicate to the Malaysian general public.
 - (ii) Different purposes of graffiti art works were illustrated based on four graffiti art works of the graffiti artist THEY and demonstrated a deeper, hidden meaning of these works.
 - (iii) Graffiti art works with the Gaza War thematic had the purpose to draw attention towards a humanitarian crisis.
- (b) This present study also disclosed themes and motifs present in Malaysian graffiti art works, which are repeated on a global scale in graffiti art works – represented, especially, by the ‘dark’ and ‘graffiti art’ thematic.

❖ **Exact Average Size of a Graffiti Art Work**

- (a) The present research discovered that an average piece has the dimensionality of 474 cm in width by 193 cm in height.
 - (i) The present research suggests that an average tag has the dimensionality of 107 cm in width by 67 cm in height.
 - (ii) The present research suggests that an average throw-up has the dimensionality of 261 cm in width by 129 cm in height.
 - (iii) The present research suggests that an average character has the dimensionality of 234 cm in width by 190 cm in height.
- (b) A method for the measurement of sizes of graffiti art works was proposed.

5.4 Summary

The objectives of the present study were to provide, to the uninitiated reader in graffiti art, insights into the often ‘hidden’ content of graffiti art works. These objectives of the present study were met. The major contribution of this study is the focus on graffiti art works from the urban area of Greater Kuala Lumpur, as any major research in Malaysia has yet to be conducted, even though graffiti art has been present in this Southeast Asian country for 15 years. The research findings expand, in particular, the former studies of Craig Castleman, Jack Stewart, Ivor Miller, Lisa Gottlieb, Susan A. Lundy and also general knowledge about graffiti art works.

The conducted research suggests that graffiti art represents a completely new sort of an extreme, radical historically not yet encountered case of art-for-art’s-sake. It is additionally proposed that ‘authenticity’ of graffiti art works alters negatively the quality of life of people living in cities and that through a more tolerant approach towards graffiti art the quality of life in cities might slightly improve.

Finally, it is proposed to possibly explore, in another future research, the question: “What kind of city do people want to live in?”

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- Novak, David. "Graffiti Art as Public Art and the City Image: A Comparison of Prague and Kuala Lumpur." Paper presented at the Contemp Art '14, Istanbul, Turkey, 24-26 April 2014.

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APPENDIX A: Visual Catalogue (VI-CA)

App. A: 1.0 Introduction to VI-CA

For the construction of the Visual Catalogue (VI-CA) I used photographs from my own research archive. Several dozens of images were provided in the year 2009 by the graffiti artists SUGA52 and SONA.

The black-and-white appearance of tags and throw-ups in Figure A.33-Figure A.336 was achieved with the software program Adobe Photoshop. Classical photographs of tags and throw-ups (see Figure A.1-Figure A.2) were adjusted with the ‘Contrast’ function, until only lines remained. The images were adjusted in this form, because tags and throw-ups are strictly line-oriented forms of graffiti art works and the placement of these tags and throw-ups should have not been obvious to the participants of this research.

With regards to characters and pieces, it needs to be stated that the size of the images is rather small. However, larger size of the samples would have significantly increased the size of this thesis, which was not desirable. Nevertheless, even the smaller sizes of images were sufficient for the conduct of the present research.

To provide additional information about some of the graffiti art works contained in the VI-CA see Figure A.1-Figure A.32.

List of Abbreviations in VI-CA

XYZ..... Author
[XYZ] Name of the probable author
<05>..... Year [2005]
? Unknown or approximate



Figure A.1 The original photograph for the VI-CA Figure A.144, Figure A.301 and Figure A.365.
26 July 2008, Central Market, KL.



Figure A.2 The original photograph for the VI-CA Figure A.302.
13 December 2008, Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure A.3 Graffiti art jam: Meeting of Character 2008. Photo 1/8. See: Figure A.451.
02 November 2008, Damai, KL.



Figure A.4 Graffiti art jam: Meeting of Character 2008. Photo 2/8. See: Figure A.711.
02 November 2008, Damai, KL.



Figure A.5 Graffiti art jam: Meeting of Character 2008. Photo 3/8. See: Figure A.444, Figure A.445.
02 November 2008, Damai, KL.



Figure A.6 Graffiti art jam: Meeting of Character 2008. Photo 4/8. See: Figure A.449, Figure A.450.
02 November 2008, Damai, KL.



Figure A.7 Graffiti art jam: Meeting of Character 2008. Photo 5/8. See: Figure A.713, Figure A.714.
03 November 2008, Damai, KL.



Figure A.8 Graffiti art jam: Meeting of Character 2008. Photo 6/8. See: Figure A.712.
03 November 2008, Damai, KL.



Figure A.9 Graffiti art jam: Meeting of Character 2008. Photo 7/8. See: Figure A.452, Figure A.453
02 November 2008, Damai, KL.



Figure A.10 Graffiti at jam: Meeting of Character 2008. Photo 8/8.
03 November 2008, Damai, KL.



Figure A.11 Commercial mural by PHOBIA and KATUN at the event *Young 2010*.
10 January 2009, PWTC, KL.



Figure A.12 FONER during a graffiti art production in 2009 at Jelatek. Photo: 1/3. See: Figure A.962.
17 January 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.13 PHOBIA during a graffiti art production in 2009 at Jelatek. Photo: 2/3.
17 January 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.14 PHOBIA and KATUN trying out some skulls during a graffiti art production at Jelatek. Photo: 3/3.
17 January 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.15 CARPET producing a piece at Jelatek. Photo: 1/2.
29 January 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.16 CARPET finishing his piece in rain at Jelatek. Photo: 2/2.
29 January 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.17 TNQ30 sketching outlines for a piece. See: Figure A.969.
30 January 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.18 SIEK painting a comic speech bubble next to a character. See: Figure A.574.
30 January 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.19 CARPET producing a border line around his finished piece. See: Figure A.968.
30 January 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.20 KIOUE doing a throw-up at a canvas for the National Visual Arts Gallery canvas.
07 February 2009, Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure A.21 NUKE sketching his PW piece onto a canvas at the *Graff Jam 09* in the city center of Kuala Lumpur. 07 February 2009, Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure A.22 NENOK while painting his PW piece on a canvas. 07 February 2009, Bukit Bintang, KL.



Figure A.23 VDS preparing the concrete wall at Jelatek with emulsion paint and a roller.
11 February 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.24 MIST149 filling-in colors into his piece. To do straight lines physical balance is of importance.
11 February 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.25 VDS reaching higher grounds with a little help.
11 February 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.26 Spray paint control is necessary for every graffiti artist as shown by MIST149.
11 February 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.27 VDS while performing a last check of his work before the piece is signed with a tag.
11 February 2009, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.28 VDS producing a throw-up at the rear side of the Melawati wall.
11 February 2009, Melawati, GKL.



Figure A.29 A little song message from VDS next to his throw-up: 'OBLADEE, OBLADAA, LIFE GOES ON...' 11 February 2009, Melawati, GKL.



Figure A.30 A graffiti art jam organized by the *Style2Burn* community. Photo 1/2. 20 March 2010, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.31 A graffiti art jam organized by the *Style2Burn* community. Photo 2/2. See: Figure A.926-Figure A.930.
20 March 2010, Jelatek, KL.



Figure A.32 Graffiti art going big in the 'GREATER KL' piece by RASH. Width: 538 cm; height: 300 cm.
25 February 2012, Pasar Seni, KL.

App. A: 1.1 Samples of 153 Tags



Figure A.33 18?



Figure A.34 3SIXTY [360].



Figure A.35 3SIXTY [360].



Figure A.36 AIGOR.



Figure A.37 ANOKAYER.



Figure A.38 APEK [DREW].



Figure A.39 ARES*.



Figure A.40 ASKOE.



Figure A.41 ASWER <2x>.



Figure A.42 BALY.

BEAT ME IF YOU CAN!!!

Figure A.43 BEAT ME IF YOU CAN! [KIOUE].



Figure A.44 BICHUN [BIBICHUN].



Figure A.45 BLOB.

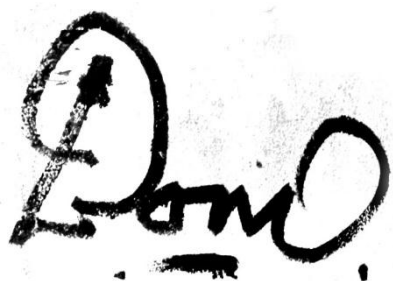


Figure A.46 BOND.



Figure A.47 BONKS.



Figure A.48 BONKS2 [BONKS].



Figure A.49 BONKS2 [BONKS].



Figure A.50 BONKS.



Figure A.51 BONKS.



Figure A.52 BONKS.



Figure A.53 BUDEAN.



Figure A.54 BURP.



Figure A.55 CARPET.



Figure A.56 CARPET.



Figure A.57 CARPET.



Figure A.58 CARPET.



Figure A.59 CHAER.



Figure A.60 CLOAK.

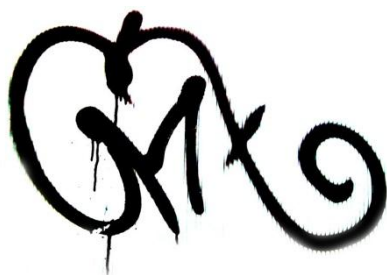


Figure A.61 CMX [SNOZZE].



Figure A.62 COMMUNICATE BY VISUAL [KIOUE].



Figure A.63 CUZ.



Figure A.64 DAMIS.

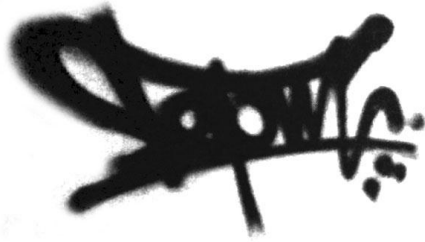


Figure A.65 DATOM.



Figure A.66 DEM OWSUM [NUKE].



Figure A.67 DEMS ONE. [DEMS333]



Figure A.68 DESYR [NUKE].



Figure A.69 DMP [DIGITAL MALAYSIA PROJECT].



Figure A.70 DODGE.



Figure A.71 DON2.



Figure A.72 THE DREW [DREW].



Figure A.73 DTC.



Figure A.74 DWANE.



Figure A.75 ESOK.



Figure A.76 GHOST ONE [DREW].



Figure A.77 HEKY.



Figure A.78 HELL YEA WE ARE WANTED [THA-B].



Figure A.79 JABA.



Figure A.80 JABA UB [JABA].



Figure A.81 JABSTAR [JABA].



Figure A.82 JUON.



Figure A.83 JYROE [JIROE].

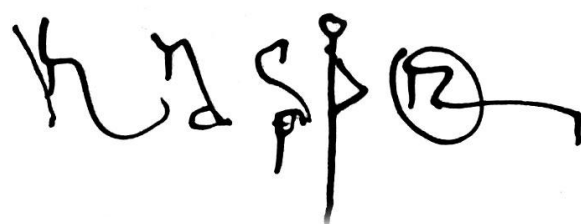


Figure A.84 KASIO.



Figure A.85 KATUN 08 [KATUN].



Figure A.86 KATUN.



Figure A.87 KC.



Figure A.88 KEAS.



Figure A.89 KEAS.



Figure A.90 THE KIOUE [KIOUE].



Figure A.91 KIOUE 07 [KIOUE].



Figure A.92 KOS.



Figure A.93 KURN.



Figure A.94 KURT.



Figure A.95 LOVER WALL [KIOUE].



Figure A.96 LUXE.



Figure A.97 MALAYSIA SINGAPORE [CARPET].



Figure A.98 MALAYSIAN LARGEST TAGGIN [KIOUE].



Figure A.99 MEDEA.



Figure A.100 MEDEA.



Figure A.101 MILE09.



Figure A.102 MIST149.



Figure A.103 NASEL [NAS-EL].

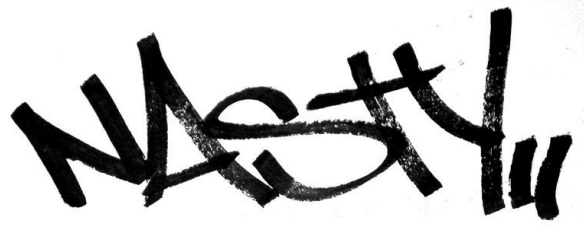


Figure A.104 NASTY.



Figure A.105 NBA.



Figure A.106 NEDONER [NED].



Figure A.107 NENOK 08 [NENOK].



Figure A.108 NENOK 1 NRL [NENOK].



Figure A.109 NENOK.



Figure A.110 NENOK 2008 [NENOK].



Figure A.111 NUKE.



Figure A.112 NUKE.



Figure A.113 NUKE PWTC [NUKE].



Figure A.114 NUKE THE BOMB [NUKE].



Figure A.115 OKID AUTO.



Figure A.116 OTHER.



Figure A.117 PELAT.



Figure A.118 PELAT.



Figure A.119 PHANTOM.



Figure A.120 PHOBIA KLIK [CARPET].



Figure A.121 PHOBIA.



Figure A.122 PHOBIA.

..PHBKLKZNC..

..CARPET..	..SLACSATU..	..CLOG02..
..PHOBIA..	..SANDMAN..	..SEN..
..KATUN..	..DATOM..	..NAMEXONE..
..SIEK	..CRASONE..	
..SOPEY..	..CYDE02..	
..SHAKE..	..CRAZ1..	
..KAY..	..ESPY..	
	..GORONE..	

Figure A.123 PHBKLKZNC [CARPET]:
CARPET, PHOBIA, KATUN, SIEK, SOPEY, SHAKE, KAY;
SLACSATU, SANDMAN, DATOM, CRASONE, CYDE02, CRAZ1, ESPY, GORONE;
CLOG02, SEN, NAMEXONE.

PHOBIA KLIK DISTRICT

Figure A.124 PHOBIA KLIK DISTRICT [CARPET].

POOSAD 08

Figure A.125 POOSAD 08 [POOSAD].

Signature of Najib Tun Razak

Figure A.126 Signature of Najib Tun Razak.

..PHK..
OAC..
N.

Figure A.127 PWC OAC [NUKE].

PWTC

Figure A.128 PWTC [NENOK].



Figure A.129 QUALITY CONTROL [CARPET].



Figure A.130 RASHE [RASH].



Figure A.131 RESCUE.



Figure A.132 ROCKET THOSE CHICKS! [CARPET].



Figure A.133 REVOK MSK [REVOK].

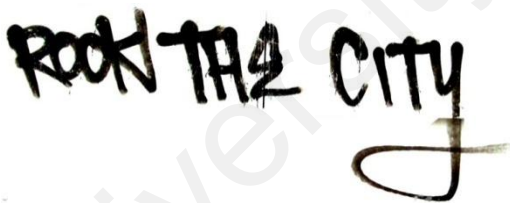


Figure A.134 ROCK THE CITY [BONKS].



Figure A.135 ROIDS [ROID].



Figure A.136 SAINT.



Figure A.137 SANDMAN ZNC [SANDMAN].



Figure A.138 SANDMAN! [CARPET].



Figure A.139 SCIEN 123 [SCIEN].



Figure A.140 SHAKE 2010 [SHAKE].



Figure A.141 SIEK.



Figure A.142 SIETO.



Figure A.143 SIXTHIE.



Figure A.144 SKORE.



Figure A.145 SLACSATU.



Figure A.146 SLAC.



Figure A.147 SOME70.



Figure A.148 SOME70's [SOME70].



Figure A.149 NAC SOME70 [SOME70].



Figure A.150 SOME ONE 07 [SOME70].



Figure A.151 SONA.



Figure A.152 SONA.



Figure A.153 SONAPEK SWS [SONA].



Figure A.154 SONAONE [SONA].



Figure A.155 SOPEY.



Figure A.156 SOPEY.



Figure A.157 SPARKLING [PHOBIA].



Figure A.158 SPK [SPOKE].



Figure A.159 STACK.



Figure A.160 STYL3 [ASWER].



Figure A.161 SUBWAY.



Figure A.162 STREET ART RULE [KIOUE].



Figure A.163 STC [MADNUZ].



Figure A.164 STC [MADNUZ].



Figure A.165 SUGA 52 SWS [SHIEKO].



Figure A.166 SYCO [SYCO03].



Figure A.167 TAGGIN LOVER [KIOUE].



Figure A.168 THA-B.



Figure A.169 THE SUPER SUNDAY [KIOUE].



Figure A.170 THEY 2008 [THEY].



Figure A.171 THEY TLG [THEY].



Figure A.172 THE KIOUE©; THE SUPER SUNDAY; MALAYSIAN [KIOUE].



Figure A.173 TRASH.



Figure A.174 TWIGGY.



Figure A.175 UTAH ETHER.



Figure A.176 VDS.



Figure A.177 VDSOUL SWS 2009 [VDS].



Figure A.178 VDSOUL SWS [VDS].



Figure A.179 VIOLENT.



Figure A.180 WACK CREW [NUKE].



Figure A.181 WARN.



Figure A.182 WAZER [ASWER].



Figure A.183 WE ERASING TOYS [NENOK].



Figure A.184 WE DON'T LISTEN TO THE SYSTEM [THA-B].



Figure A.185 YAK YAK.



Figure A.186 ZIDS.

App. A: 1.2 Samples of 150 Throw-ups

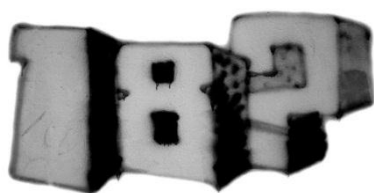


Figure A.187 182.



Figure A.188 149 [MIST149].

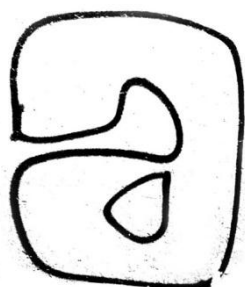


Figure A.189 A [ANOKAYER].



Figure A.190 ACE.



Figure A.191 AKEY.



Figure A.192 AR! [ARES].



Figure A.193 ARES!.



Figure A.194 ARES.



Figure A.195 ARES!.



Figure A.196 AROE.



Figure A.197 ASK [ASKOE].



Figure A.198 ASWER.



Figure A.199 BABES.



Figure A.200 BBC [FLIN].

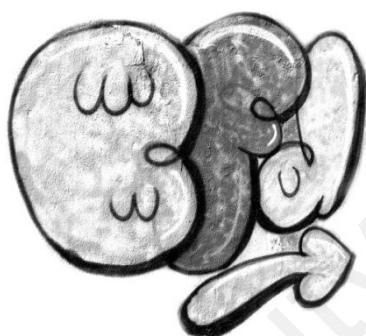


Figure A.201 BFD.



Figure A.202 BFD.



Figure A.203 "BLOB".



Figure A.204 B! [BLOB].



Figure A.205 BLOB!.

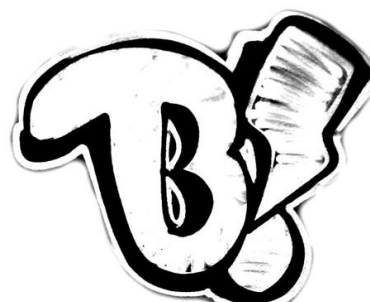


Figure A.206 B! [BLOB].

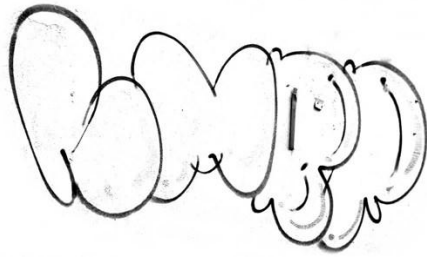


Figure A.207 HMBR [HOMELESS BOMBER] [by KURT].

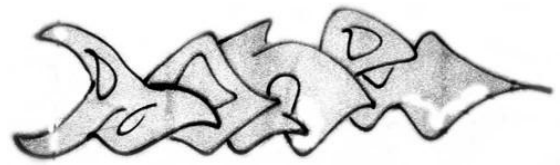


Figure A.208 BONE.



Figure A.209 BONE.



Figure A.210 BONE.



Figure A.211 B! [BONKERS].

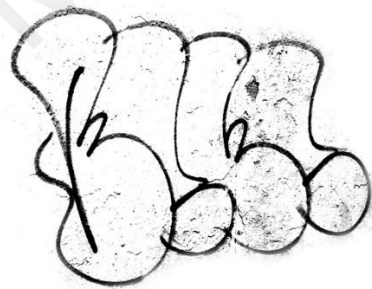


Figure A.212 B! B! [BONKERS].



Figure A.213 BK [BONKS].



Figure A.214 B [BONKS].

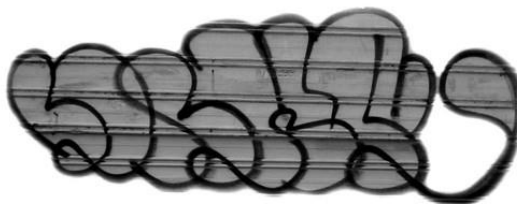


Figure A.215 BONKS.



Figure A.216 BONKS.



Figure A.217 BONKS.

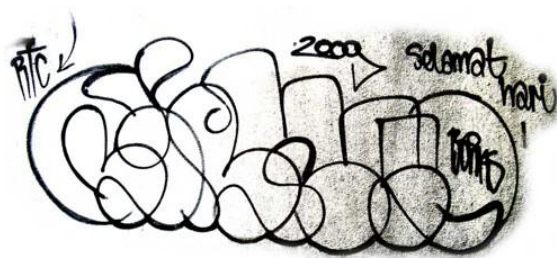


Figure A.218 BONKS.

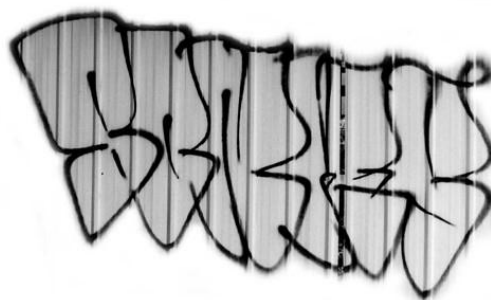


Figure A.219 BONKS.



Figure A.220 BONK [BONKS2].



Figure A.221 BONKS2. [BONKS2].



Figure A.222 BONKS2.

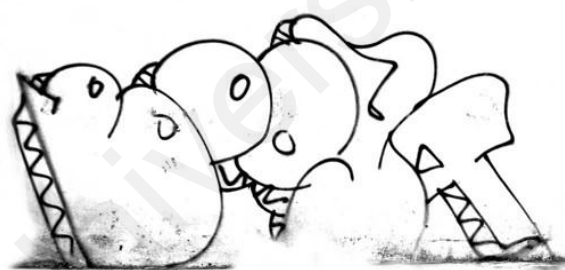


Figure A.223 BOOYA.



Figure A.224 [BOTAX].

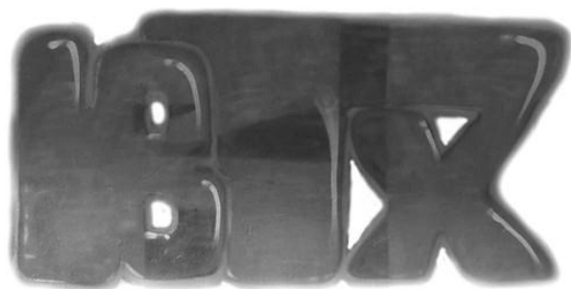


Figure A.225 BTX [BOTAX].



Figure A.226 BYS [FONER].



Figure A.227 CARPE [CARPET].



Figure A.228 CARPET.



Figure A.229 CARPET.



Figure A.230 SIEK.



Figure A.231 COUN [???].

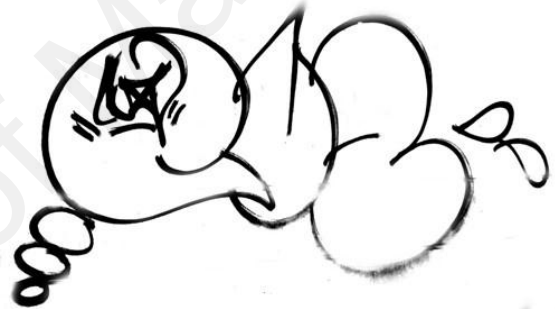


Figure A.232 CUZ.



Figure A.233 CYDE [CYDE02] [???].



Figure A.234 DAMIS.

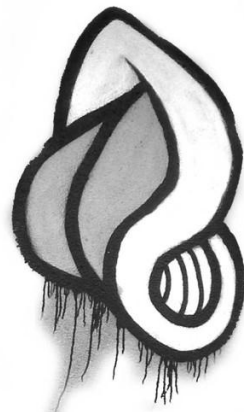


Figure A.235 [DAMIS].



Figure A.236. DEAZ.



Figure A.237 DREAM [XEME].



Figure A.238 DREW.



Figure A.239 [DREW].



Figure A.240 D'SIDE! [SOME70 ??].



Figure A.241 DTM [DATOM].

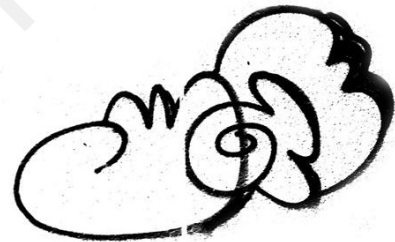


Figure A.242 DWANE.



Figure A.243 DWANE.



Figure A.244 DWANE.



Figure A.245 ETHER.

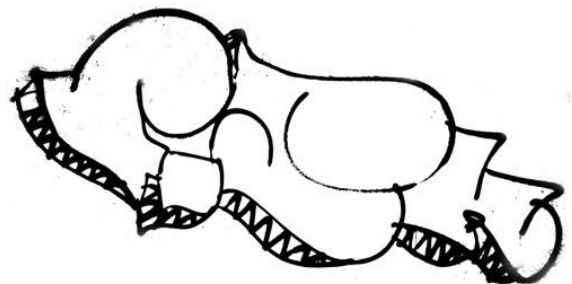


Figure A.246 FISH.

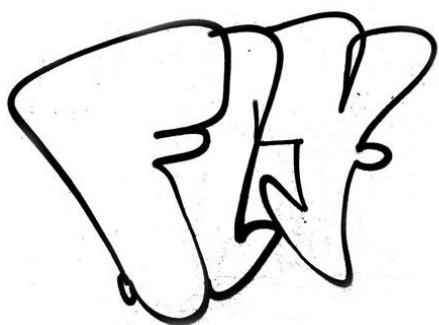


Figure A.247 FLY.



Figure A.248 FCKU [by ??].



Figure A.249 FYC [by ??].



Figure A.250 HEMO [HEMOS].



Figure A.251 HO [HEMOS] [??].



Figure A.252 HOZOY.



Figure A.253 JIROE.

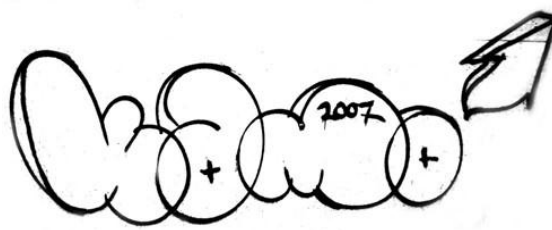


Figure A.254 KAMO.



Figure A.255 KC [by ??].



Figure A.256 KIOUE.



Figure A.257 KIOUE.

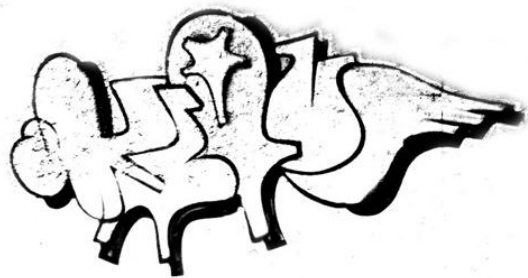


Figure A.258 KIOUE.



Figure A.259 KIOUE.

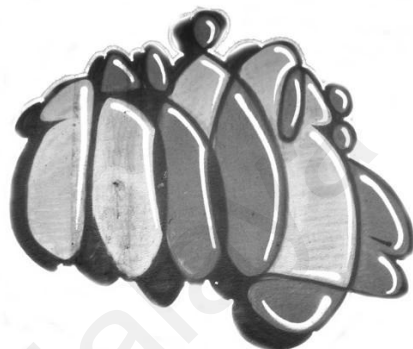


Figure A.260 KIOUE.



Figure A.261 KN [KATUN].



Figure A.262 KOS.



Figure A.263 KOS.



Figure A.264 KOSIK [KOS].



Figure A.265 KURT.



Figure A.266 LAU.



Figure A.267 LIES.



Figure A.268 MEDEA.



Figure A.269 MEDEA.



Figure A.270 MEDEA.



Figure A.271 MILE09.

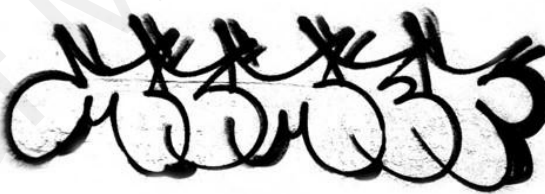


Figure A.272 MIMER.

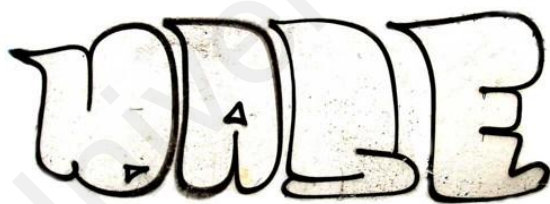


Figure A.273 NASEL [NAS-EL].



Figure A.274 NED.



Figure A.275 NUKE.



Figure A.276 NUKE.



Figure A.277 OFN [MIST149] [ONE FOUR NINE].

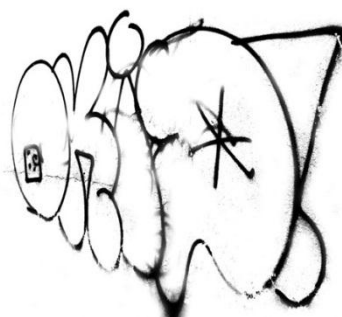


Figure A.278 OKID!.



Figure A.279 [ORKIBAL].



Figure A.280 [ORKIBAL].

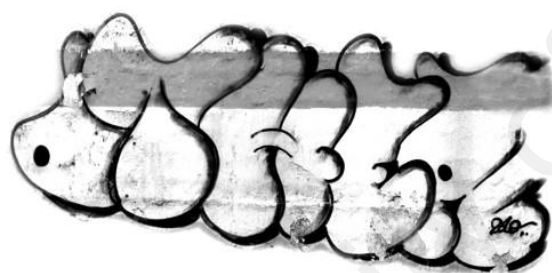


Figure A.281 OTHER.



Figure A.282 PHB PHOBIA KLIK. [PHOBIA]



Figure A.283 PLT [PELAT].

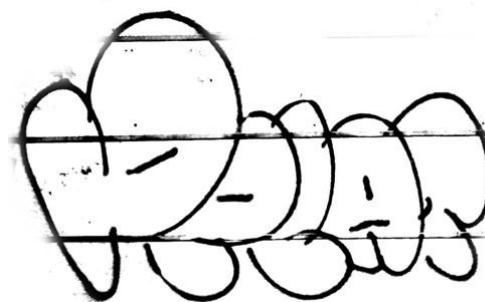


Figure A.284 PELAT.

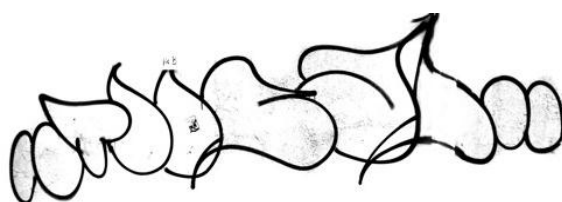


Figure A.285 POOSAD.

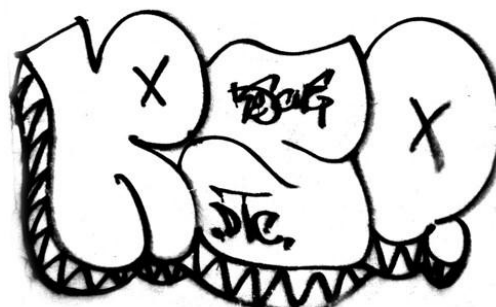


Figure A.286 RSO [RESCUE]. [??]



Figure A.287 REESE [REEZE79].



Figure A.288 RESK [AKEY].



Figure A.289 RO! [ROID].



Figure A.290 ROID!.

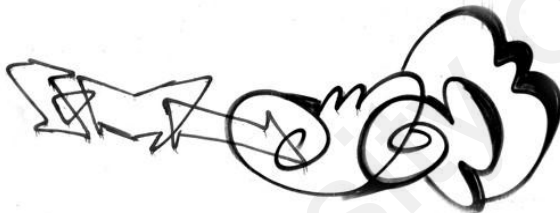


Figure A.291 SMN [SANDMAN]; DWANE.

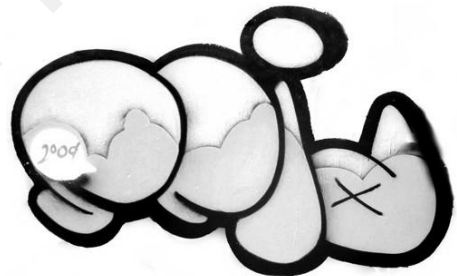


Figure A.292 SCID.



Figure A.293 SCOPE.



Figure A.294 [Excrement by Khalil]. [??]



Figure A.295 SLAC.



Figure A.296 SNOZZE.



Figure A.297 [SNOZZE].



Figure A.298 [VLT; SNOZZE].



Figure A.299 SNOZZE.



Figure A.300 S [SOME70].



Figure A.301 SOME [SOME70].



Figure A.302 SOME70.



Figure A.303 SOME [SOME70].



Figure A.304 SOME [SOME70].

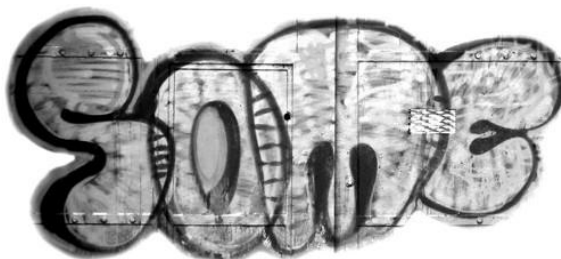


Figure A.305 SOME [SOME70].



Figure A.306 SONA.



Figure A.307 SONA; VDS.



Figure A.308 SOPEY.

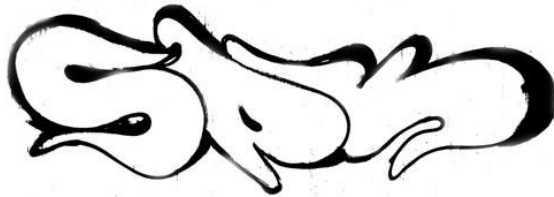


Figure A.309 SPK [SPOKE].



Figure A.310 SPOKE.



Figure A.311 STC. [by ??]



Figure A.312 STYL3 [ASWER].



Figure A.313 SUGA [SUGA52].



Figure A.314 THA-B.



Figure A.315 THA-B.



Figure A.316 THEY.



Figure A.317 [THEY].



Figure A.318 [THEY].



Figure A.319 TRASH.



Figure A.320 TRASH.



Figure A.321 TRASH!.



Figure A.322 TRASH.



Figure A.323 TSS [by KIOUE].



Figure A.324 TSS [by KIOUE].



Figure A.325 UTAH.



Figure A.326 VECTOR.

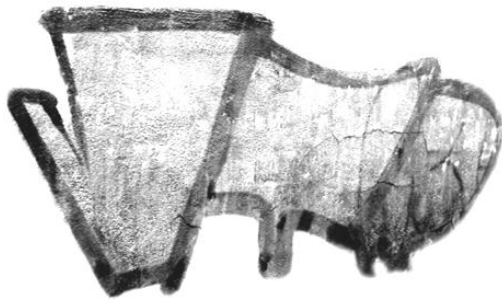


Figure A.327 VTR [VECTOR].



Figure A.328 VISE [KATUN].

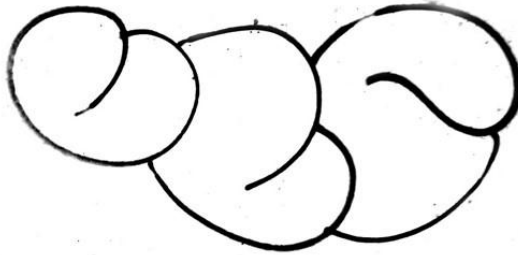


Figure A.329 VLT [VIOLENT].



Figure A.330 VLT [VIOLENT].



Figure A.331 [VIOLENT].



Figure A.332 VIOLENT.



Figure A.333 VOD [by SOME70].



Figure A.334 WHIP.

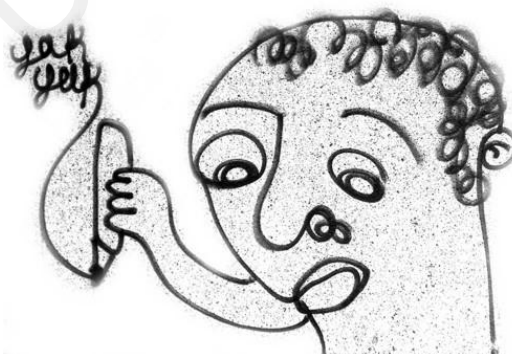


Figure A.335 YAK YAK.



Figure A.336 ZANY.

App. A: 1.3 Samples of 250 Characters



Figure A.337 ORKIBAL.

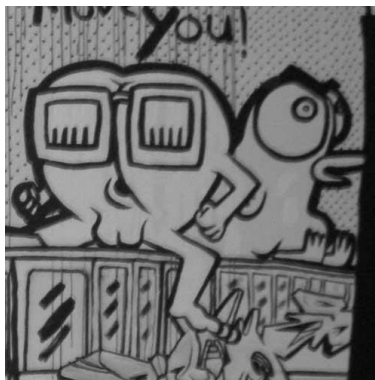


Figure A.338 THA-B.



Figure A.339 KIOUE.

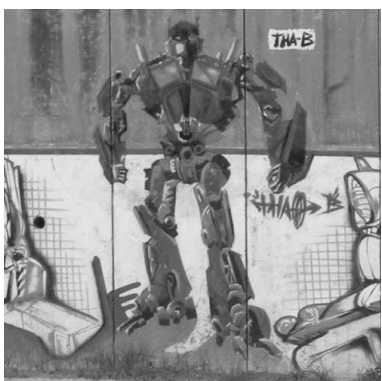


Figure A.340 THA-B.

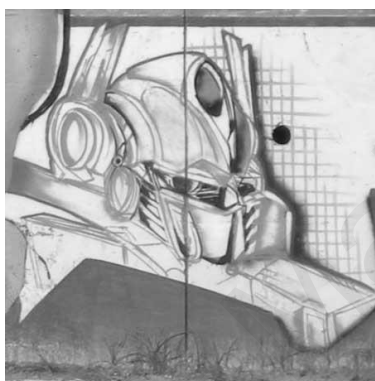


Figure A.341 A80S [?].



Figure A.342 A80S [?].



Figure A.343 THEY.



Figure A.344 THA-B.



Figure A.345 KIOUE.



Figure A.346 ANOKAYER.



Figure A.347 SNOZZE; JOJO.



Figure A.348 SNOZZE.



Figure A.349 ANOKAYER.



Figure A.350 KIOUE.



Figure A.351 BIBICHUN.



Figure A.352 JUON.



Figure A.353 THEY.



Figure A.354 THEY.



Figure A.355 KIOUE.



Figure A.356 KIOUE, THA-B.



Figure A.357 SNOZZE.



Figure A.358 BIBICHUN.



Figure A.359 KIOUE.



Figure A.360 THA-B.



Figure A.361 KATUN.



Figure A.362 THA-B.



Figure A.363 MOGOT.



Figure A.364 PATOX [ANOKAYER].



Figure A.365 SKORE.



Figure A.366 PHOBIA.



Figure A.367 PHOBIA.



Figure A.368 BURP.



Figure A.369 A80S.



Figure A.370 VLT.



Figure A.371 SNOZZE.



Figure A.372 VLT.



Figure A.373 NAS-EL or ISH ??.



Figure A.374 ISH or NAS-EL ??.



Figure A.375 ANOKAYER. <08>



Figure A.376 VLT. <08>



Figure A.377 THEY. <08>



Figure A.378 JUON.



Figure A.379 BIBICHUN.



Figure A.380 KIOUE.



Figure A.381 BALY. <08>



Figure A.382 BURP. <08>



Figure A.383 NAS-EL. <08>



Figure A.384 KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.385 THA-B ?? <08>.



Figure A.386 CARPET <08>.



Figure A.387 CARPET <08>.

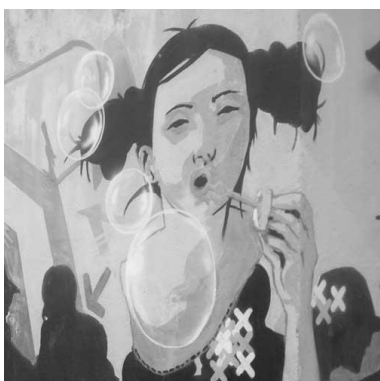


Figure A.388 PHOBIA ? <07?>



Figure A.389 PHOBIA. ? <07?>



Figure A.390 SIEK. <07?>



Figure A.391 MEDEA. [??] <07?>



Figure A.392 MEDEA. <07?>



Figure A.393 DATOM. <08?>



Figure A.394 SANDMAN. <08>

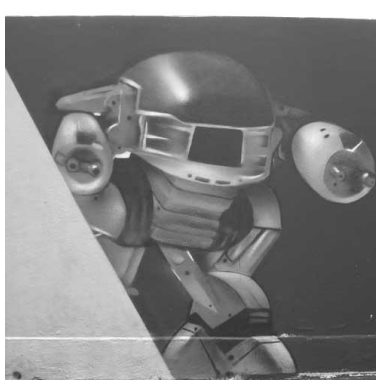


Figure A.395 KAY. <08>



Figure A.396 KATUN. <08>



Figure A.397 CARPET. <08>



Figure A.398 BONE. <08?>

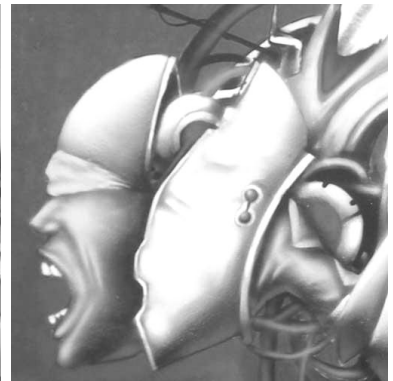


Figure A.399 KATUN. <08>



Figure A.400 KATUN. <08>



Figure A.401 CARPET. <08>



Figure A.402 BIBICHUN. <08?>



Figure A.403 TSS. ?? <07?>



Figure A.404 TSS. ?? <07?>



Figure A.405 TSS. ?? <07?>



Figure A.406 PHOBIA. ?<07?>



Figure A.407 PHBKLLK ?? <07?>



Figure A.408 PHBKLLK ?? <07?>



Figure A.409 PHBKLLK ?? .<07?>



Figure A.410 PHOBIA. <07?>



Figure A.411 PHOBIA. <07?>



Figure A.412 PHBKLLK ?? .<07?>



Figure A.413 KATUN ?. <07?>



Figure A.414 SIEK. ?? <07?>



Figure A.415 KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.416 NAS-EL. <08>



Figure A.417 KIOUE; BALY. <08>



Figure A.418 BARBIE; THA-B. <08>



Figure A.419 SLACSATU. <08>



Figure A.420 KATUN. <08>



Figure A.421 CARPET. <08>

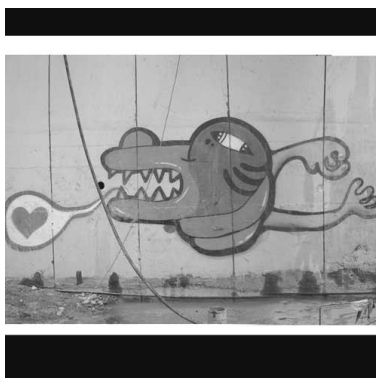


Figure A.422 JOJO. ??<08>

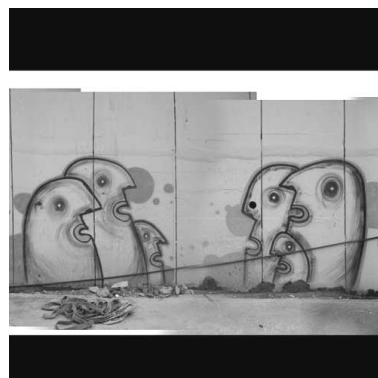


Figure A.423 YAK YAK. ?<08>



Figure A.424 POOSAD. <08>



Figure A.425 KIOUE. <08>

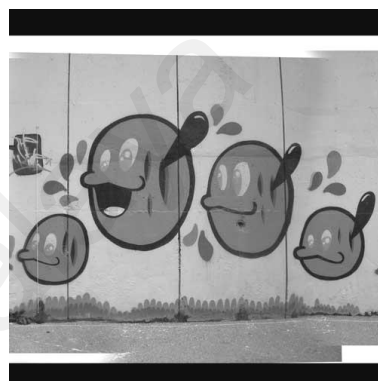


Figure A.426 VLT. <08>



Figure A.427 BALY. <08>



Figure A.428 SKORE. <08>



Figure A.429 SNOZZE. <08>



Figure A.430 MOGOT. <08>



Figure A.431 KIOUE; VLT; BARBIE.
<08>



Figure A.432 VLT. <08>



Figure A.433 MOGOT. <08>



Figure A.434 BIBICHUN. <08>



Figure A.435 THEY. <08>



Figure A.436 VLT. <08>



Figure A.437 MOGOT. <08>



Figure A.438 NAS-EL. ?<08>



Figure A.439 NENOK. <08>



Figure A.440 NENOK; NBA. ??<08>



Figure A.441 BIBICHUN. <08>



Figure A.442 NENOK. <08>



Figure A.443 NUKE. <08>



Figure A.444 A80S. <08>



Figure A.445 BALLY. <08>



Figure A.446 SEEKAYEM; VLT.
<08>



Figure A.447 SNOZZE. <08>



Figure A.448 THEY. <08>



Figure A.449 MOGOT. <08>



Figure A.450 SNOZZE. <08>

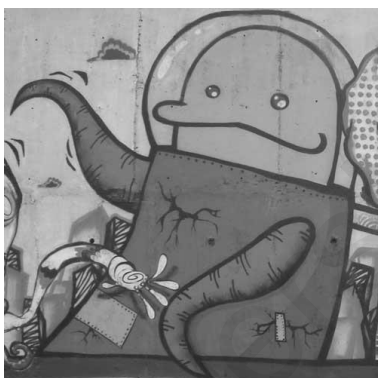


Figure A.451 VLT. <08>



Figure A.452 SEEKAYEM. <08>



Figure A.453 BIBICHUN. <08>



Figure A.454 CLOAK. <11>



Figure A.455 BLACK FRIDAY. <11>



Figure A.456 KATUN. ?<11>



Figure A.457 PHOBIA. ?<11>



Figure A.458 PHOBIA. ? <11>



Figure A.459 BGHX. ?<11>



Figure A.460 BURP. <11>



Figure A.461 SPUXX &... ?<11>



Figure A.462 BIBICHUN. <11?>

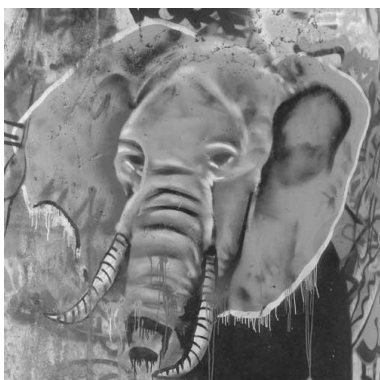


Figure A.463 SNOZZE. ?<11?>



Figure A.464 ESCAPE. <11>



Figure A.465 PAKEY. <11>



Figure A.466 BIBICHUN. <10?>



Figure A.467 DREW. <05??>



Figure A.468 DREW. <05??>



Figure A.469 SUGA52. <05??>



Figure A.470 SUGA52. <05??>

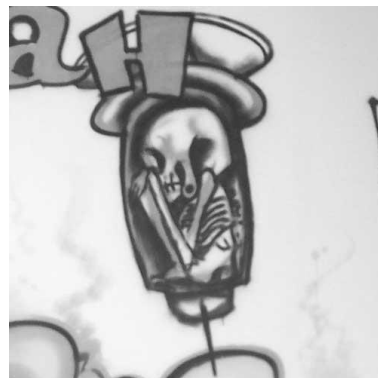


Figure A.471 SUGA52. <05??>



Figure A.472 DREW. <06>

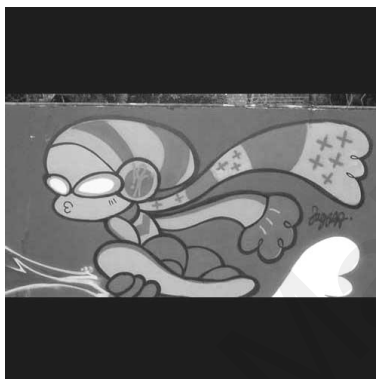


Figure A.473 SUGA52. <06??>



Figure A.474 BONE. <07??>



Figure A.475 SUGA52. <05??>



Figure A.476 SUGA52. <05??>



Figure A.477 SUGA52. <05??>

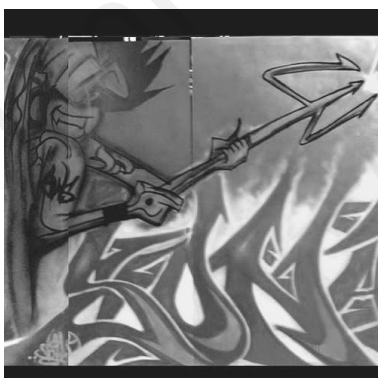


Figure A.478 SUGA52. <05??>



Figure A.479 SUGA52. <05??>



Figure A.480 SUGA52. <05??>



Figure A.481 SUGA52. <06??>



Figure A.482 SUGA52. <05??>



Figure A.483 SIXTHIE. <05??>

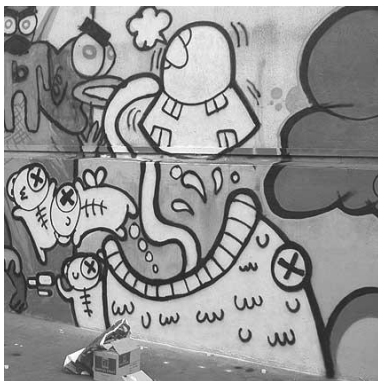


Figure A.484 ORKIBAL. <06?>



Figure A.485 THA-B. <06?>



Figure A.486 ROOTY. ?<06?>



Figure A.487 DMP. ?<06?>



Figure A.488 ??. <06?>



Figure A.489 BLOB. ??<08>



Figure A.490 KATUN. <08>



Figure A.491 SPUX. ?<08>



Figure A.492 NAS-EL. <08>



Figure A.493 BARBIE. <08>



Figure A.494 KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.495 A80S. <08>



Figure A.496 BALY. <08>



Figure A.497 MEDEA. <07?>



Figure A.498 THEY. ??<07?>



Figure A.499 PHOBIA. <04>



Figure A.500 KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.501 THA-B. <08>



Figure A.502 THA-B. <06?>

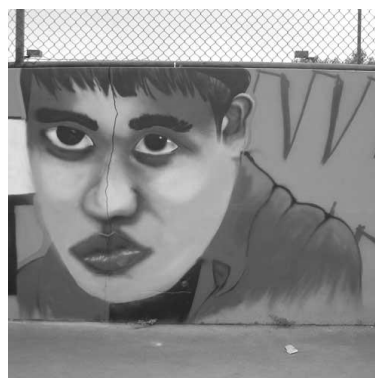


Figure A.503 NAS-EL. <08>



Figure A.504 BALY. <08>



Figure A.505 LAU. ??<08>



Figure A.506 THEY. <08>



Figure A.507 BIBICHUN. <08>



Figure A.508 KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.509 THA-B. <08>



Figure A.510 KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.511 KIOUE. <09?>



Figure A.512 KIOUE. <09?>



Figure A.513 JACE. <10?>



Figure A.514 KATUN. <09>



Figure A.515 CARPET. <09?>



Figure A.516 BIBICHUN. ?<10>



Figure A.517 BLACK FRIDAY. <10>



Figure A.518 ORKIBAL. ?<10>



Figure A.519 BIBICHUN & SNOZZE. ?<10>



Figure A.520 BIBICHUN & SNOZZE. ?<10>



Figure A.521 BIBICHUN & SNOZZE. ?<10>



Figure A.522 CRITICS06. ?<10>



Figure A.523 BURP. <10>



Figure A.524 RN. ?<10>



Figure A.525 RN. ?<10>



Figure A.526 NAS-EL. ??<10>



Figure A.527 SHAGGY. <10>



Figure A.528 JENG. <10>



Figure A.529 VLT. <10??>



Figure A.530 BIBICHUN & SNOZZE. ?<10?>



Figure A.531 BURP. <10?>



Figure A.532 BIBICHUN. <09>



Figure A.533 BIBICHUN & SNOZZE. ?<10?>



Figure A.534 ??. <09?>



Figure A.535 RN. ?<09?>



Figure A.536 RN. ?<09?>



Figure A.537 RN. ?<09?>



Figure A.538 BIBICHUN. <09?>



Figure A.539 JACE. <10?>



Figure A.540 JACE. <10?>



Figure A.541 ADOR. ?<06?>



Figure A.542 KIOUE. <10>



Figure A.543 KATUN. ?<09?>



Figure A.544 KAY. <09?>



Figure A.545 BONE. <09?>



Figure A.546 MEDEA. ?<09?>



Figure A.547 BONE ? KATUN.
<10>

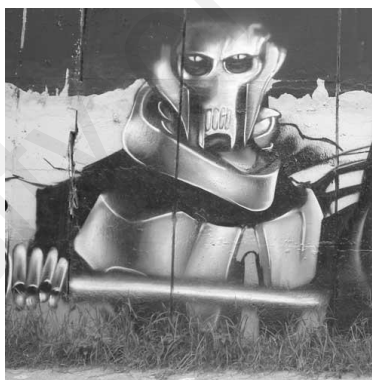


Figure A.548 BONE ? KATUN.
<10>



Figure A.549 KATUN. <09?>



Figure A.550 BONE. <10?>



Figure A.551 BONE. <10?>

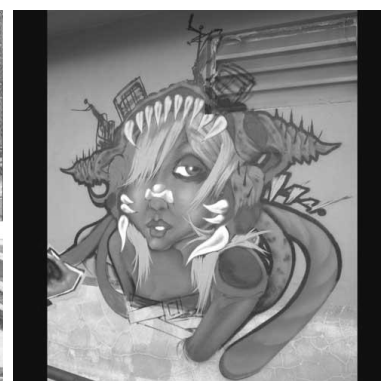


Figure A.552 KATUN. ?<10?>



Figure A.553 NENOK. <09?>



Figure A.554 BURP. ? <10>



Figure A.555 KATUN. <10>



Figure A.556 KAY. <10>



Figure A.557 CRAZ. <10>



Figure A.558 BURP. <09?>



Figure A.559 KATUN. ?<10>



Figure A.560 BIBICHUN & SNOZZE. ?<10>



Figure A.561 SNOZZE. ?<10>



Figure A.562 BUZY. <10>



Figure A.563 NBA. <10>



Figure A.564 NED ONE. <10>



Figure A.565 NBA. <10>



Figure A.566 NENOK. <10>



Figure A.567 KIOUE. <10>



Figure A.568 KIOUE. <10>



Figure A.569 KIOUE. <10>



Figure A.570 KIOUE. <10>

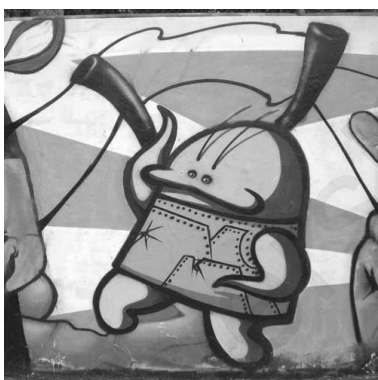


Figure A.571 VLT. <09>



Figure A.572 ESCAPE. ?<09>



Figure A.573 KAY. <09>



Figure A.574 SIEK. <09>



Figure A.575 KIOUE. <09>



Figure A.576 NAS-EL. <09>



Figure A.577 FLIP. <09>



Figure A.578 NENOK. <09?>



Figure A.579 NBA. <09?>



Figure A.580 AKES. <09?>



Figure A.581 SNOZZE. <09?>



Figure A.582 KAY. <09>



Figure A.583 KATUN. <09>



Figure A.584 KATUN. <09>



Figure A.585 SIEK. <09>



Figure A.586 NENOK. <11?>



Figure A.587 MEDEA. <07?>



Figure A.588 MEDEA. <07?>

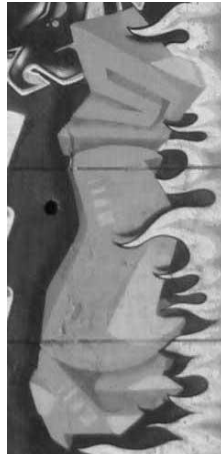


Figure A.589 DAMIS. <07?>



Figure A.590 KIOUE. <07?>



Figure A.591 THA-B. <07?>



Figure A.592 BONE. <07?>



Figure A.593 SCE ? [SKORE]. <07?>



Figure A.594 360 ? [SIXTY]. <07?>



Figure A.595 SCID. <07?>



Figure A.596 SORE [SKORE]. <07?>



Figure A.597 PHB [PHOBIA]. <07?>



Figure A.598 BONE. <07?>



Figure A.599 KIOUE. <07?>



Figure A.600 THA-B. <07?>



Figure A.601 SHAKE. <07?>



Figure A.602 CARZ [CARPET]. <07?>



Figure A.615 EIGT [A80S]. <07?>



Figure A.611 FCKU [??]. <07?>



Figure A.616 SPK [SPOKE]. <08>



Figure A.617 MILE09. <08>



Figure A.618 SHADE. <08>

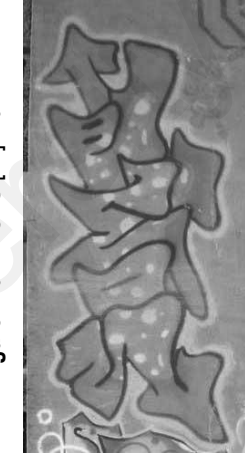


Figure A.612 SOME [SOME70]. <07?>



Figure A.613 COLONY [PELAT]. <07?>



Figure A.614 JUON. <07?>



Figure A.608 THE KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.609 SUPER SUNDAY [KIOUE]. <08>



Figure A.610 SLAC [SLACSATUJ]. <08>



Figure A.607 THA-B. <08>



Figure A.604 ?? [SOPEY] <07>



Figure A.605 SUPER [KIOUE]. <07>



Figure A.606 MAMAK [THEY]. <08?>



Figure A.603 SIEK. <07>



Figure A.631 THA-B. <08>



Figure A.632 THE KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.633 CARPET. <08>



Figure A.634 SIEK. <08>



Figure A.627 THA-B. <08>



Figure A.628 THE KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.629 ASK. <08>



Figure A.630 KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.623 CHING [JENG]. <08>



Figure A.624 KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.625 ?? [JUON]. <08>



Figure A.626 A80S. <08>



Figure A.619 VLT. <08>



Figure A.620 SPKE [SPOKE]. <08>



Figure A.621 KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.622 THA-B. <08>



Figure A.647 LULU [CARPET].



Figure A.648 CARPET.



Figure A.649 DWANE.



Figure A.650 DATO [DATOM]



Figure A.643 PHB [PHOBIA].



Figure A.644 SIEK.



Figure A.645 DTM ?[DATOM].



Figure A.646 DWANE.



Figure A.639 MEDEA.



Figure A.640 DTM ?[DATOM].



Figure A.641 PHB [PHOBIA].



Figure A.642 DATOM.



Figure A.635 CARPET.



Figure A.636 CARPET.



Figure A.637 SIEK.



Figure A.638 DTM [DATOM].

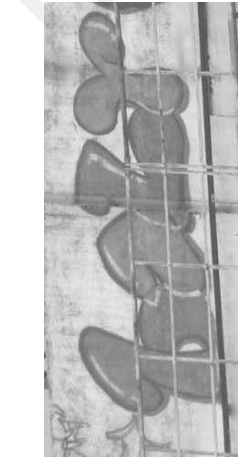


Figure A.663 BAL Y. <08>



Figure A.664 MILE09. <08>



Figure A.665 THA-B. <08>



Figure A.666 MILE09. <08>

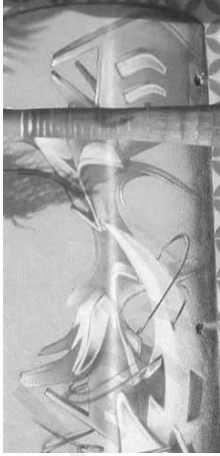


Figure A.659 DATOM. <07?>



Figure A.660 REVOK. <08>

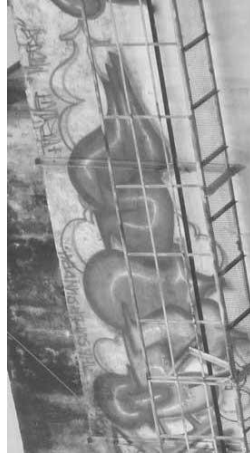


Figure A.661 KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.662 THA-B. <08>



Figure A.655 PHB [PHOBIA]. <?07>

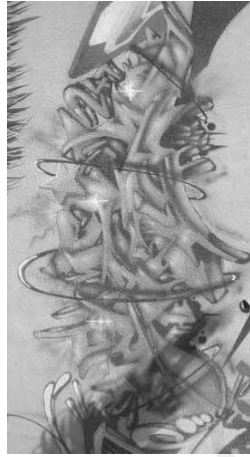


Figure A.656 CARZ ? [CARPET]. <07?>



Figure A.657 SOPEY ? <07?>



Figure A.658 SIEK. <07?>



Figure A.651 SIEK. <?08>



Figure A.652 DWANE. <?08>



Figure A.653 SIXTHIE. <?05>



Figure A.654 SYCO [SYCO03]. <08>



Figure A.679 DWANE. <08>



Figure A.680 SIEK. <08>



Figure A.681 MILE09. <08>



Figure A.682 DWANE. <08>



Figure A.675 CARPET. <08>



Figure A.676 SLAC [SLACSATU]. <08>



Figure A.677 NENOK. <08>



Figure A.678 NUKE. <08>



Figure A.671 MADNUZ. <08>



Figure A.672 KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.673 THA-B. <08>



Figure A.674 DAVE. <08>



Figure A.667 A80S. <08>



Figure A.668 KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.669 NUKE. <06>



Figure A.670 THA-B. <08>



Figure A.695 NUKE. <08>



Figure A.696 NENOK. <08>



Figure A.697 DON2. <08>



Figure A.698 WAZER. <08>



Figure A.691 THE KIOUE. <08>

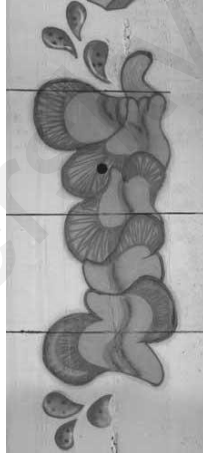


Figure A.692 NAS-EL. <08>

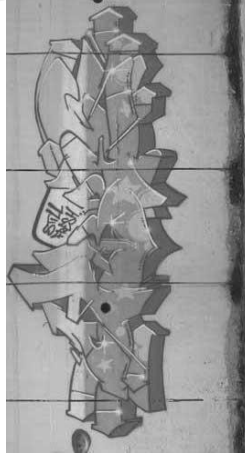


Figure A.693 CARPET. <08>



Figure A.694 NENOK. <06>



Figure A.687 THA-B. <08>

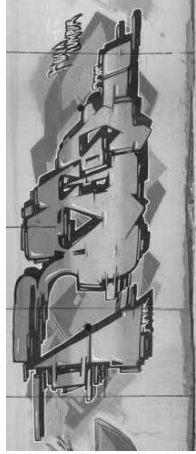


Figure A.688 ROID. <08>

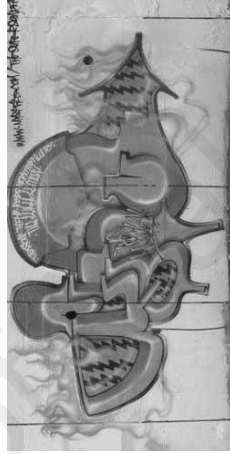


Figure A.689 THE KIOUE. <08>



Figure A.690 THA-B. <08>



Figure A.683 A80S. <08>

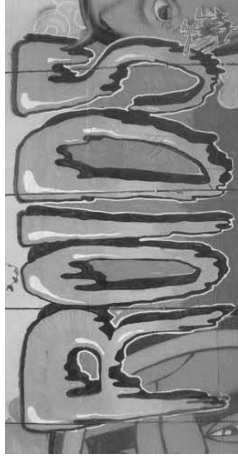


Figure A.684 ROIDS [ROID]. <08>



Figure A.685 THEY. <08>

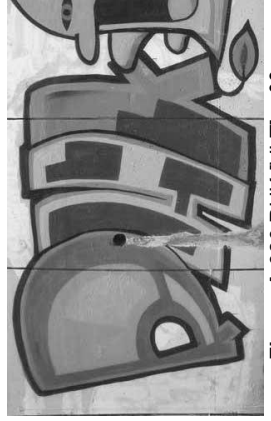


Figure A.686 RHK [VLTJ]. <08>



Figure A.711 MILE09. <08>



Figure A.712 KURN. <08>



Figure A.713 KDM. <08>



Figure A.714 SPK [SPOKE]. <08>



Figure A.707 KEAS. <08>



Figure A.708 KURN. <08>



Figure A.709 CARLZ [KOLA]. <08>



Figure A.710 YANG [KURN]. <08>

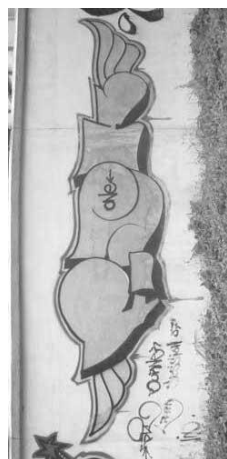


Figure A.703 FISH. <07>



Figure A.704 KAMO. <07>



Figure A.705 REBEL. <07>



Figure A.706 WAZER. <08>



Figure A.699 NENOKS [NENOK]. <08>



Figure A.700 NUKERS. [NUKE]. <08>



Figure A.701 ASKONE [ASKOE]. <08>



Figure A.702 BONKS. <08>



Figure A.727 UTAH. <11>



Figure A.728 ETHER. <11>

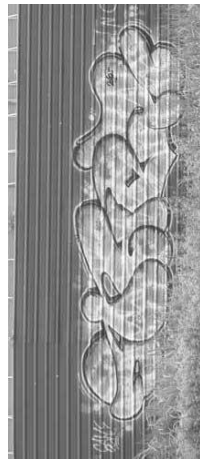


Figure A.729 OTHER. <10?>



Figure A.730 DESYR [NUKE]. <11>



Figure A.723 ASWER [WAZER]. <11>



Figure A.724 KIOUE. <11>



Figure A.725 RASH. <11>



Figure A.726 NUKE. <11>



Figure A.719 LIES. <11>



Figure A.720 MILE [MILE09]. <11>



Figure A.721 ROSK [MIST149]. <11>



Figure A.722 POKE [BLOB]. <11>



Figure A.715 ALL. ? <11>



Figure A.716 PHOBI. <11>



Figure A.717 ETHER. <11>



Figure A.718 UTAH. <11>



Figure A.743 DAMIS. <11>



Figure A.744 NAY2. <11>

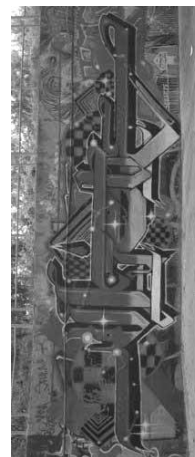


Figure A.745 KIOUE. <11>



Figure A.746 AIGOR. <11>



Figure A.739 KEAS. <11>



Figure A.740 NUKE. <11>



Figure A.741 BLOB. <11>



Figure A.742 SEBAT [NUKE]. <11>



Figure A.735 NUKE. <11>



Figure A.736 AKEY. <11>



Figure A.737 ASWER [WAZER]. <11>



Figure A.738 RESK. <11>



Figure A.731 ROSK [MIST149]. <11>



Figure A.732 SIEK. <11>



Figure A.733 MADE U LOOK! [UTAH; ETHER]. <11>



Figure A.734 JABA. ?<11>



Figure A.759 MARISSA [SONA]. <05>



Figure A.760 VDS. <05>



Figure A.761 VDS. <05>



Figure A.762 SONA. <05>

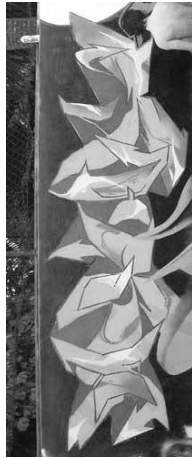


Figure A.755 ASHD. <05>



Figure A.756 VDS. <05>



Figure A.757 SONA. <05>



Figure A.758 SONA. <05>



Figure A.751 KIOUE. <11>



Figure A.752 DREW. <06?>



Figure A.753 SONA. <06?>



Figure A.754 BONY. <05>



Figure A.747 CARZ [CARPET]. <10>



Figure A.748 REZZE. <11>



Figure A.749 CYDE. <11>



Figure A.750 BONKS. <11>



Figure A.763 APEK [DREW]. <05>



Figure A.764 SONA. <05>



Figure A.765 SONA ONE. <08>



Figure A.766 SONA. <06>



Figure A.767 ISON. <06>



Figure A.768 NIGRO. <06>



Figure A.769 VDS. <06>



Figure A.770 SONA. <06>



Figure A.771 SONA. <05>



Figure A.772 SONA. <04>



Figure A.773 SIXTHIE. <04>



Figure A.774 PHB [PHOBIA]. <04>



Figure A.775 DREW. <04>



Figure A.776 VDS. <04>



Figure A.777 VDS. <04?>



Figure A.778 VDS. <05>



Figure A.791 CARPET. <08>



Figure A.792 SHAKE. <08>



Figure A.793 DWANE. <08>



Figure A.794 ASKOE. <08>



Figure A.787 PHOBIA. <05>



Figure A.788 SIETO. <05>



Figure A.789 CINDY [DREW]. <05>



Figure A.790 VDS. <05>



Figure A.783 SONA ONER. <05>



Figure A.784 APEK ONER [DREW]. <05>



Figure A.785 VDS. <05>



Figure A.786 LUXE. <05>



Figure A.779 SUGA [SUGA52]. <04?>



Figure A.780 VDS. <05?>



Figure A.781 SONA. <05?>



Figure A.782 DREW. <05?>



Figure A.807 PELAT. <07?>



Figure A.808 MEOW. <07?>



Figure A.809 PELAT. <07?>



Figure A.810 NASZ. <07?>



Figure A.803 PHOBIA KLIK [PHOBIA]. <08>



Figure A.804 SIEK. <08>



Figure A.805 ? [AL-FIQUE]. <08>



Figure A.806 ? [MEDEA]. <07?>



Figure A.799 WAZER. <08>



Figure A.800 KEAS. <08>



Figure A.801 DREAM [NENOK]. <04?>



Figure A.802 CARZ. ?[CARPET]. <08>



Figure A.795 NUKE. <08>



Figure A.796 KEAS. <08>



Figure A.797 NUKE. <08>



Figure A.798 NENOK. <08>



Figure A.823 CARPET. <09>



Figure A.824 JABA ? [JABA]. <09>



Figure A.825 CARPET. <09?>



Figure A.826 THEY. <09>



Figure A.819 DAMIS. <09>



Figure A.820 KIOUE. <09>



Figure A.821 BONKS. <09?>



Figure A.822 CYDE2 ?. <09>



Figure A.815 MILE ? <08>



Figure A.816 MIST [MIST149]. <08>



Figure A.817 OH! TUHAN [THEY]. <08>



Figure A.818 MIST [MIST149]. <09>



Figure A.811 WARN <07?>



Figure A.812 KARAOKE [PHOBIA]. <04>



Figure A.813 SOME [SOME70]. <06?>



Figure A.814 EIGHT [A80S]. <06?>



Figure A.839 MIST [MIST149]. <10?>



Figure A.840 VIOLENT. <09?>



Figure A.841 NENOK. <09>



Figure A.842 NUKE. <09>



Figure A.835 MILE09. <09>



Figure A.836 THEY. <10?>



Figure A.837 CRITIC. <10?>



Figure A.838 KIOUE. <10?>



Figure A.831 THEY. <10?>



Figure A.832 KIOUE THE SUPER SUNDAY.
<10>



Figure A.833 BLOB. <09>



Figure A.834 MIST [MIST149]. <09>



Figure A.827 CRITIC. <09?>



Figure A.828 KINGZ. <09?>



Figure A.829 ESCAPE. <10?>



Figure A.830 BFD [BLACK FRIDAY]. <10?>



Figure A.855 PHATZ [PHANTOM]. <09>



Figure A.856 KEAS. <09>



Figure A.857 AKEY. <09>



Figure A.858 REYNA. <09>



Figure A.851 AKES. <09>



Figure A.852 ASKOE. <09>



Figure A.853 CYDE02. <09>



Figure A.854 CARPET. <09>



Figure A.847 RASHE [RASH]. <09>



Figure A.848 NBA. <09>



Figure A.849 BLOB. <09>



Figure A.850 CRITIC. <09>



Figure A.843 MIST [MIST149]. <09>



Figure A.844 WAZER. <09>



Figure A.845 SIEK. <09>



Figure A.846 MILE09. <09>



Figure A.871 THEY. <09?>



Figure A.872 KIOUE. <09?>



Figure A.873 TLG [JENG]. <09?>



Figure A.874 REZZE. <09?>



Figure A.867 HOZAE. <09>



Figure A.868 SNOZZE. <09?>



Figure A.869 KIOUE. <10?>



Figure A.870 CARPET. <10?>



Figure A.863 KIOUE ? <09>



Figure A.864 THEY. <09?>



Figure A.865 KIOUE. <09>



Figure A.866 VIOLENT. <09>



Figure A.859 BONKS. <09>



Figure A.860 THEY. <09?>



Figure A.861 CYDE2. <09?>



Figure A.862 THEY. <09?>



Figure A.887 BLOB. <10>



Figure A.888 ASKOE. <10>



Figure A.889 NUKE. <10>



Figure A.890 NENOK. <10>



Figure A.883 FONER. <10>



Figure A.884 BERY. <10>

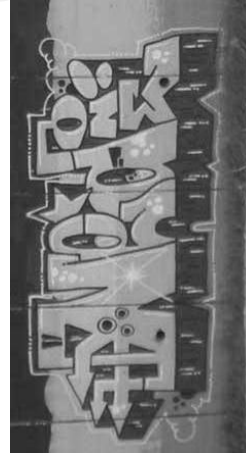


Figure A.885 NED ONE. <10>



Figure A.886 MIMER. <10>



Figure A.879 SHAGGY. <10>

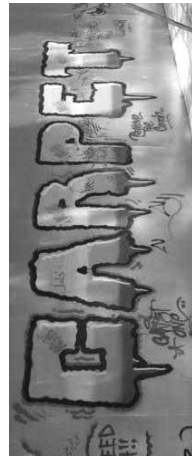


Figure A.880 CARPET. <09>



Figure A.881 ??? <10>



Figure A.882 CARPET. <10>



Figure A.875 PHATZ. <09>



Figure A.876 MILE09... ??<09>



Figure A.877 THEY. <09>



Figure A.878 KAMI. <09>



Figure A.903 TRUTH ?[Mohamm. Ali]. <07?>



Figure A.904 CARPET ONE. <10>



Figure A.905 BONE. <10>



Figure A.906 CARPET. <10>



Figure A.899 KIOUE. <10>



Figure A.900 SNOZZE. <10>

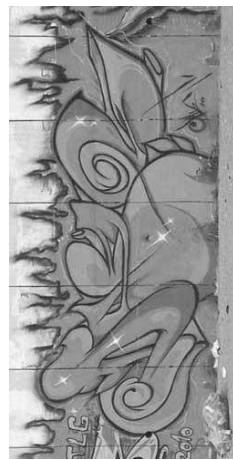


Figure A.901 NAY2. <10>



Figure A.902 VIOLENT [VL]. <10>



Figure A.895 SONA ONE. <10>



Figure A.896 ANOKAYER. <10>



Figure A.897 ???. <10>



Figure A.898 ??KWS crew. <10>



Figure A.891 SIEK. <10>



Figure A.892 DAMIS. <10>



Figure A.893 CARPET. <10>

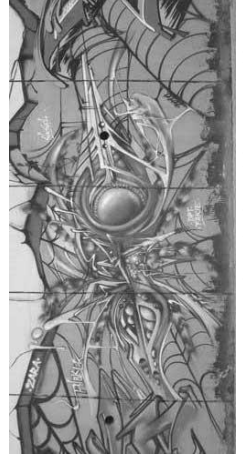


Figure A.894 SLAC [SLACSATUJ]. <10>



Figure A.919 SIEK. <10>



Figure A.915 ASKOE. <09>



Figure A.911 KEAS. <10>



Figure A.907 CRAS. <10>



Figure A.920 KIOUE. <09>



Figure A.916 NUKE. <09>



Figure A.912 WASER [WAZER]. <10>



Figure A.908 DEAZ. <10>



Figure A.921 MIST [MIST149]. <09>



Figure A.917 SUPER SUNDAY [KIOUE]. <10>



Figure A.913 BLOB. <10>



Figure A.909 RASH. <10>



Figure A.922 KIOUE. <09>

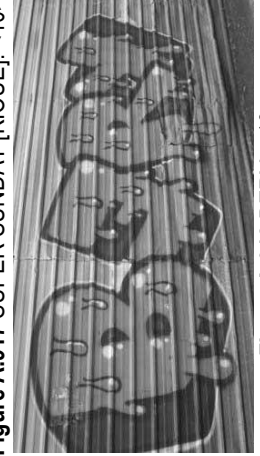


Figure A.918 BERY. <10>



Figure A.914 KEAS. <09>



Figure A.910 NUKE. <10>



Figure A.935 SPAMIST [MIST149]. <10?>



Figure A.936 KIOUE. <10>



Figure A.937 HYBRID [SKOPE] <10>



Figure A.938 NENOK. <10>



Figure A.931 NUKE. <10>



Figure A.932 WASER [WAZER] <10>



Figure A.933 KIOUE. <10>



Figure A.934 MUNDEN [NESTWO] <10>



Figure A.927 BEATS [NUKE]. <10>



Figure A.928 BEATS [NENOK]. <10>



Figure A.929 BEATS [NBA]. <10>



Figure A.930 BEATS [DAMIS]. <10>



Figure A.923 SLAC [SLACSATUJ]. <10>



Figure A.924 PHOBIA. <10>



Figure A.925 SNOZZE. <10>



Figure A.926 BEATS [WAZER]. <10>



Figure A.951 SLEEK [SEKT?]. <10>



Figure A.952 BENNY! <10>



Figure A.953 DARE [CARPET]. <10>

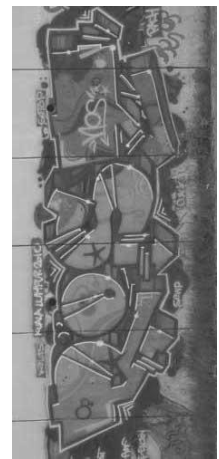


Figure A.954 ROST. <10>



Figure A.947 CYDE [CYDE02]. <10>



Figure A.948 REYNA. <10>



Figure A.949 KEAS. <10>



Figure A.950 ROST. <10>



Figure A.943 JEST ?. <10>

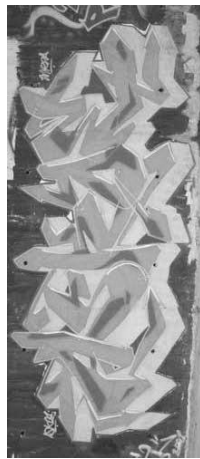


Figure A.944 ASKOE. <10>



Figure A.945 NAIM ?. <10>



Figure A.946 NEWBA [NBA]. <10>



Figure A.939 NUKE. <10>



Figure A.940 DEAZ. <10>



Figure A.941 CYDE2 ? [CYDE02]. <10>



Figure A.942 KEAS. <10>



Figure A.967 MIST [MIST149]. <09>



Figure A.968 CARPET. <09>



Figure A.969 TNQ30. <09>



Figure A.970 DTM [DATOM]. <09>



Figure A.963 CARPET. <09>



Figure A.964 SIEK. <09>



Figure A.965 DAVE [DAVE7]. <09>



Figure A.966 MILE09. <09>



Figure A.959 2 BURN [DAMIS]. <10>



Figure A.960 KIOUE??. <10>



Figure A.961 KIOUE. <09?>



Figure A.962 FONER. <09>



Figure A.955 SEKT. <10>



Figure A.956 SEKT. <10>



Figure A.957 CYDE [CYDE02]. <10>



Figure A.958 STYLE [NBA]. <10>



Figure A.983 CRITIC [CRITIC06]. <09>



Figure A.984 MILE09. <09>



Figure A.985 MIST [MIST149]. <09>



Figure A.986 CARPET. <08>



Figure A.979 NUKE. <09>



Figure A.980 SAEK [KEAS]. <09>



Figure A.981 YEKA [AKEY]. <09>



Figure A.982 CRITIC [CRITIC06]. <09>



Figure A.975 MIST [MIST149]. <09>



Figure A.976 MEDEA ?? <?>



Figure A.977 ASKOE. <09>



Figure A.978 KEAS. <09>



Figure A.971 THA-B. <09>



Figure A.972 THE KIOUE. <09>



Figure A.973 MILE09. <09>



Figure A.974 MIST [MIST149]. <09>



Figure A.999 PAWK. <10>



Figure A.1000 SONEA. <10?>



Figure A.1001 CARPET. <10?>



Figure A.1002 REZZE. <10>



Figure A.995 SIEK. <09>



Figure A.996 CARPET. <09>



Figure A.997 DAVE [DAVE7]. <09>



Figure A.998 DTM [DATOM]. <09>



Figure A.991 THEY. <08>



Figure A.992 KEAS. <08>



Figure A.993 NENOK. <08>



Figure A.994 CYDE [CYDE02]. <09>



Figure A.987 ORSEK. <08>



Figure A.988 PHB [PHOBIA]. <08>



Figure A.989 DWANE. <08>



Figure A.990 DATOM. <08>



Figure A.1015 DAMIS. <11?>



Figure A.1016 NAY2. <11?>



Figure A.1017 BONKS. <11?>



Figure A.1018 KOS. <11?>



Figure A.1011 DESYR [NUKE]. <10>



Figure A.1012 DEMS [DEMS333]. <11>



Figure A.1013 JABA. <11>



Figure A.1014 DESYR [NUKE]. <11?>



Figure A.1007 NSANE. <10>



Figure A.1008 ROIDS [ROID]. <10>



Figure A.1009 DAMIS. <11?>



Figure A.1010 CYDE [CYDE02]. <11?>



Figure A.1003 SIEK. <10>



Figure A.1004 AROE. <10>



Figure A.1005 JIROE. <10>



Figure A.1006 ZIDS. <10>



Figure A.1031 IDLE [NOMAD?]. <11>



Figure A.1032 VIOLENT. <11>

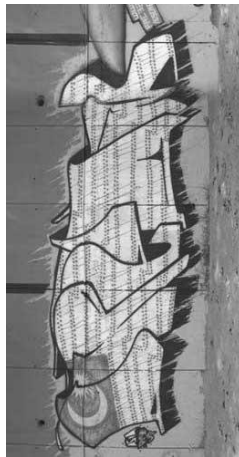


Figure A.1033 DREAM [XEME]. <11>



Figure A.1034 KATUN. <11>



Figure A.1027 REALPS. <11>



Figure A.1028 NENOK. <11>



Figure A.1029 NUKE. <11>



Figure A.1030 BONKS2. <11>



Figure A.1023 ROSK [MIST149]. <11>



Figure A.1024 POKE. <11>



Figure A.1025 DREAM [XEME]. <11>



Figure A.1026 NUKE. <11>



Figure A.1019 ESOK. <11>



Figure A.1020 BOND. <11>



Figure A.1021 ASKO. <11>



Figure A.1022 NEWBA. <11>



Figure A.1035 KOLA. <11>



Figure A.1036 PHATZ. <11>

University of Malaya

APPENDIX B: Typography

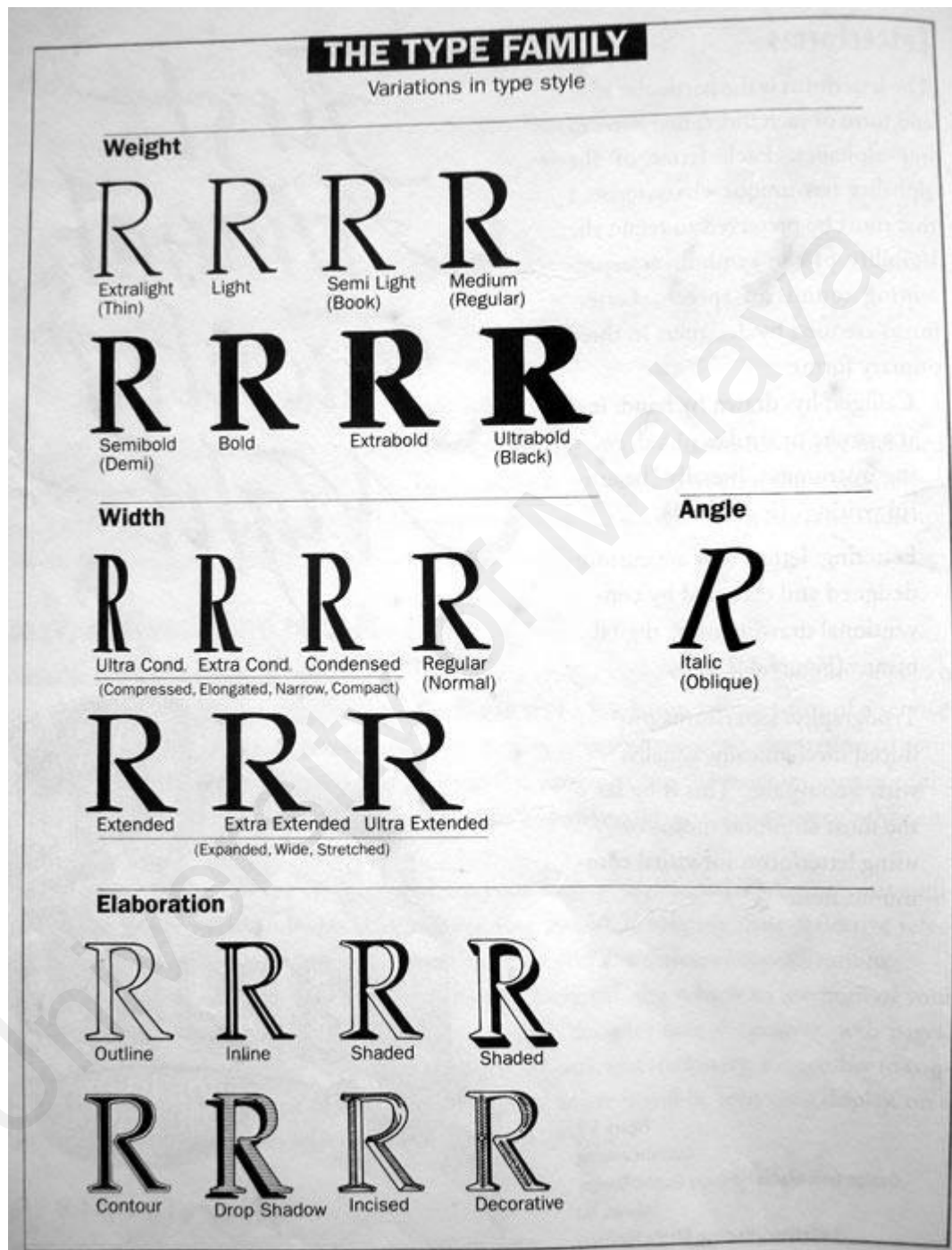


Figure B.1 The Type Family. Chart by Martin Holloway. Design Firm: Martin Holloway Graphic Design, Warren, NJ.
Source: (Landa, 2001) p. 60.

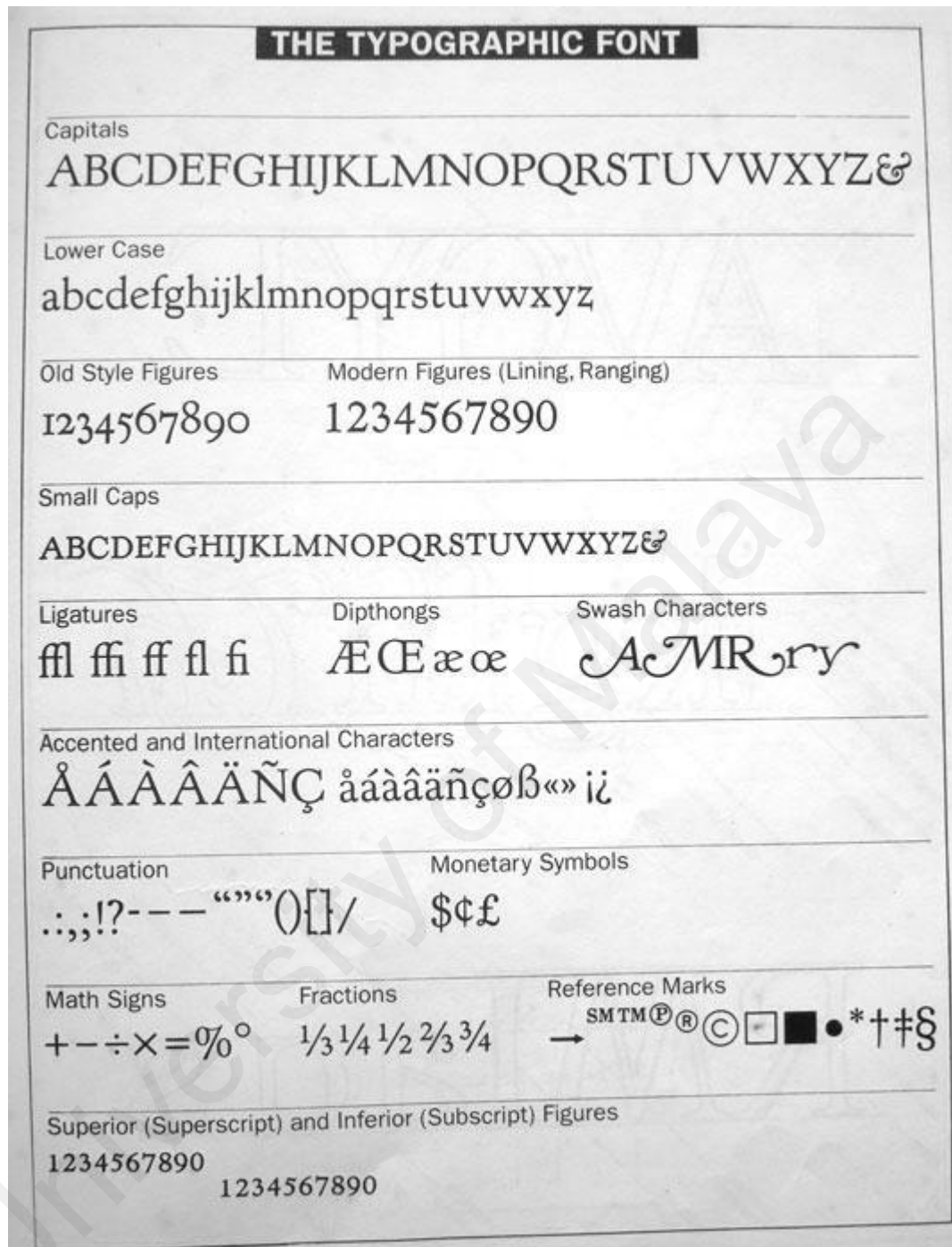


Figure B.2 The Typographic Font. Chart by Martin Holloway. Design Firm: Martin Holloway Graphic Design, Warren, NJ..

Source: (Landa, 2001) p. 61.

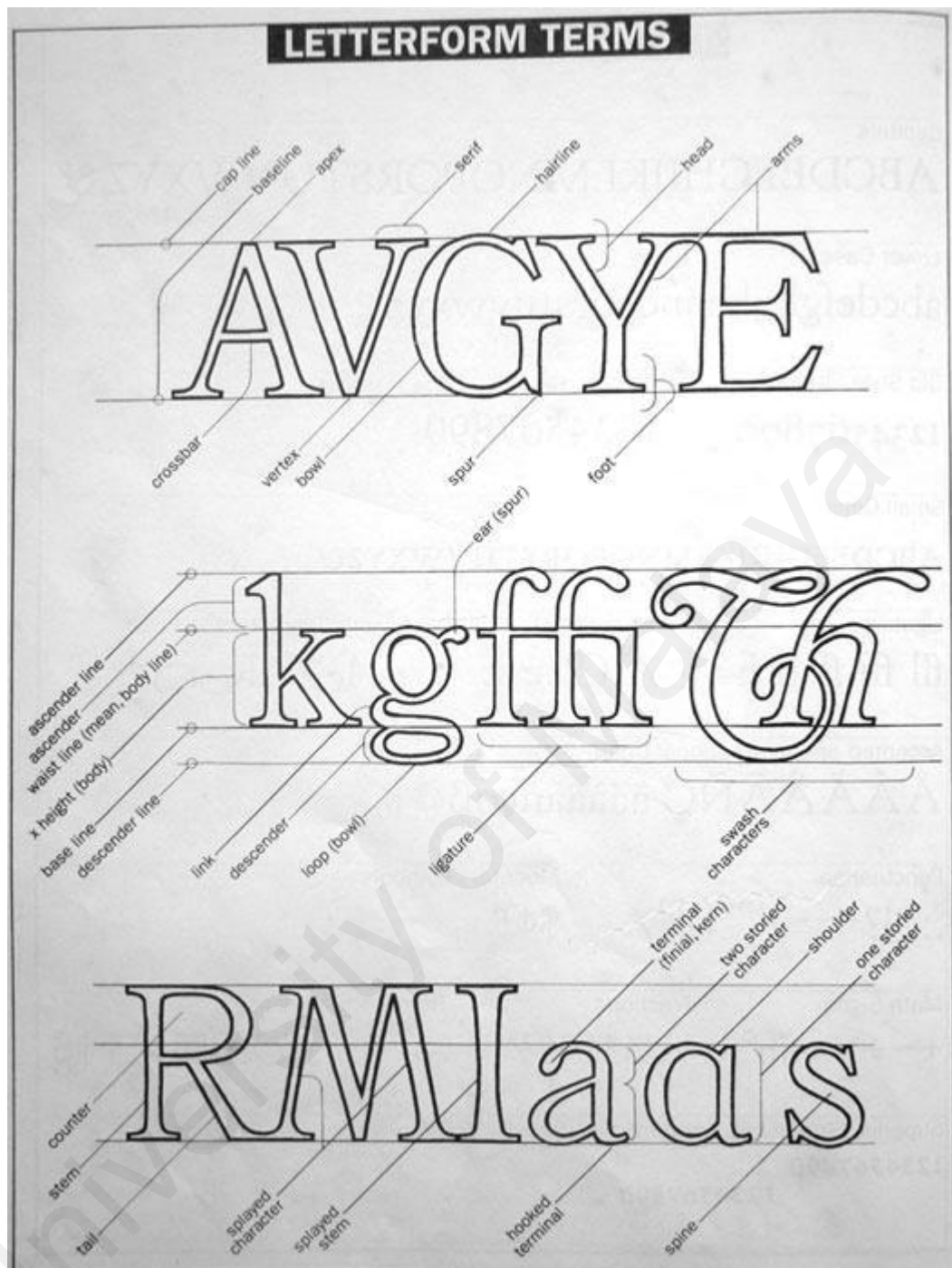


Figure B.3 Letterform Terms. Chart by Martin Holloway. Design Firm: Martin Holloway Graphic Design, Warren, NJ.. Source: (Landa, 2001) p. 62.

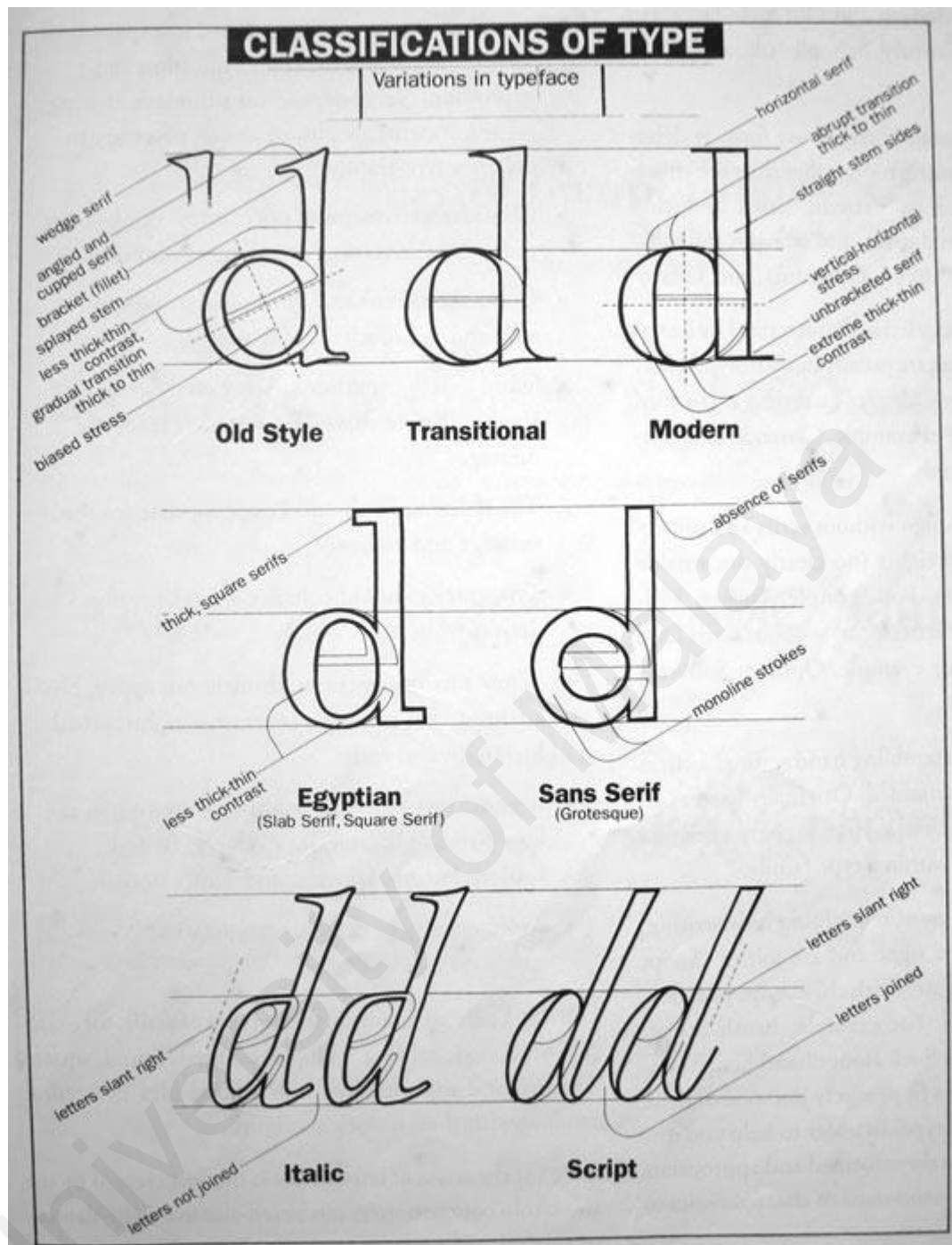


Figure B.4 Classification of Type. Chart by Martin Holloway. Design Firm: Martin Holloway Graphic Design, Warren, NJ.

Source: (Landa, 2001) p. 65.

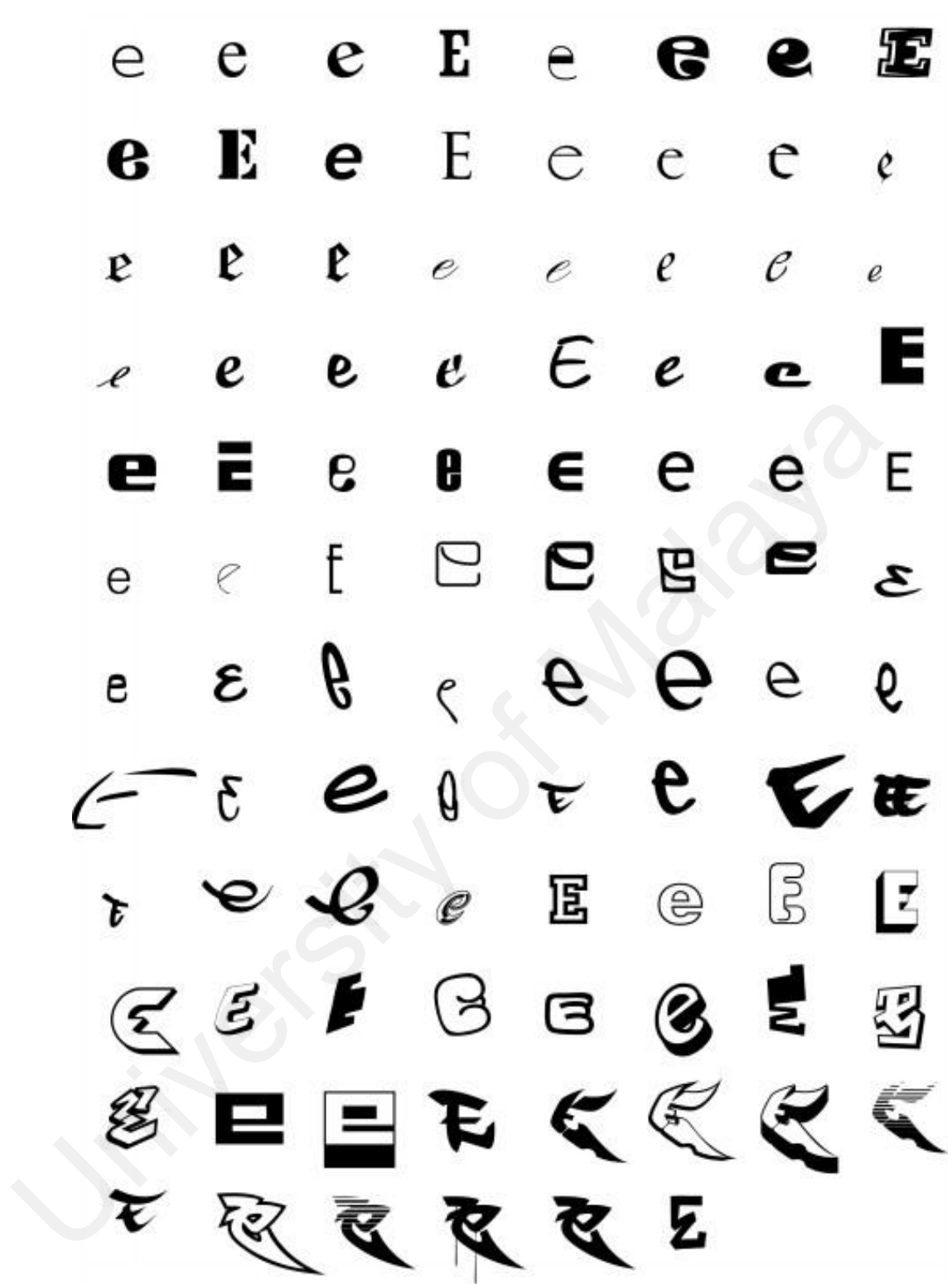


Figure B.5 Different typefaces of the letterform 'e' in lower case.
 Source: Collage by present author. Based on installed fonts in the computer. Various font faces.

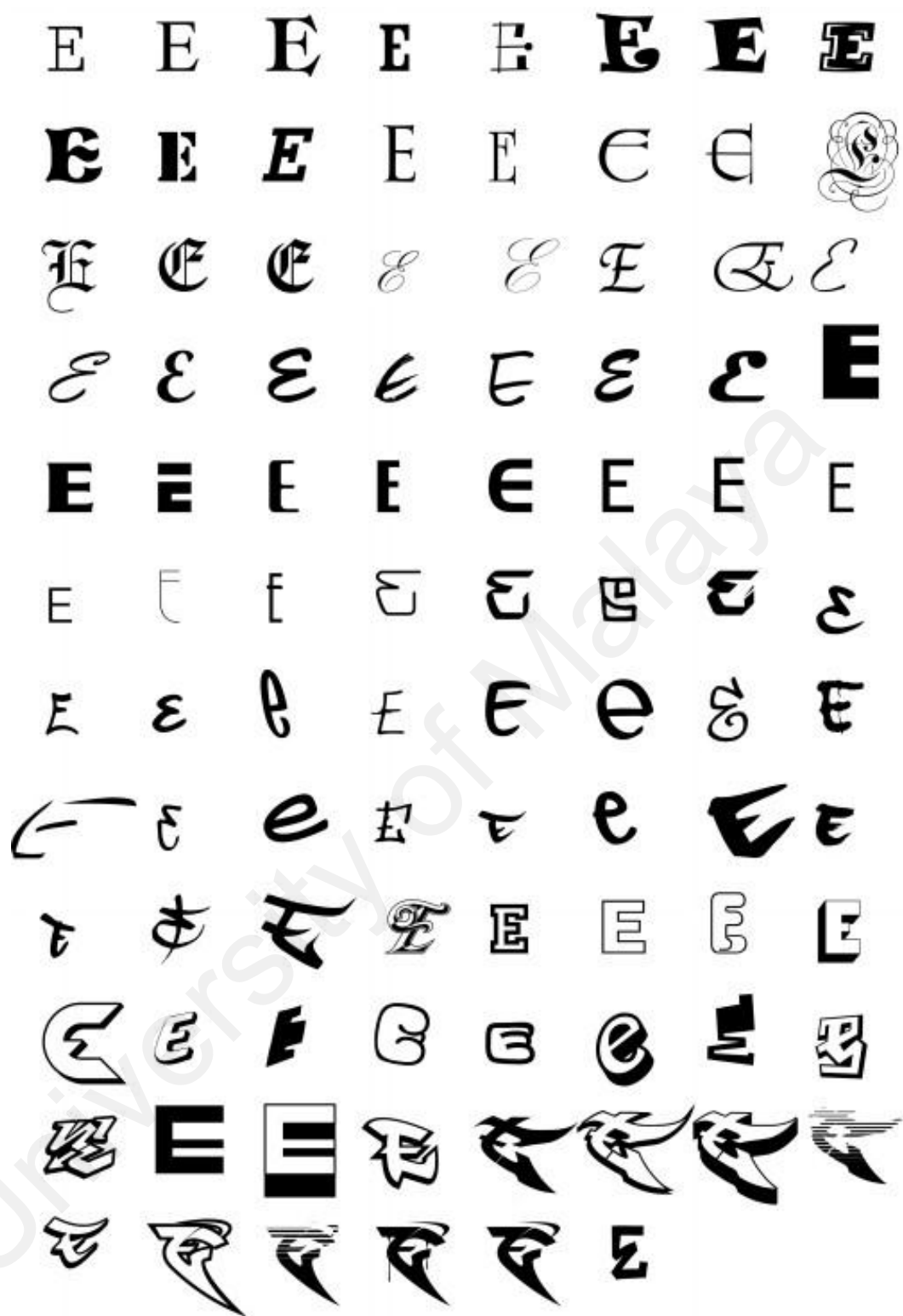


Figure B.6 Different typefaces of the letterform 'E' in capitals.

Source: Collage by present author. Based on installed fonts in the computer. Various font faces.

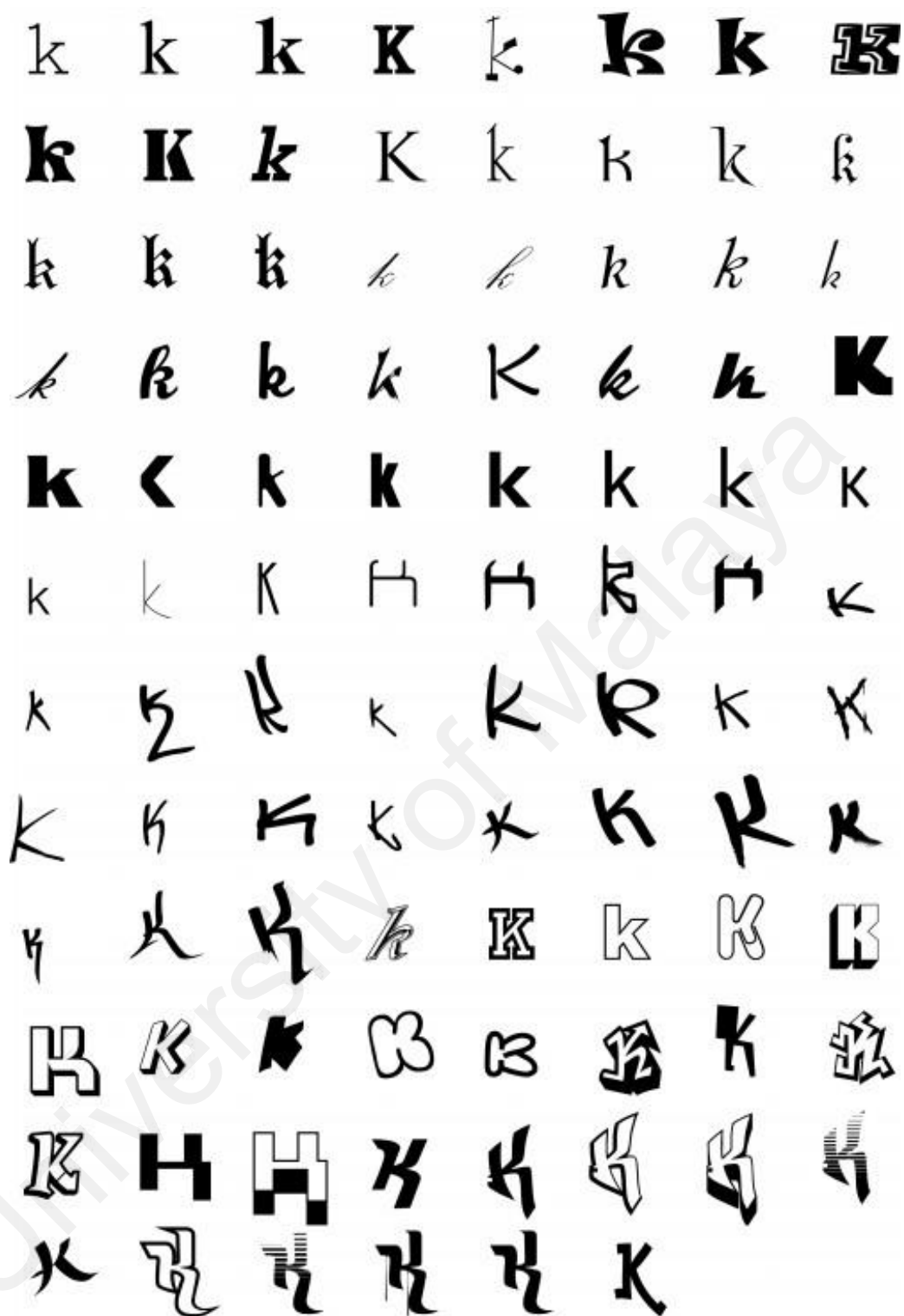


Figure B.7 Different typefaces of the letterform 'k' in lower case.

Source: Collage by present author. Based on installed fonts in the computer. Various font faces.



Figure B.8 Different typefaces of the letterform 'K' in capitals.

Source: Collage by present author. Based on installed fonts in the computer. Various font faces.

APPENDIX C: Samples of Letterforms E and K by Research Participants

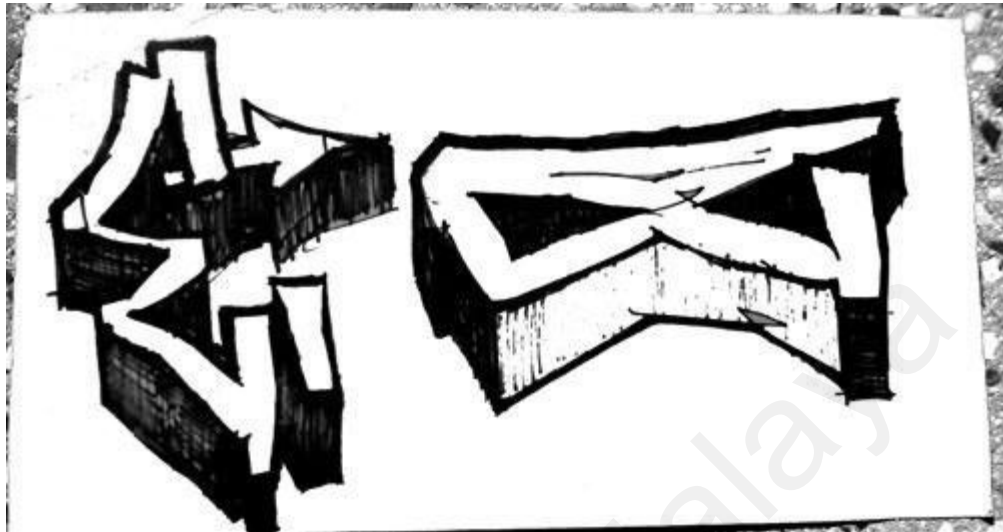


Figure C.1 Two (2) letterforms E by MIRA2. Marker on red paper (altered); size: 29,6 cm x 16 cm.
06 June 2013, Smíchov, Prague.

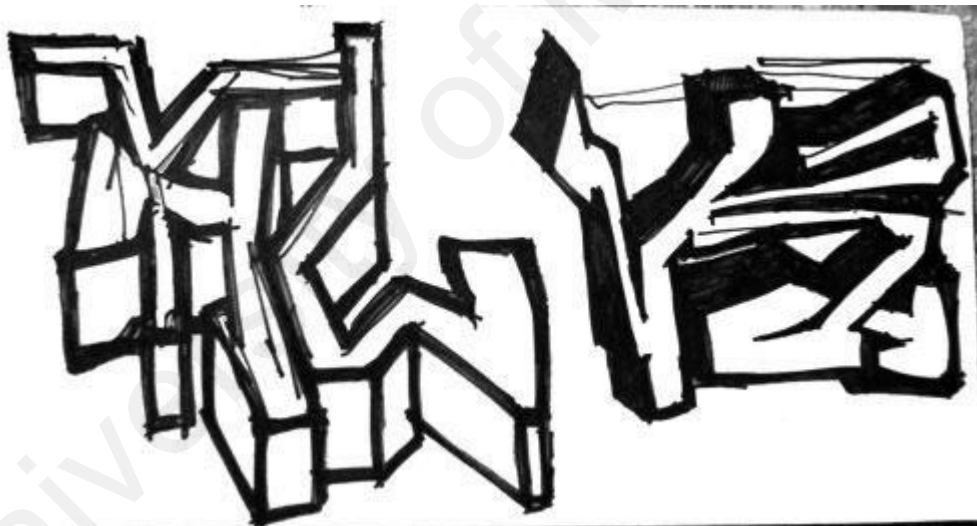


Figure C.2 The letterforms 'KL' and 1 letterform 'K' by MIRA2. Marker on red paper (altered); size: 29,6 cm x 16 cm.
06 June 2013, Smíchov, Prague.

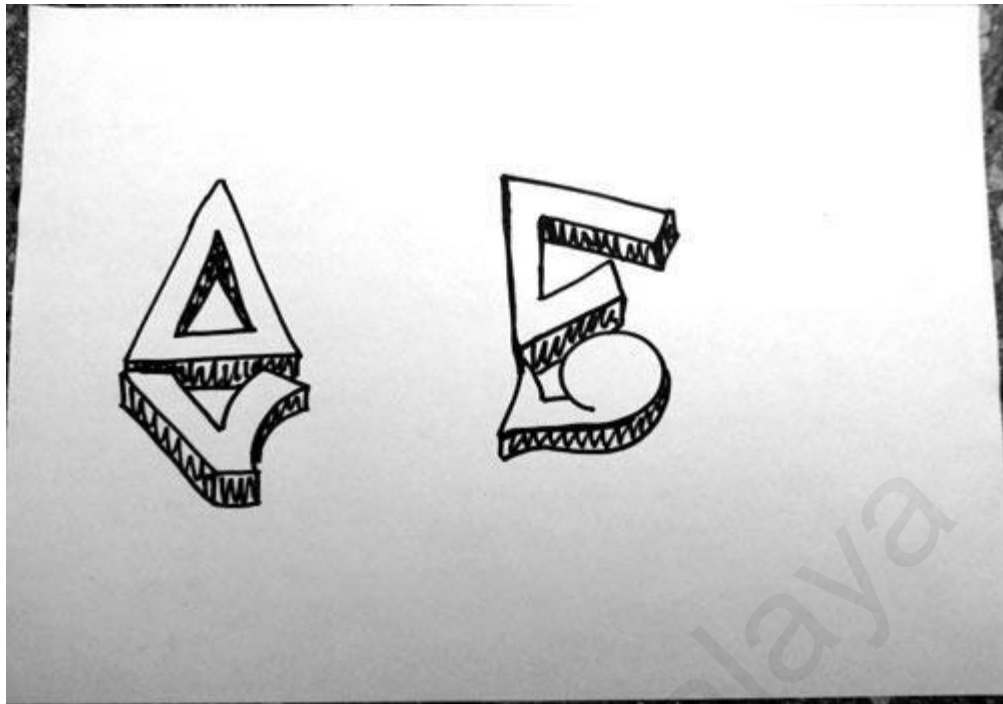


Figure C.3 Two (2) letterforms E by RIDIK. Marker on A4 size paper.
26 August 2013, Main railway station, Prague.

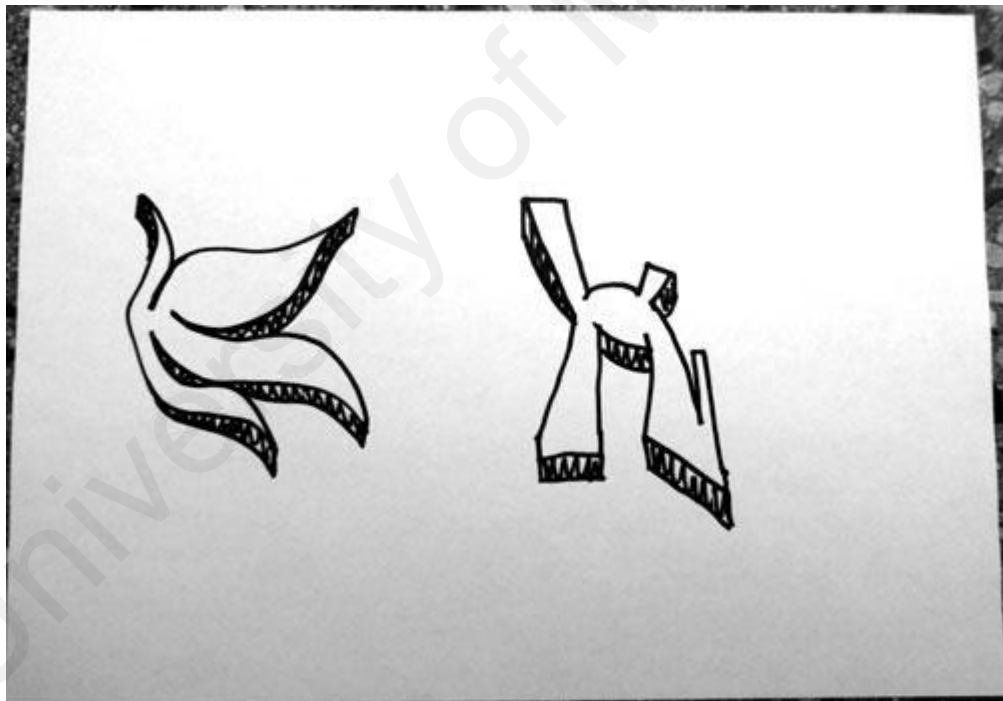


Figure C.4 Two (2) letterforms K by RIDIK. Marker on A4 size paper.
26 August 2013, Main railway station, Prague.

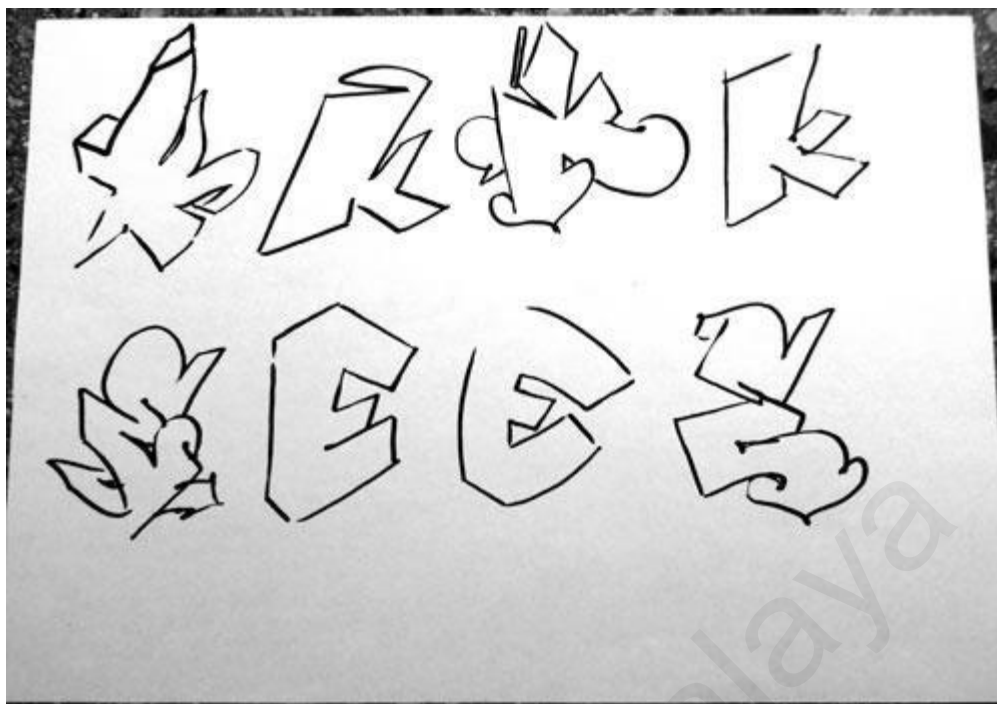


Figure C.5 Four (4) letterforms K and four (4) letterforms E by CAGO. Marker on A4 size paper.
25 August 2013, Řepy, Prague.



Figure C.6 The letterforms E and K by SWEB. Marker on half of an A4 size paper.
26 August 2013, New Town, Prague.

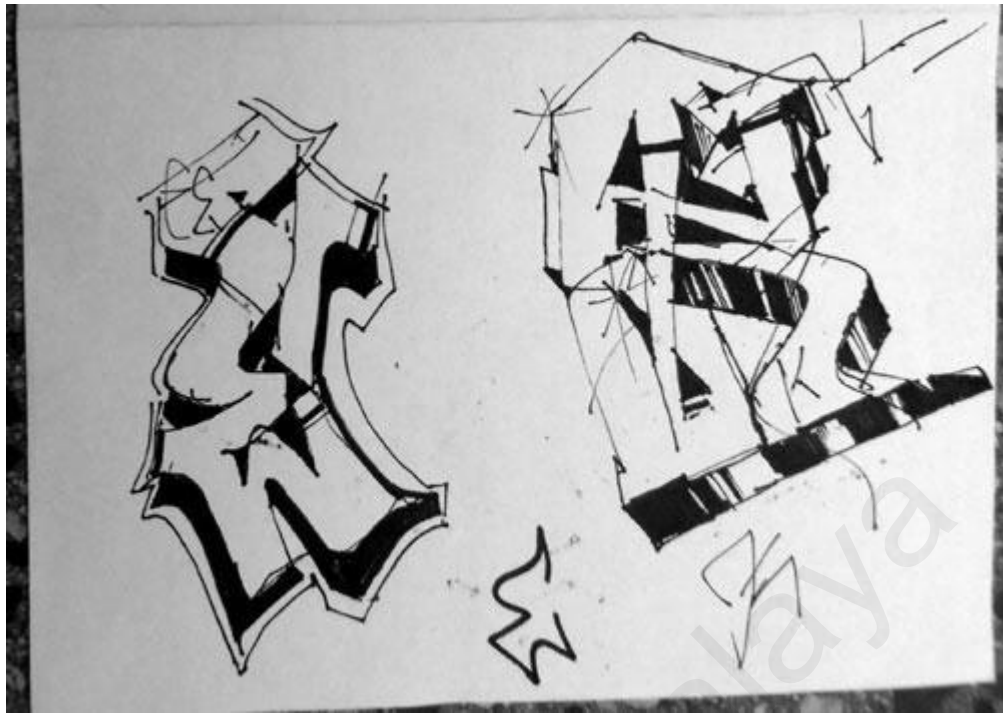


Figure C.7 The letterforms E and K by SWEB. Marker on half of a A4 size paper.
26 August 2013, New Town, Prague.



Figure C.8 Two (2) letterforms E and two (2) letterforms K by YUMZ. Marker on A4 size paper.
16 February 2013, Shah Alam, GKL.



Figure C.9 Three (3) letterforms E and three (3) letterforms K by NUKE. Marker on A4 size paper. 16 February 2013, Shah Alam, GKL.



Figure C.10 Two (2) letterforms E and two (2) letterforms K by CARPET. Marker on A4 size paper. 21 February 2013, Imbi, KL.

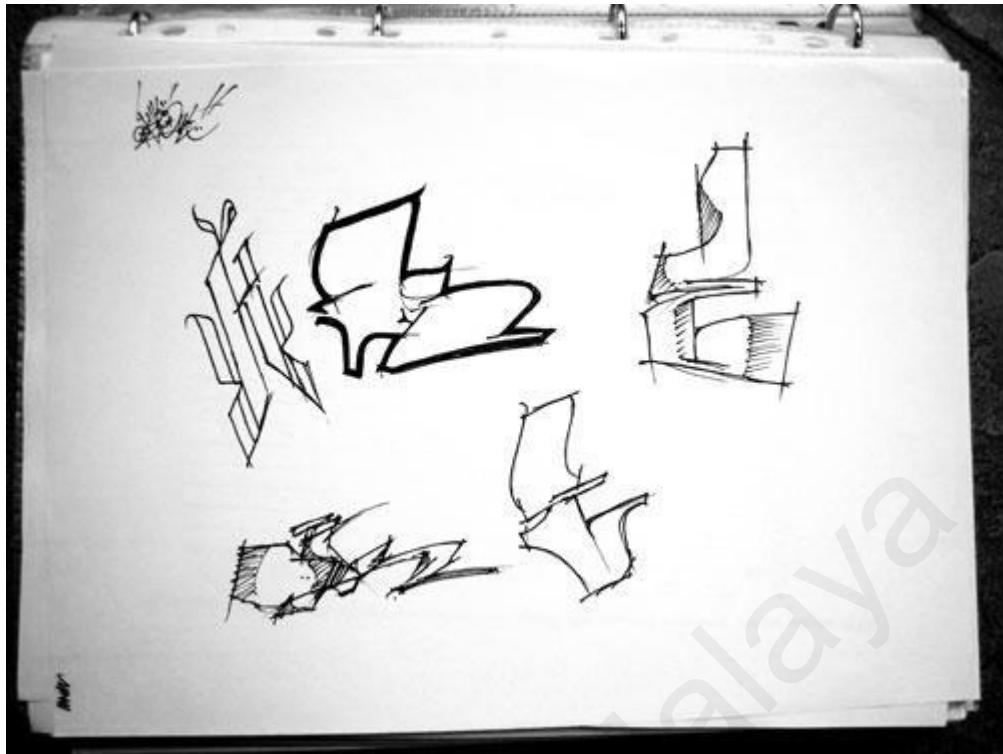


Figure C.11 Three (3) letterforms K and two (2) letterforms E by KIOUE. Marker on A4 size paper.
26 February 2013, Sungei Wang, Bukit Bintang, GKL.



Figure C.12 Two (2) letterforms E and two (2) letterforms K by CLOAK. Marker on A4 size paper.
14 April 2013, Genting.



Figure C.13 Two (2) letterforms E and two (2) letterforms K by BLACK FRYDAY.
Pencil and marker on A4 size paper.
14 April 2013, Genting.



Figure C.14 Six (6) letterforms E and five (5) letterforms K by YUDOE. Marker on A4 size paper.
23 August 2013, Holešovice, Prague.



Figure C.15 Two (2) letterforms E and two (2) letterforms K by KATUN. Pencil and marker on A4 size paper.
16 December 2012, Central Market, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure C.16 Four (4) letterforms E and four (4) letterforms K by ASE. Marker on A4 size paper.
24 October 2012, Letná, Prague.



Figure C.17 Two (2) letterforms E and two (2) letterforms K by BOND. Marker on A4 size paper. 16 December 2012, Central Market, Kuala Lumpur.

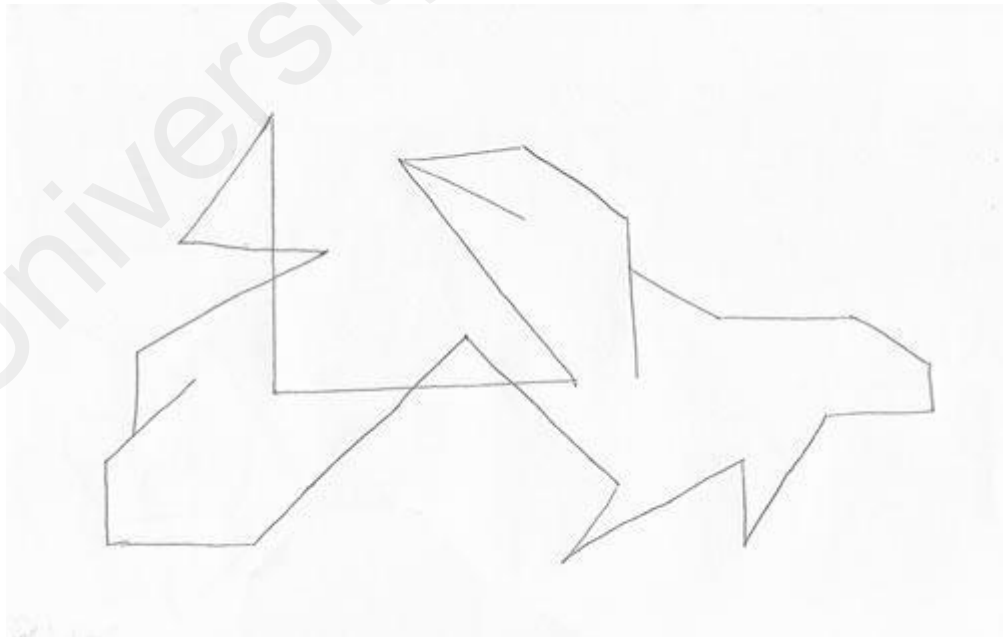


Figure C.18 Letterforms E by POIS. Ballpen on paper. Size unknown. 10 July 2013. Prague.

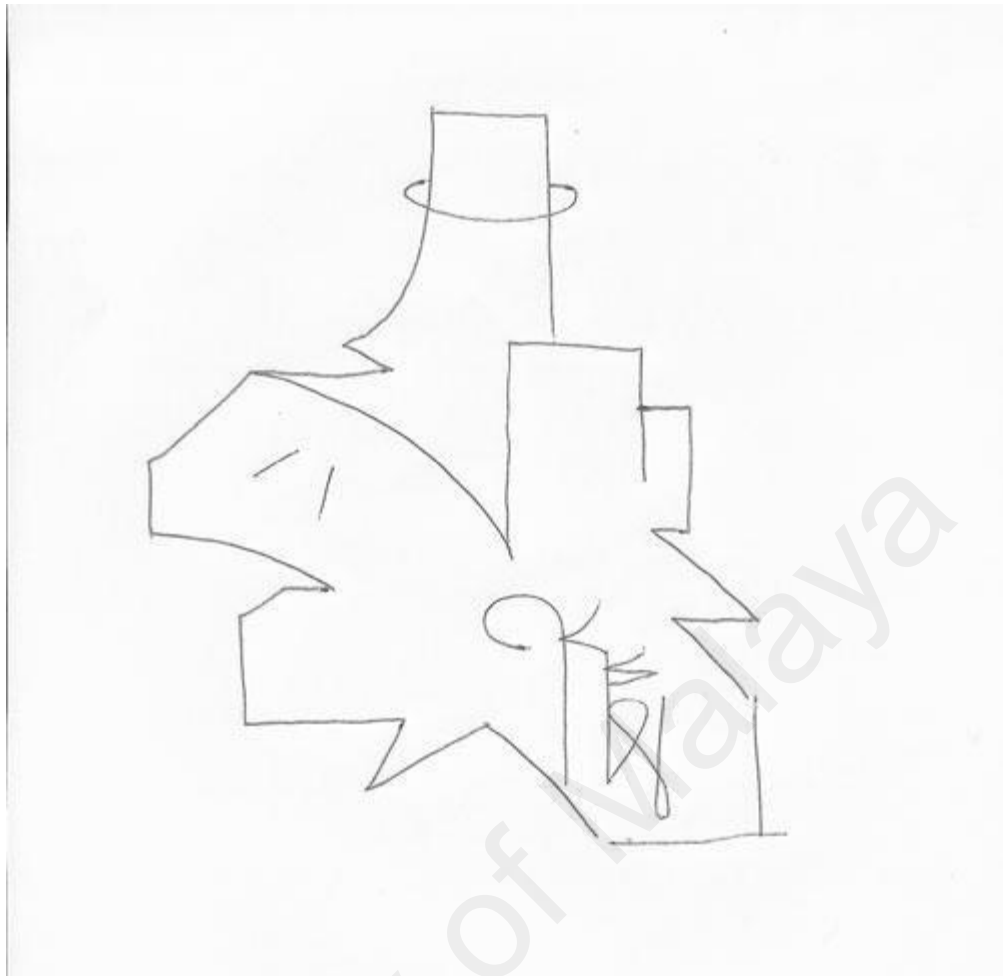


Figure C.19 Letterforms E by POIS. Ballpen on paper. Size unknown.
10 July 2013. Prague.

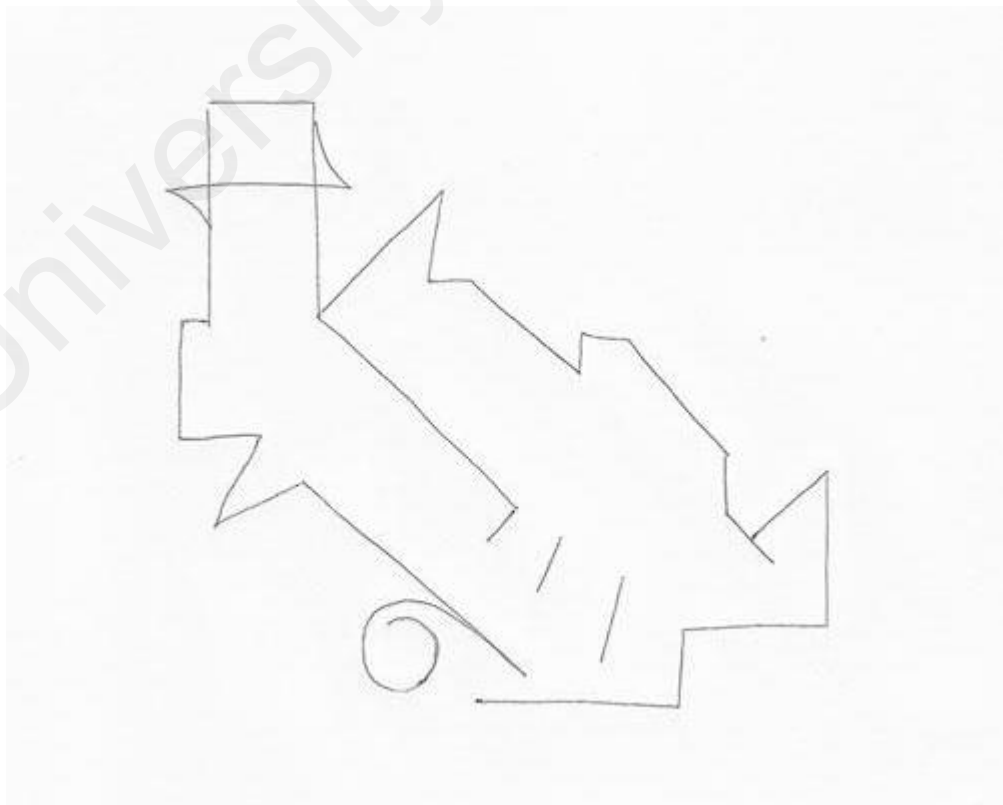


Figure C.20 Letterforms K by POIS. Ballpen on paper. Size unknown.
10 July 2013. Prague.

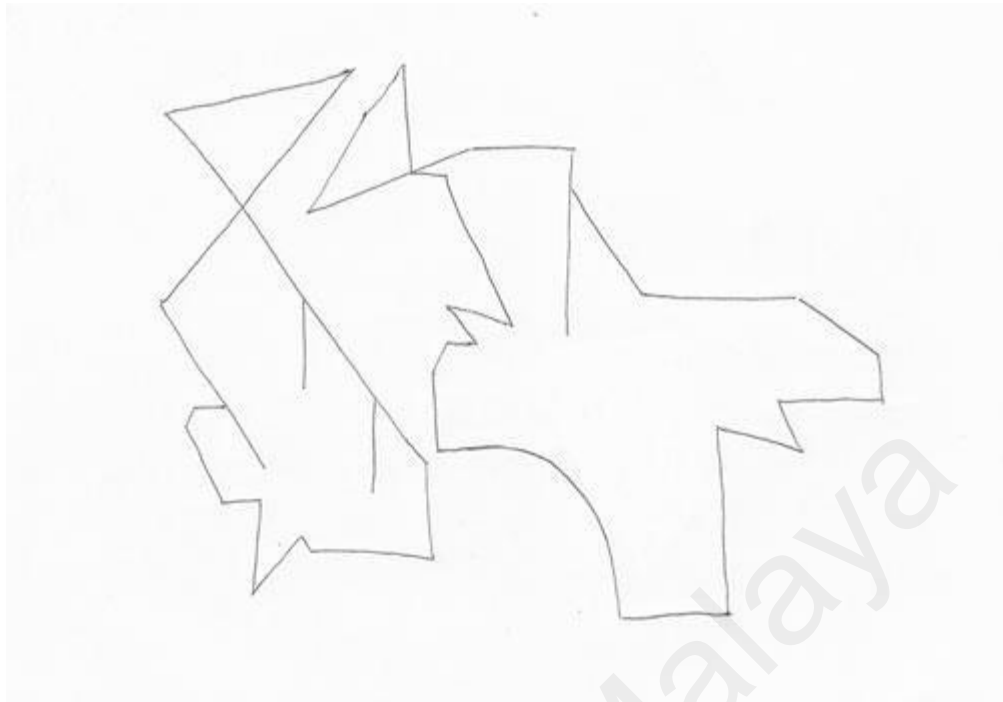


Figure C.21 Letterforms K by POIS. Ballpen on paper. Size unknown.
10 July 2013. Prague.



Figure C.22 Two (2) letterforms E and two (2) letterforms K by SIEK. [One pair is incorporated into a sketched SIEK throw-up shape.] Pencil and marker on A4 size paper.
16 December 2012, Central Market, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure C.23 Three (3) letterforms E [1 strikethrough] and two (2) letterforms K by VOLRE.
Pencil and marker on A4 size paper.
16 December 2012, Central Market, Kuala Lumpur.

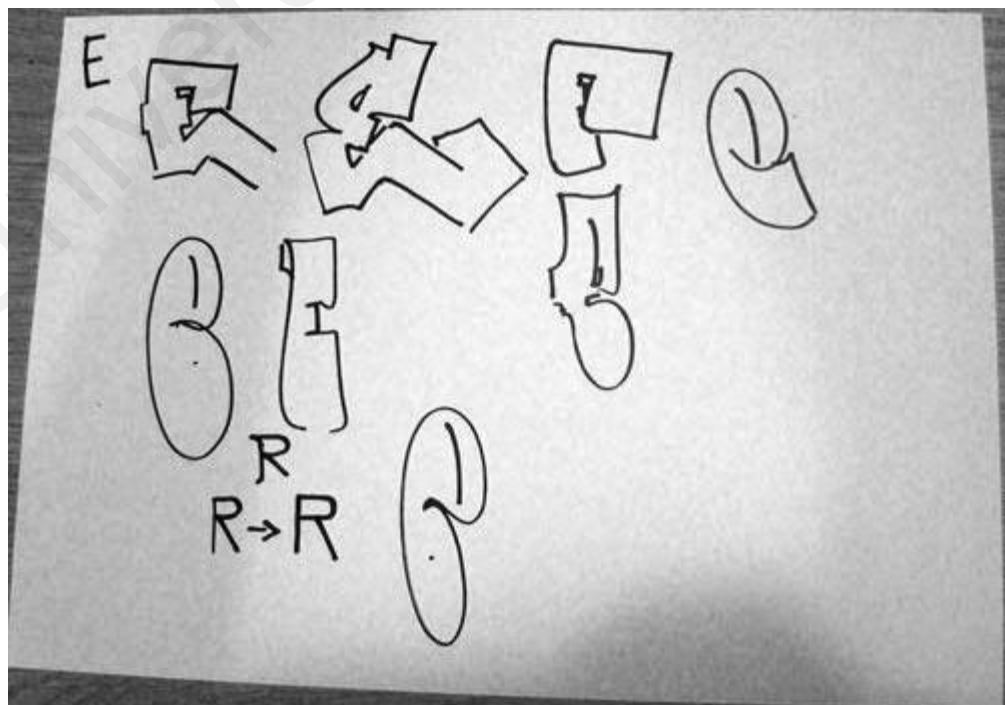


Figure C.24 Eight (8) letterforms E by HANES. Marker on A4 size paper.
01 November 2012, Staroměstská, Prague.

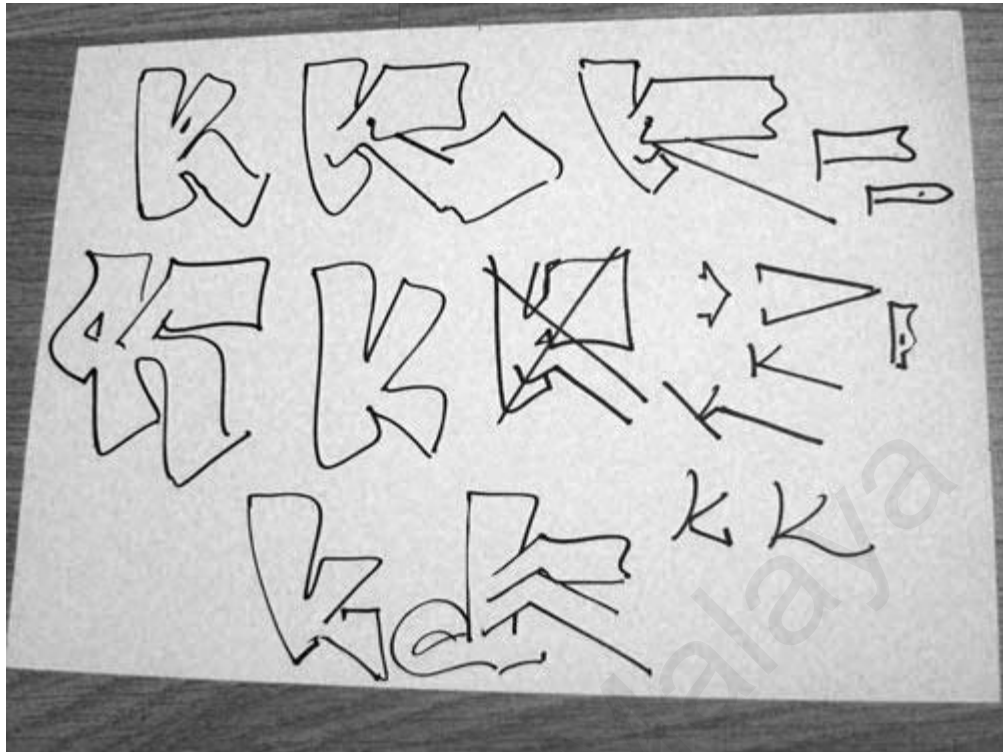


Figure C.25 Eight (8) letterforms K [1 strikethrough] by HANES. Marker on A4 size paper.
01 November 2012, Staroměstská, Prague.

APPENDIX D: Style development by SIEK, KIOUE, CARPET and NUKE



Figure D.1 SIEK 1/25.



Figure D.2 SIEK 2/25.



Figure D.3 SIEK 3/25.



Figure D.4 SIEK 4/25.



Figure D.5 SIEK 5/25.



Figure D.6 SIEK 6/25.



Figure D.7 SIEK 7/25.



Figure D.8 SIEK 8/25.



Figure D.9 SIEK 9/25.



Figure D.10 SIEK 10/25.



Figure D.11 SIEK 11/25.



Figure D.12 SIEK 12/25.



Figure D.13 SIEK 13/25.



Figure D.14 SIEK 14/25.



Figure D.15 SIEK 15/25.



Figure D.16 SIEK 16/25.



Figure D.17 SIEK 17/25.



Figure D.18 SIEK 18/25.



Figure D.19 SIEK 19/25.



Figure D.20 SIEK 20/25.



Figure D.21 SIEK 21/25.



Figure D.22 SIEK 22/25.



Figure D.23 SIEK 23/25.



Figure D.24 SIEK 24/25.



Figure D.25 SIEK 25/25.



Figure D.26 KIOUE 1/25.



Figure D.27 KIOUE 2/25.



Figure D.28 KIOUE 3/25.



Figure D.29 KIOUE 4/25.



Figure D.30 KIOUE 5/25.



Figure D.31 KIOUE 6/25.



Figure D.32 KIOUE 7/25.



Figure D.33 KIOUE 8/25.



Figure D.34 KIOUE 9/25.



Figure D.35 KIOUE 10/25.



Figure D.36 KIOUE 11/25.



Figure D.37 KIOUE 12/25.



Figure D.38 KIOUE 13/25.



Figure D.39 KIOUE 14/25.



Figure D.40 KIOUE 15/25.



Figure D.41 KIOUE 16/25.



Figure D.42 KIOUE 17/25.



Figure D.43 KIOUE 18/25.



Figure D.44 KIOUE 19/25.



Figure D.45 KIOUE 20/25.



Figure D.46 KIOUE 21/25.



Figure D.47 KIOUE 22/25.



Figure D.48 KIOUE 23/25.



Figure D.49 KIOUE 24/25.



Figure D.50 KIOUE 25/25.



Figure D.51 CARPET 1/25.



Figure D.52 CARPET 2/25.



Figure D.53 CARPET 3/25.



Figure D.54 CARPET 4/25.



Figure D.55 CARPET 5/25.



Figure D.56 CARPET 6/25.



Figure D.57 CARPET 7/25.



Figure D.58 CARPET 8/25.



Figure D.59 CARPET 9/25.



Figure D.60 CARPET 10/25.



Figure D.61 CARPET 11/25.



Figure D.62 CARPET 12/25.



Figure D.63 CARPET 13/25.



Figure D.64 CARPET 14/25.



Figure D.65 CARPET 15/25.



Figure D.66 CARPET 16/25.



Figure D.67 CARPET 17/25.



Figure D.68 CARPET 18/25.



Figure D.69 CARPET 19/25.



Figure D.70 CARPET 20/25.



Figure D.71 CARPET 21/25.



Figure D.72 CARPET 22/25.



Figure D.73 CARPET 23/25.



Figure D.74 CARPET 24/25.



Figure D.75 CARPET 25/25.



Figure D.76 NUKE 1/25.



Figure D.77 NUKERS [NUKE] 2/25.



Figure D.78 NUKE 3/25.



Figure D.79 NUKE 4/25.



Figure D.80 FRESH [NUKE] 5/25.



Figure D.81 NUKE 6/25.



Figure D.82 NUKE 7/25.



Figure D.83 NUKE 8/25.



Figure D.84 BEATS [NUKE] 9/25.



Figure D.85 DESYR [NUKE] 10/25.



Figure D.86 DESYR [NUKE] 11/25.



Figure D.87 DESYR [NUKE] 12/25.



Figure D.88 DESYR [NUKE] 13/25.



Figure D.89 DESYR [NUKE] 14/25.



Figure D.90 DESYR [NUKE] 15/25.



Figure D.91 CYPHER [NUKE] 16/25.



Figure D.92 DESYR [NUKE] 17/25.



Figure D.93 DESYR [NUKE] 18/25.



Figure D.94 DESYR [NUKE] 19/25.



Figure D.95 NUKE 20/25.



Figure D.96 NUKE 21/25.



Figure D.97 NUKE 22/25.



Figure D.98 SEBAT [NUKE] 23/25.



Figure D.99 NUKE 24/25.



Figure D.100 NUKE 25/25.

APPENDIX E: Legibility Experiment (Photograph Sample)



Figure E.1: Figure A
[‘NUKERS’ piece by NUKE. 2008, Tennis wall, Shah Alam, GKL.]



Figure E.2: Figure B
[‘CARPET’ piece by CARPET. Width: 510 cm; height: 200 cm. 2011, Wangsa Maju, GKL.]



Figure E.3: Figure C
[‘KIOUE’ piece by KIOUE. 2008, Bukit Bintang, KL.]



Figure E.4: Figure D
 ['SIEK' piece by SIEK; collaboration with KATUN [character], 2012, Bukit Bintang, KL.]



Figure E.5: Figure E
['DESYR' piece by NUKE. Width: 605 cm; height: 199 cm. 2011, Jelatek, KL.]



Figure E.6: Figure F
[‘CARPET’ piece by CARPET. 2010, Pasar Seni, KL.]



Figure E.7: Figure G
[‘KIOUE’ piece by KIOUE. [Character by BIBICHUN,] 2009, Pasar Seni, KL.]



Figure E.8: Figure H
[‘SIEK’ piece by SIEK. Width: 640 cm; height: 230 cm. 2011, Wangsa Maju, GKL.]



Figure E.9: Figure I
[‘DESYR’ piece by NUKE. 2011, Jelatek, KL.]



Figure E.10: Figure J
[‘CARPET’ piece by CARPET. Wall height: 235 cm. 2008, Melawati wall, GKL.]



Figure E.11: Figure K
['KIOUE' piece by KIOUE. Width: 655 cm; height: 225 cm. 2011, Wangsa Maju, GKL.]



Figure E.12: Figure L
[‘SIEK’ piece [and character] by SIEK. Wall height: 235 cm. 2009, Melawati wall, GKL.]



Figure E.13: Figure M
[‘NUKE’ piece by NUKE. Width: 687 cm; height: 208 cm. 2012, Jelatek, KL.]



Figure E.14: Figure N
 ['CARPET' piece by CARPET. 2009, Imbi, KL.]



Figure E.15: Figure O
[‘KIOUE’ piece by KIOUE. Wall height: ~245 cm. 2010, Jelatek, KL.]



Figure E.16: Figure P
[‘SIEK’ piece by SIEK. 2010, Pasar Seni, KL.]



Figure E.17: Figure Q
[‘NUKE’ piece by NUKE. Width: 400 cm; height: 200 cm. 2009, KTM tunnel bridge, Shah Alam, GKL.]



Figure E.18: Figure R
 ['CARPET' piece by CARPET. Wall height: 235 cm. 2009, Melawati wall, GKL.]



Figure E.19: Figure S
[‘TH[E] KIOUE’ piece by KIOUE. 2009, Bukit Bintang, KL.]



Figure E.20: Figure T
[‘SIEK’ piece by SLEK. Wall height: ~200 cm. 2008, Secret Spot, GKL.]

App. E: 1.0 Legibility Experiment (Authors' Own Interpretation of a Work)

To show the artistic intentions of the graffiti artists NUKE, CARPET, KIOUE and SIEK I present in this section diagrams to the pieces, which formed the photographic sample of the legibility research experiment. All the four graffiti artists – NUKE, CARPET, KIOUE and SIEK – were asked to trace on the sheet protectors a simplified version of their subject matter letterforms in the pieces on pages 633-652 (see KIOUE in Figure 3.107 on page 217 tracing the outlines of his piece). After gathering the correct artistic intentions of the graffiti artists (Figure E.21), I traced their responses in the graphic program Adobe Illustrator into vector objects and send the traced images via email back to NUKE, CARPET, KIOUE and SIEK for verification. NUKE's works in Figure E.23-Figure E.32 were confirmed by the artist as '*its all correct*' via email on the 31 March 2013. CARPET's works in Figure E.33-Figure E.42 were confirmed by the artist as '*everything correct*' via email on the 28 March 2013. KIOUE's works in Figure E.43-Figure E.52 were confirmed by the artist as '*exactly....nice trace*' via email on the 30 March 2013. SIEK's works in Figure E.53-Figure E.62 were confirmed by the artist as '*absolutely correct*' via email on the 27 March 2013. The pieces were then deconstructed in three steps (see Figure E.23-Figure E.62):

- 1) Simplified: the letterform shapes were simplified to a lighter, more legible version.
- 2) Highlighted: the letterform shapes were highlighted to keep them apart.
- 3) Separated: the letterform shapes were separated to avoid their overlapping.



Figure E.21 CARPET traced the letterforms in his piece onto a sheet protector (with the original photograph).
Outline by CARPET created on: 21 February 2013. Imbi, KL.



Figure E.22 Figure E.21 after removing the original photograph.
Outline by CARPET created on: 21 February 2013. Imbi, KL.



Figure E.23 NUKE aka NUKERS lettering simplified and highlighted.

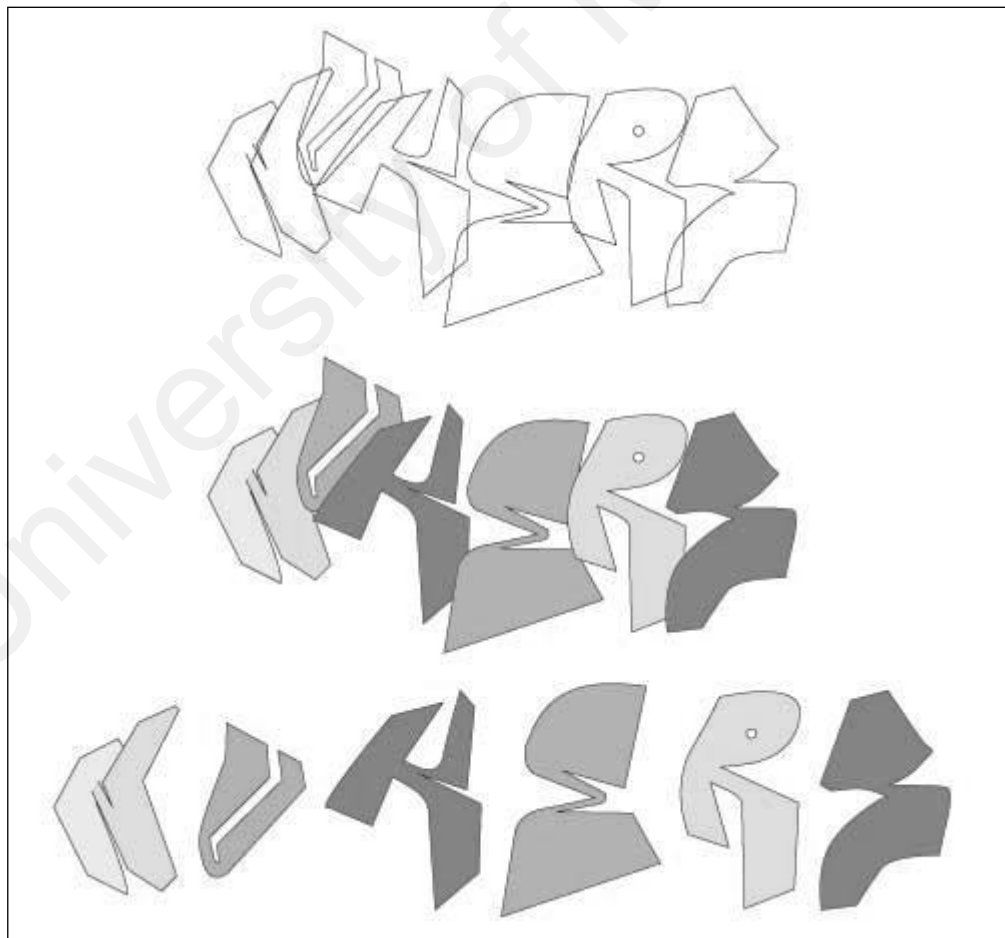


Figure E.24 NUKE aka NUKERS' lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.25 NUKE lettering simplified and highlighted.

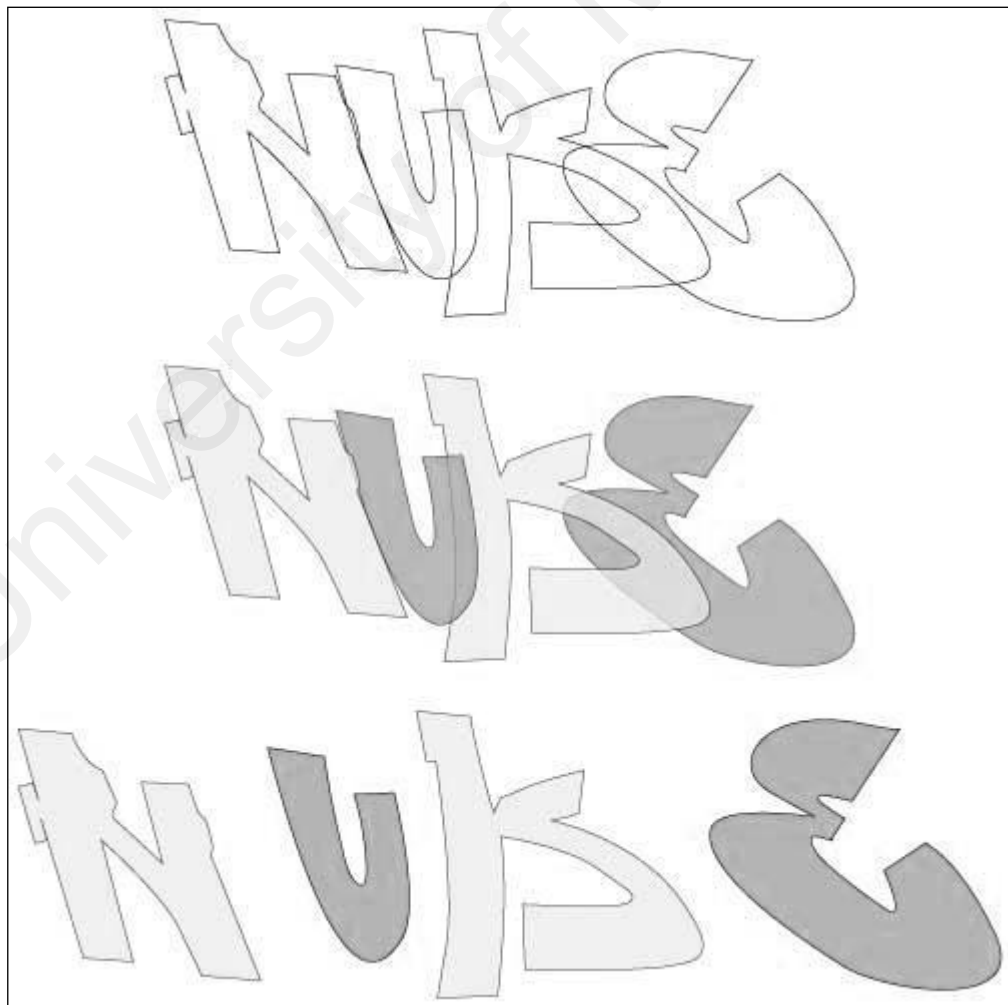


Figure E.26 NUKE lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.27 NUKE aka DESYR lettering simplified and highlighted.

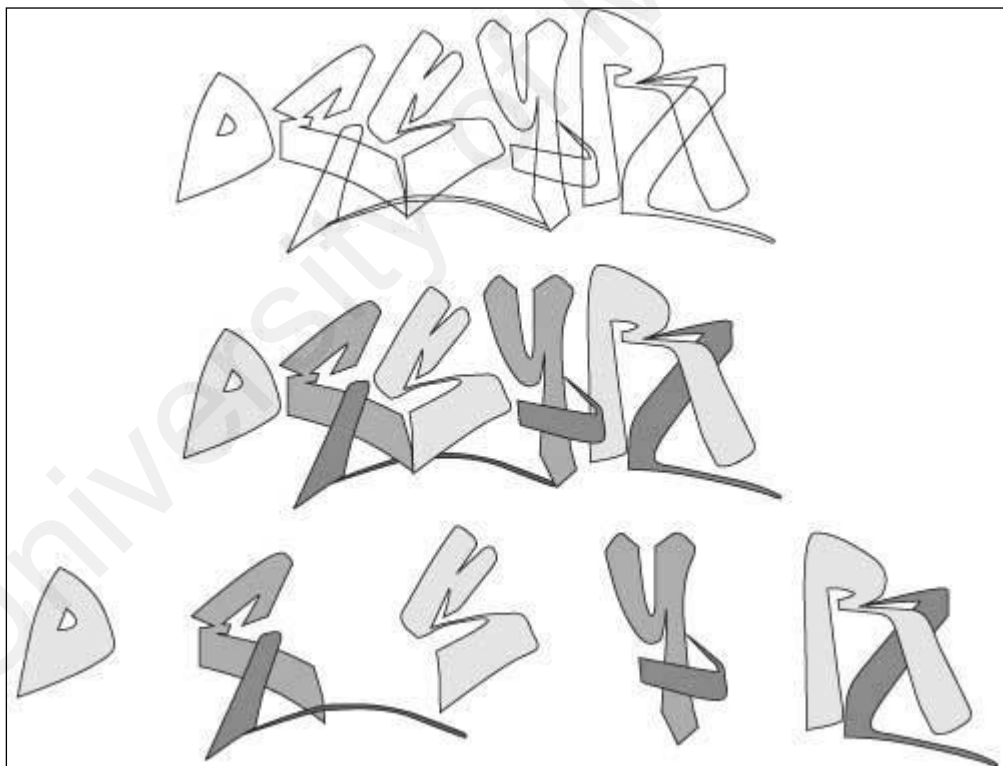


Figure E.28 NUKE aka DESYR's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.29 NUKE aka DESYR lettering simplified and highlighted.

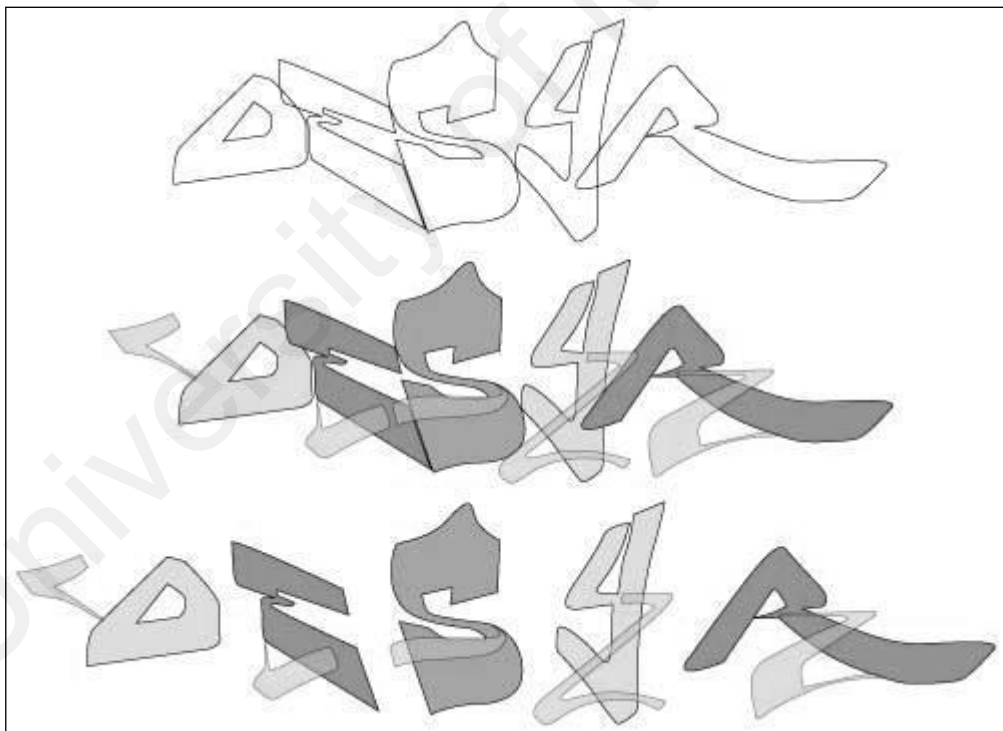


Figure E.30 NUKE aka DESYR's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.31 NUKE lettering simplified and highlighted.



Figure E.32 NUKE's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.33 CARPET lettering simplified and highlighted.

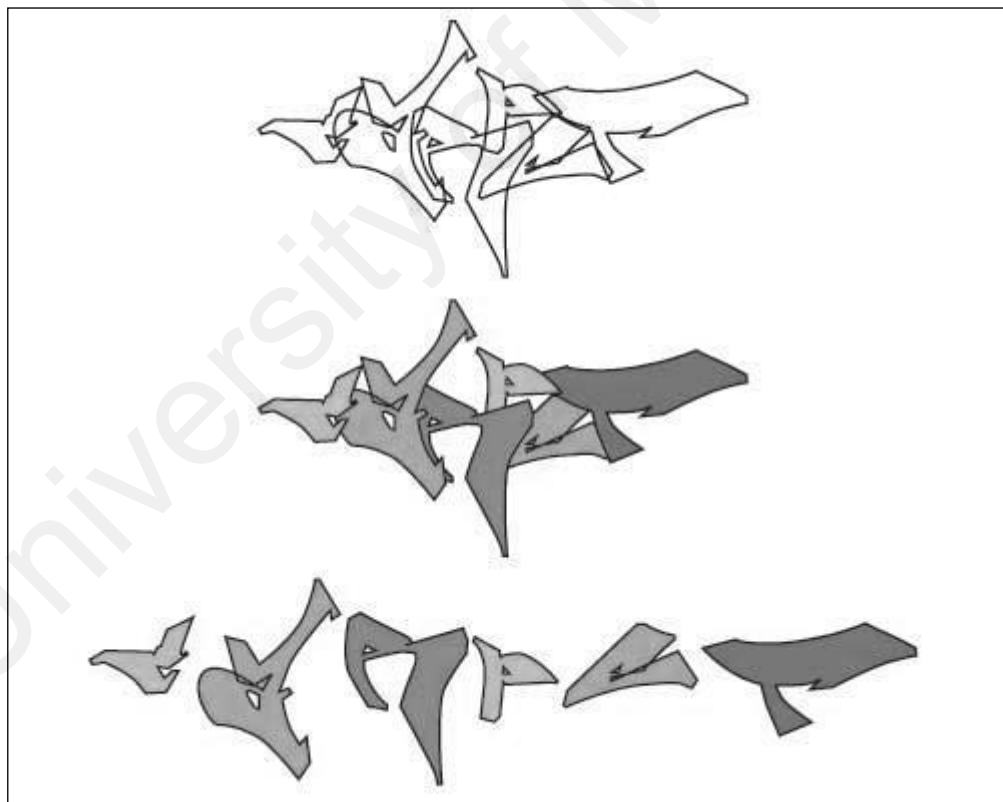


Figure E.34 CARPET's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.35 CARPET lettering simplified and highlighted.

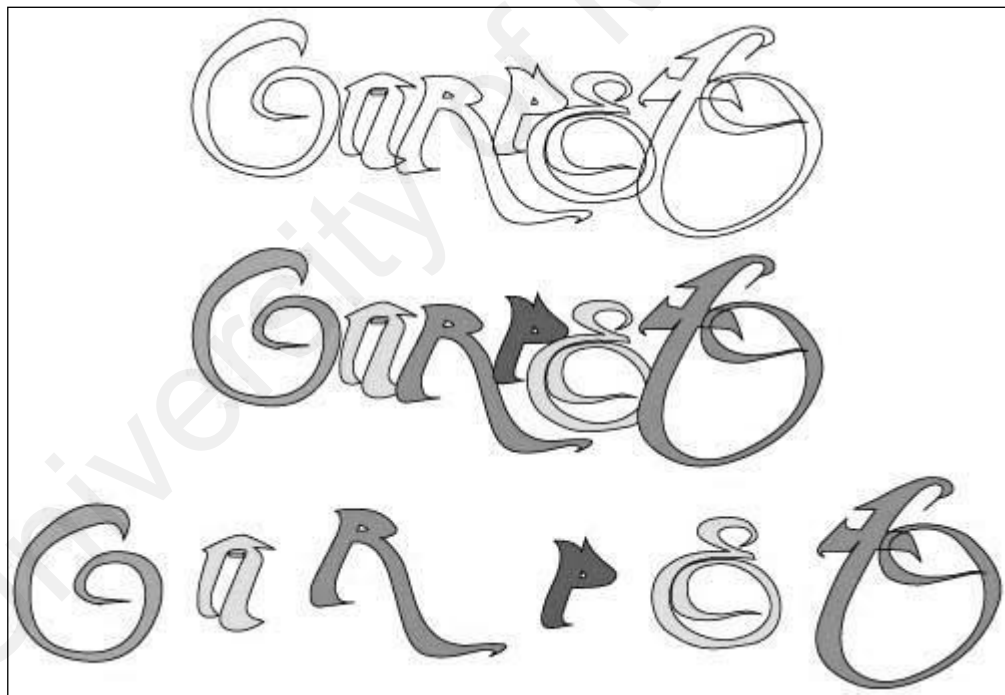


Figure E.36 CARPET's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.37 CARPET lettering simplified and highlighted.



Figure E.38 CARPET's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.39 CARPET lettering simplified and highlighted.

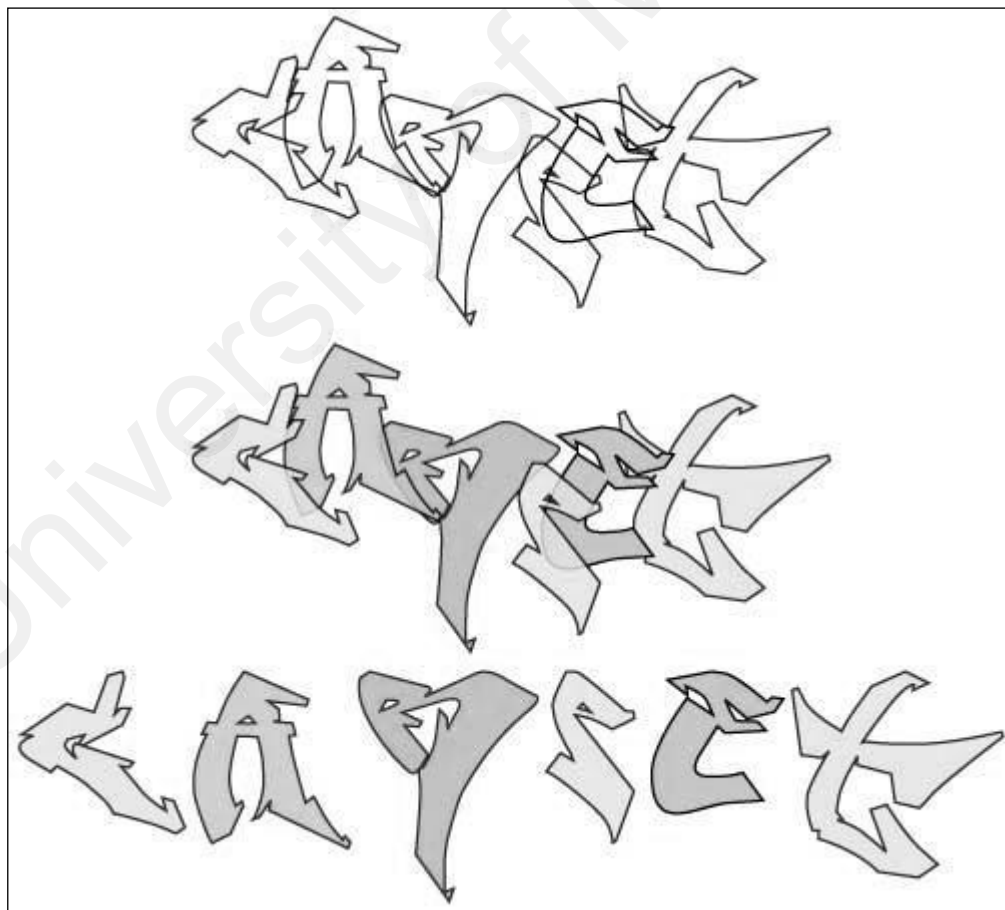


Figure E.40 CARPET's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.41 CARPET lettering simplified and highlighted.

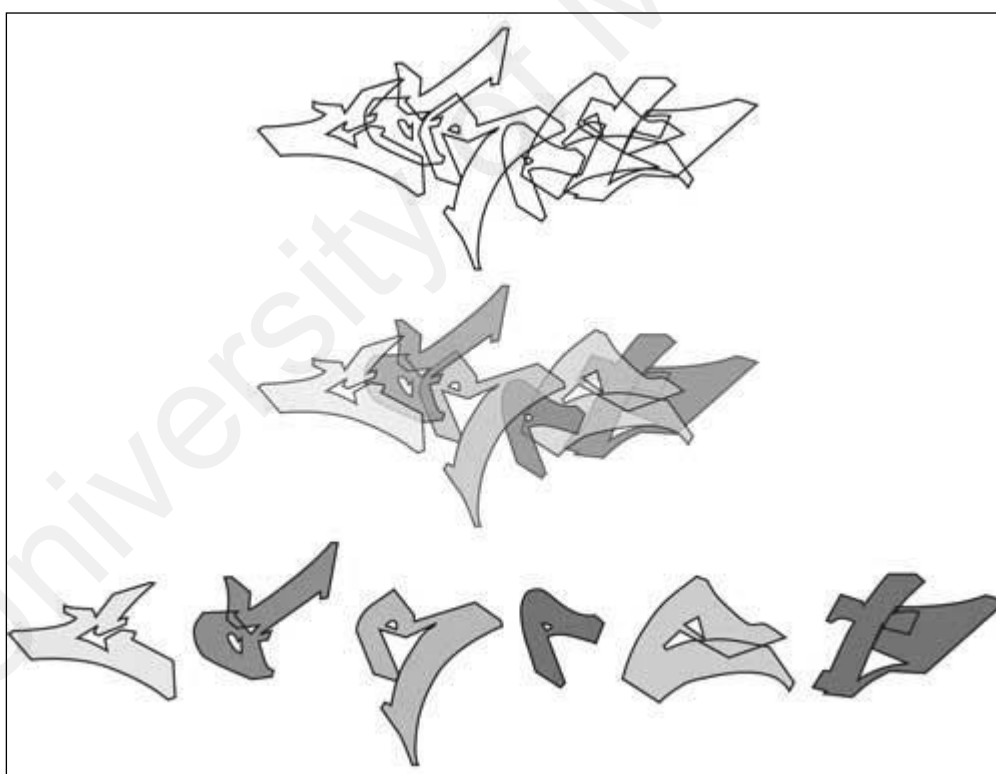


Figure E.42 CARPET's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.43 KIOUE lettering simplified and highlighted.

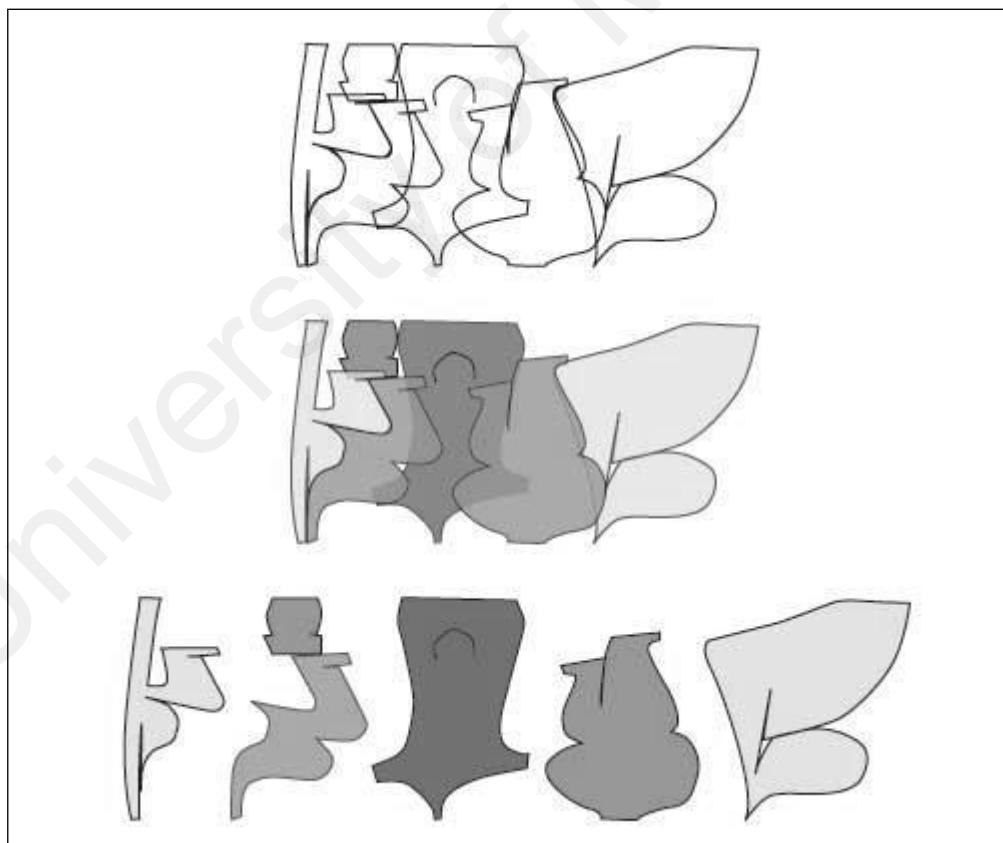


Figure E.44 KIOUE's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.45 KIOUE lettering simplified and highlighted.

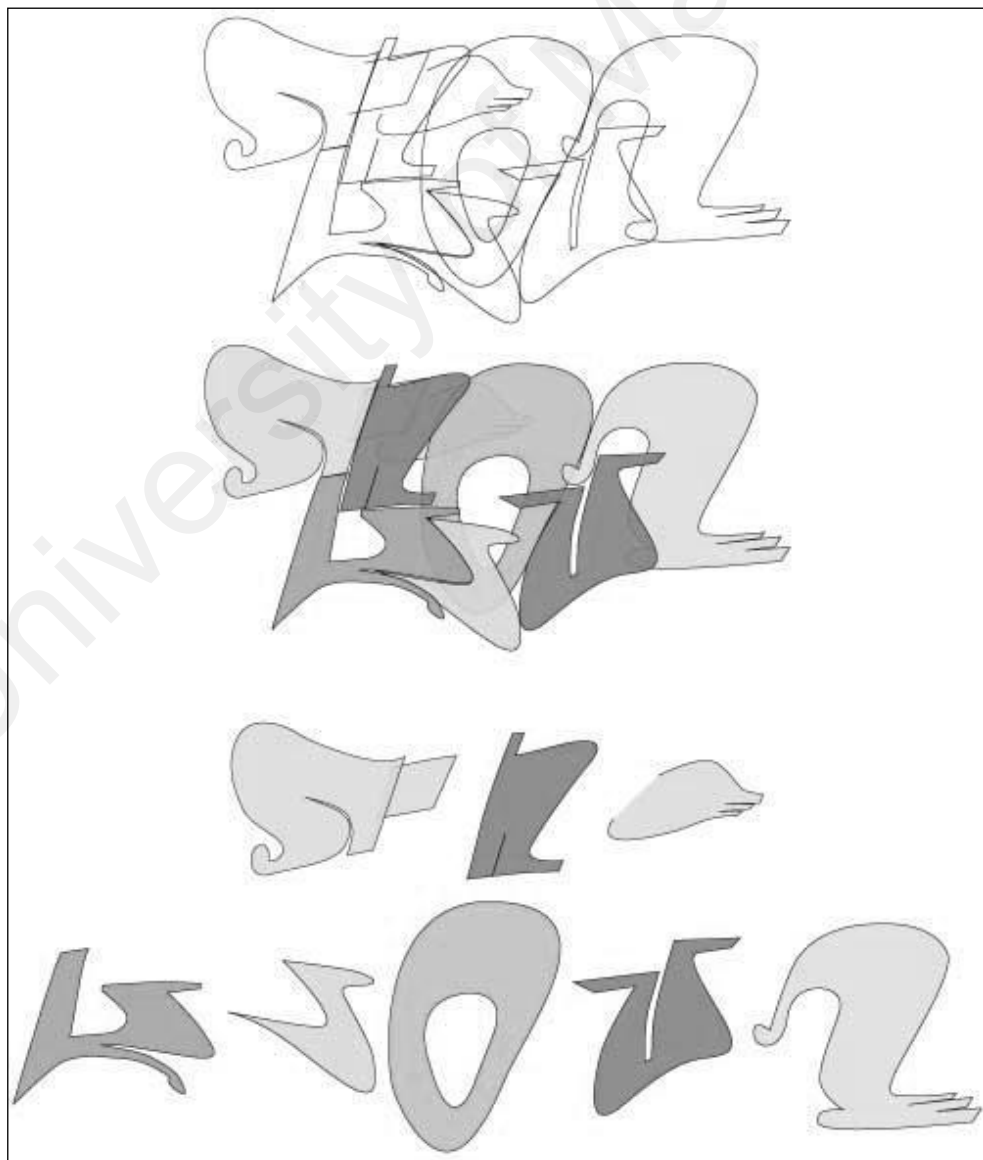


Figure E.46 KIOUE's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.47 KIOUE lettering simplified and highlighted.

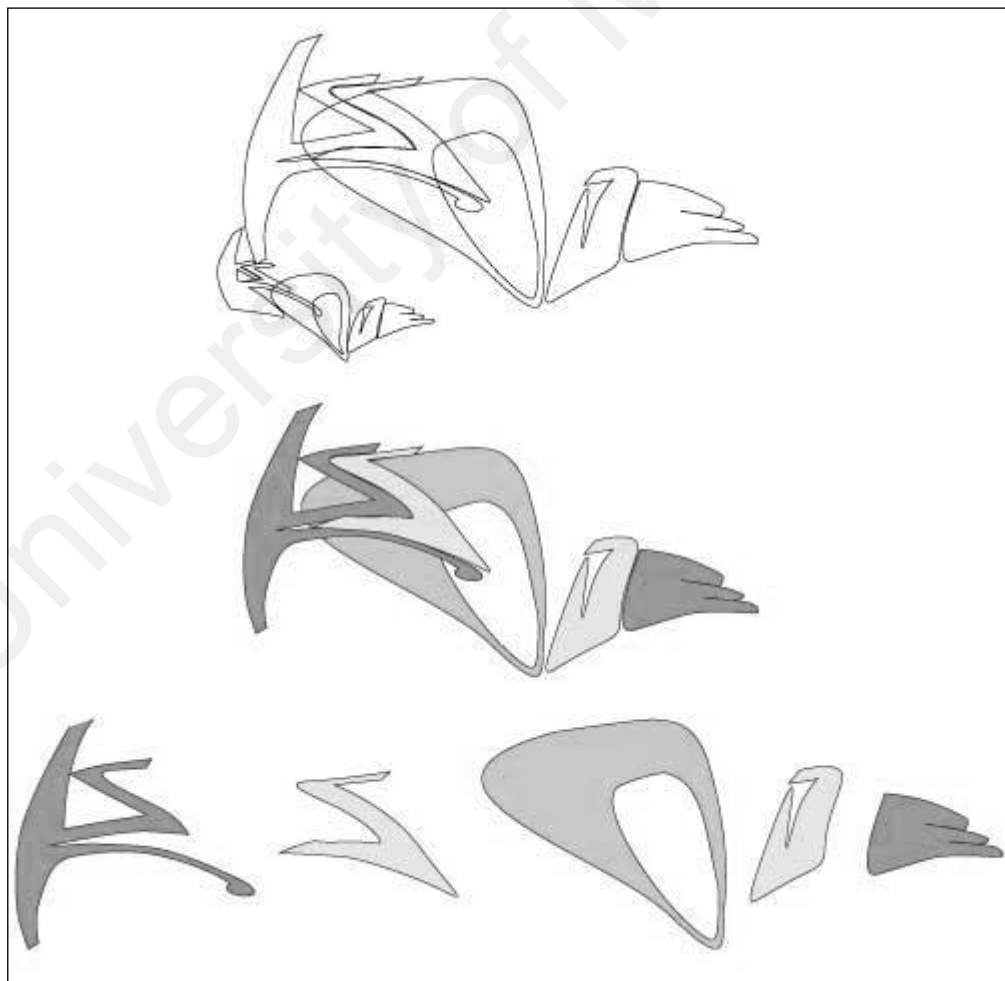


Figure E.48 KIOUE's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.49 KIOUE lettering simplified and highlighted.

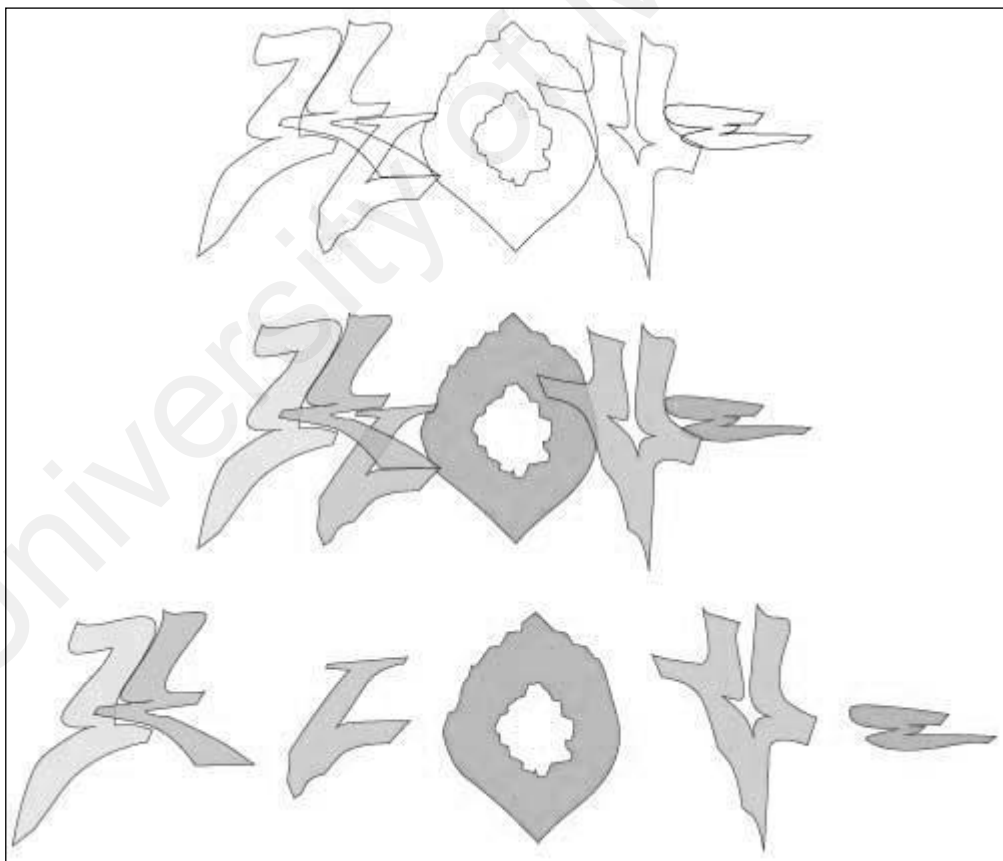


Figure E.50 KIOUE's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.51 KIOUE lettering simplified and highlighted.

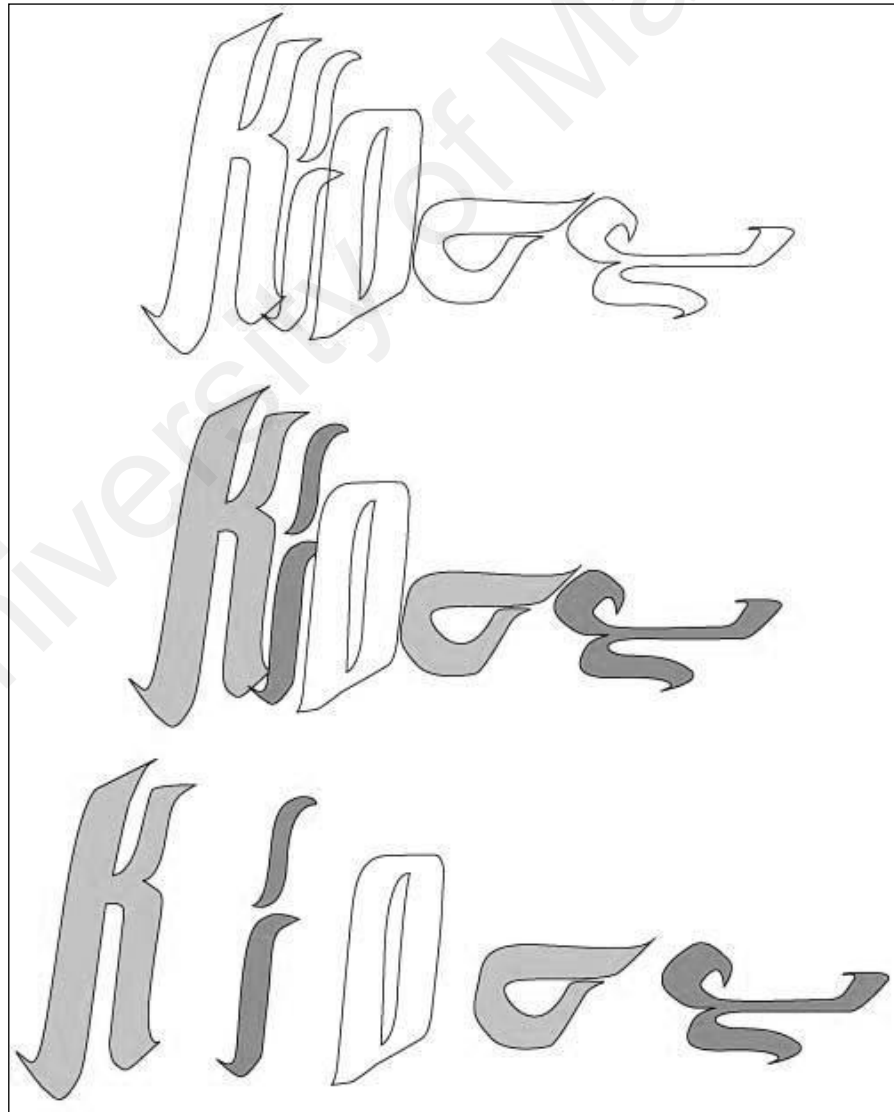


Figure E.52 KIOUE's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.53 SIEK lettering simplified and highlighted.

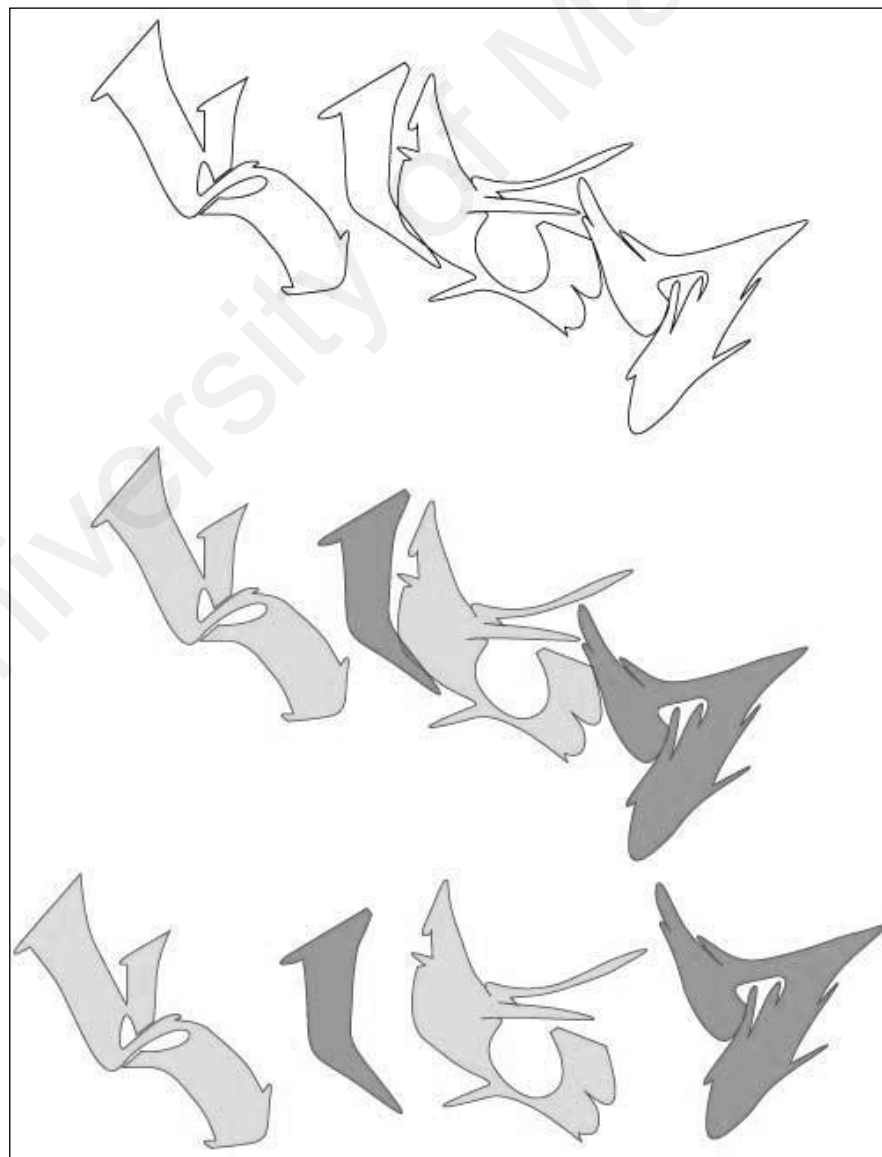


Figure E.54 SIEK's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.55 SIEK lettering simplified and highlighted.

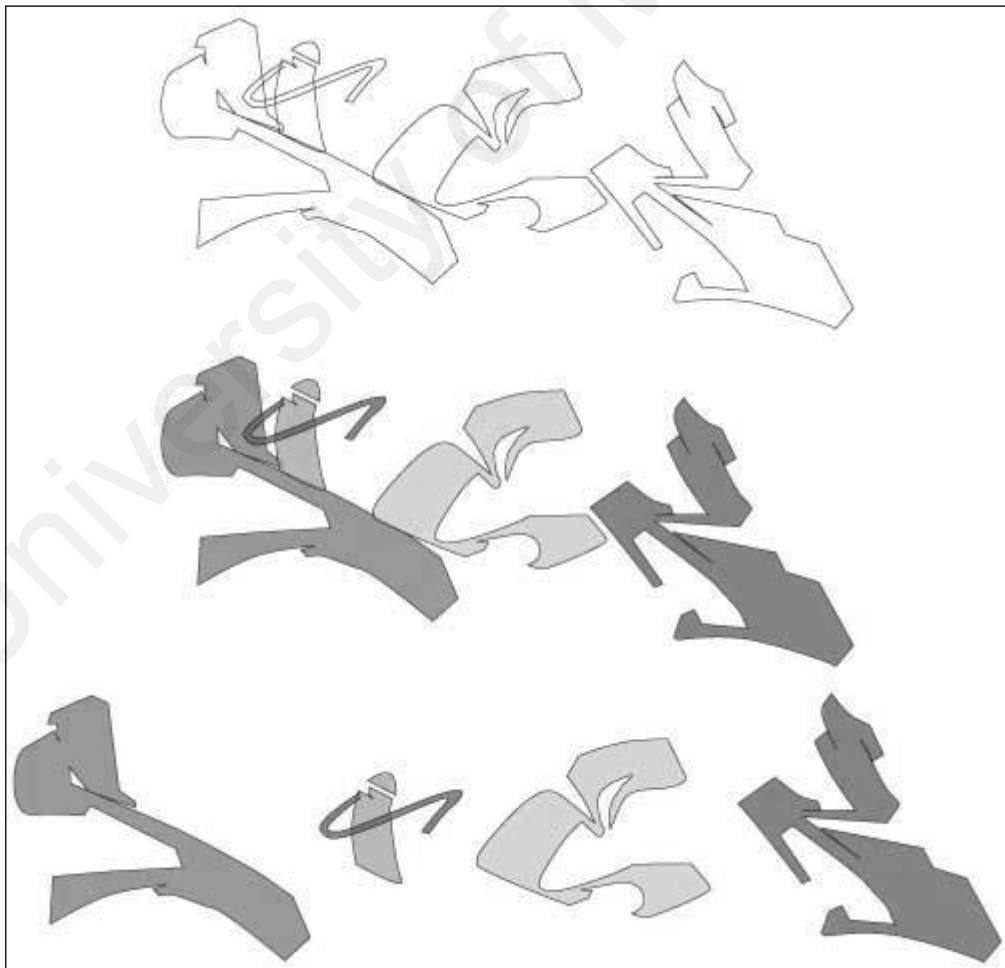


Figure E.56 SIEK's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.57 SIEK lettering simplified and highlighted.

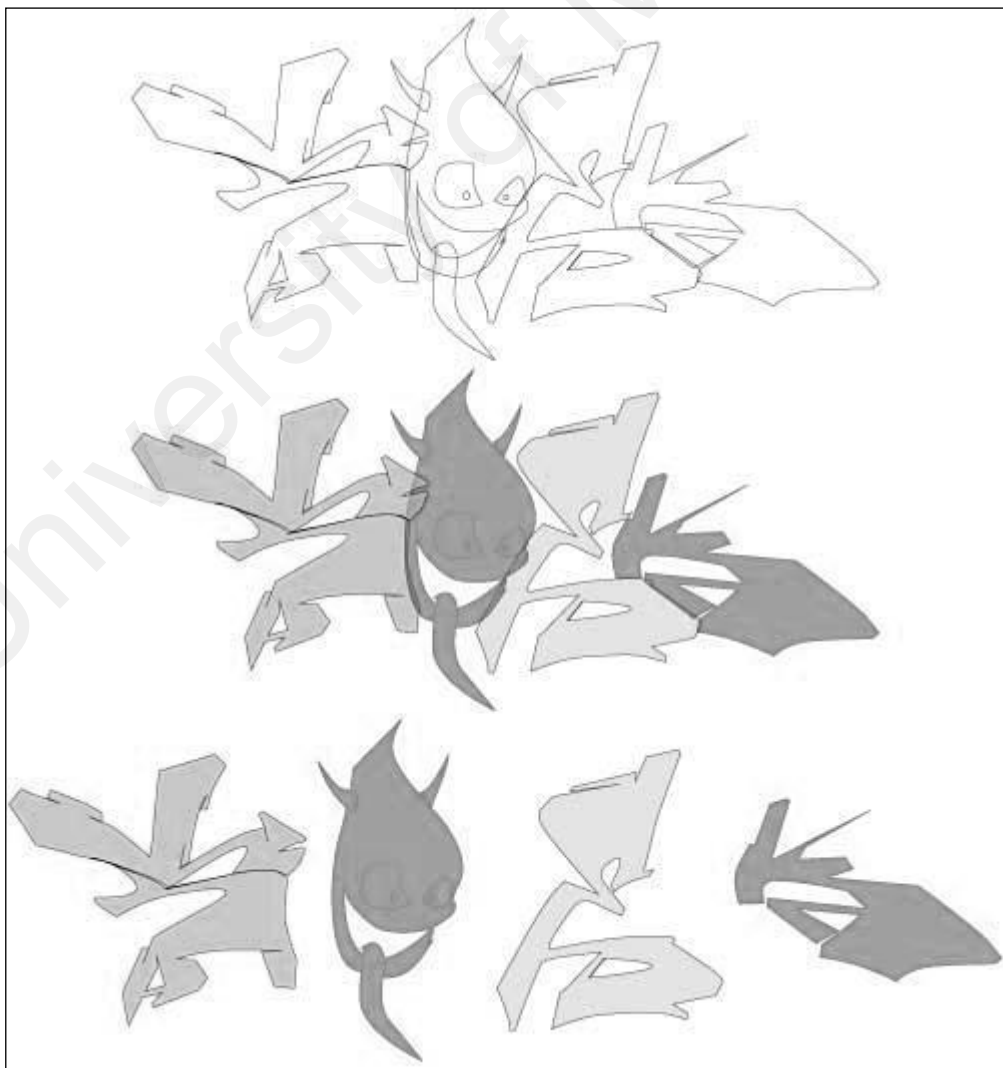


Figure E.58 SIEK's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.59 SIEK lettering simplified and highlighted.

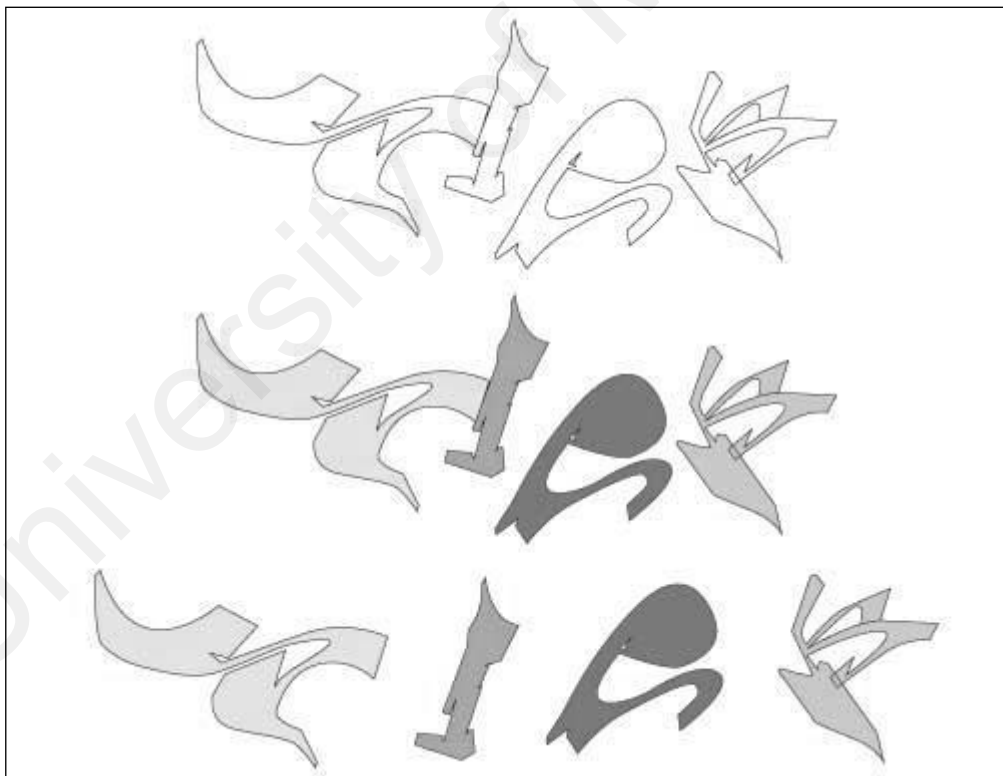


Figure E.60 SIEK's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.



Figure E.61 SIEK lettering simplified and highlighted.

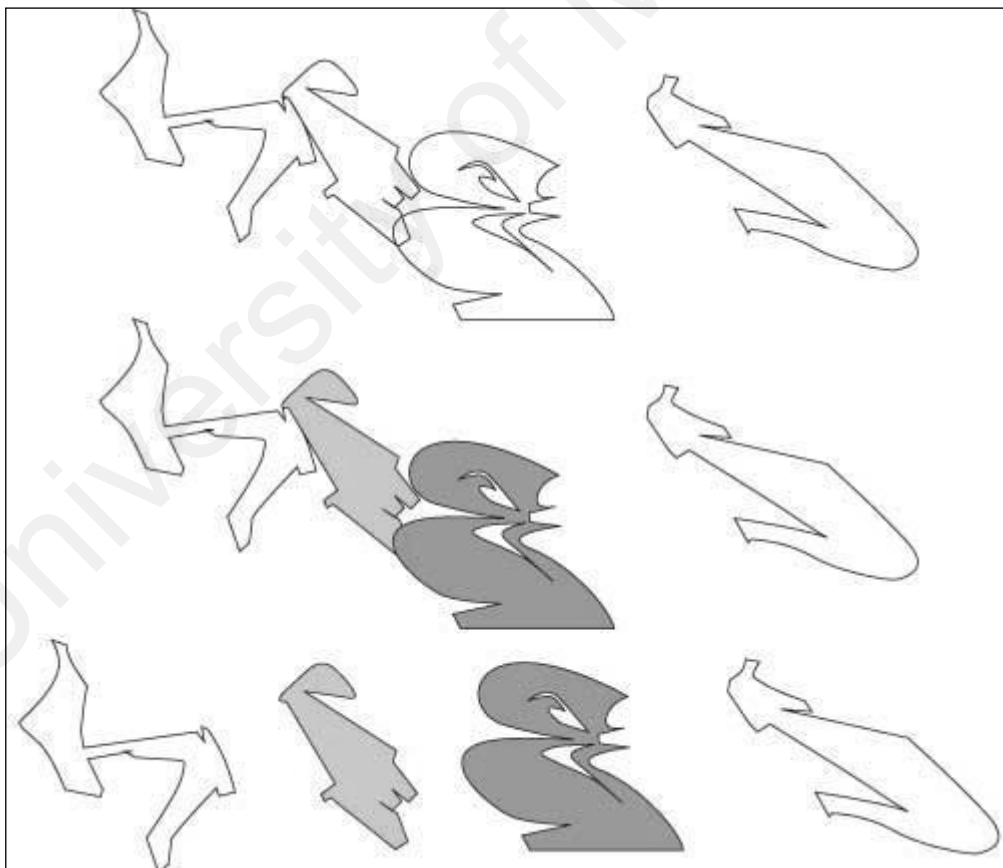


Figure E.62 SIEK's lettering simplified, highlighted and separated.

App. E: 1.1 Experimental Group Example: Results for MIRA2

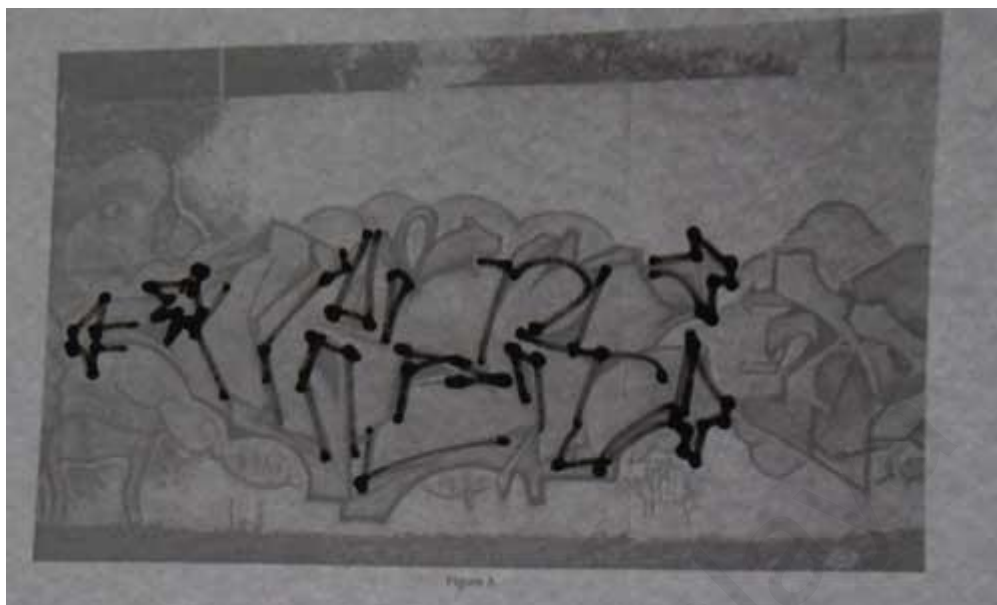


Figure E.63 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure A as: KERS.



Figure E.64 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure B as: CAETAS.



Figure E.65 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure C as: TIY!.



Figure E.66 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure D as: KP E Z.



Figure E.67 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure E as: DESYR.

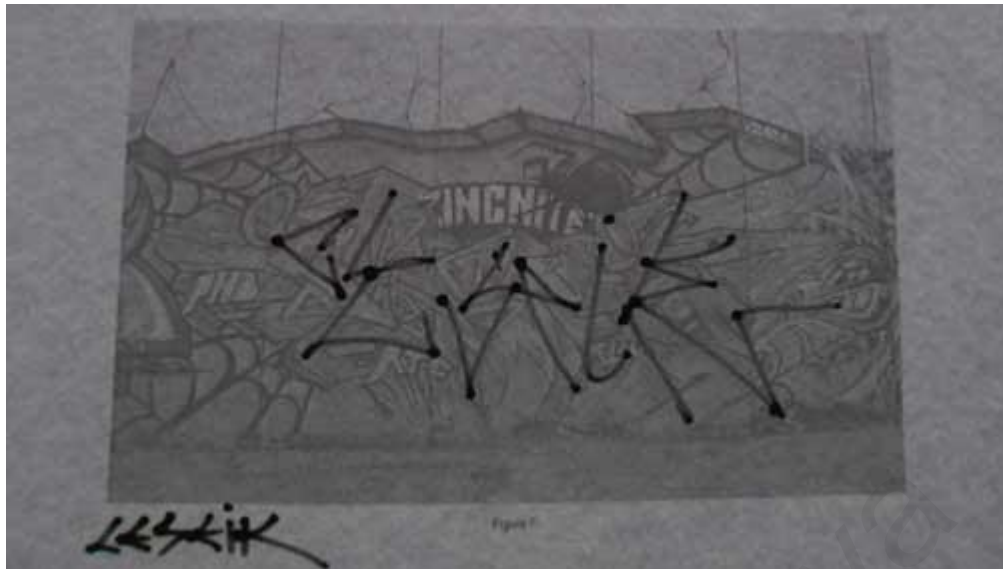


Figure E.68 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure F as: CESEIK.



Figure E.69 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure G as: BE PULSE.



Figure E.70 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure H as: BOREK.



Figure E.71 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure I as: DESYR.



Figure E.72 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure J as: BAZER.



Figure E.73 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure K as: AKIDZE.



Figure E.74 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure L as: DAEK.



Figure E.75 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure M as: INUKE.



Figure E.76 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure N as: BATPEB.



Figure E.77 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure O as: KIOVE.

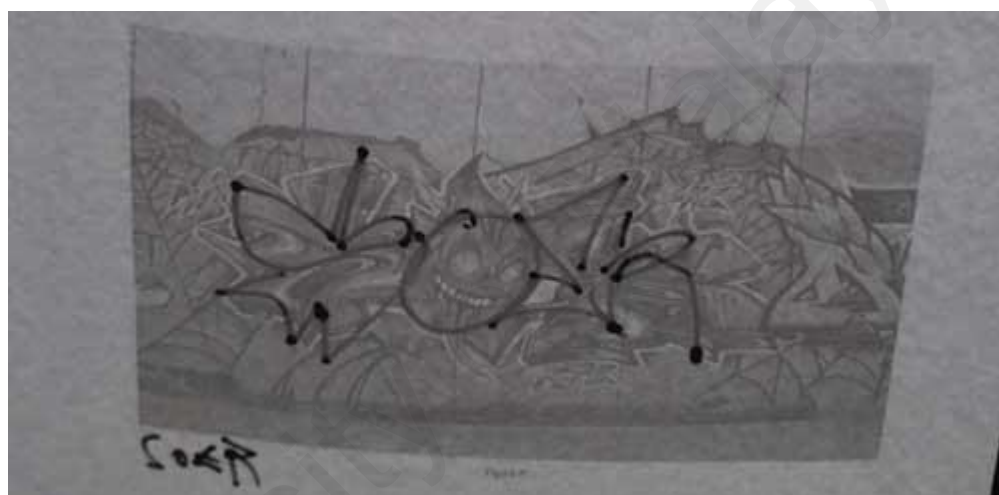


Figure E.78 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure P as: SOER.

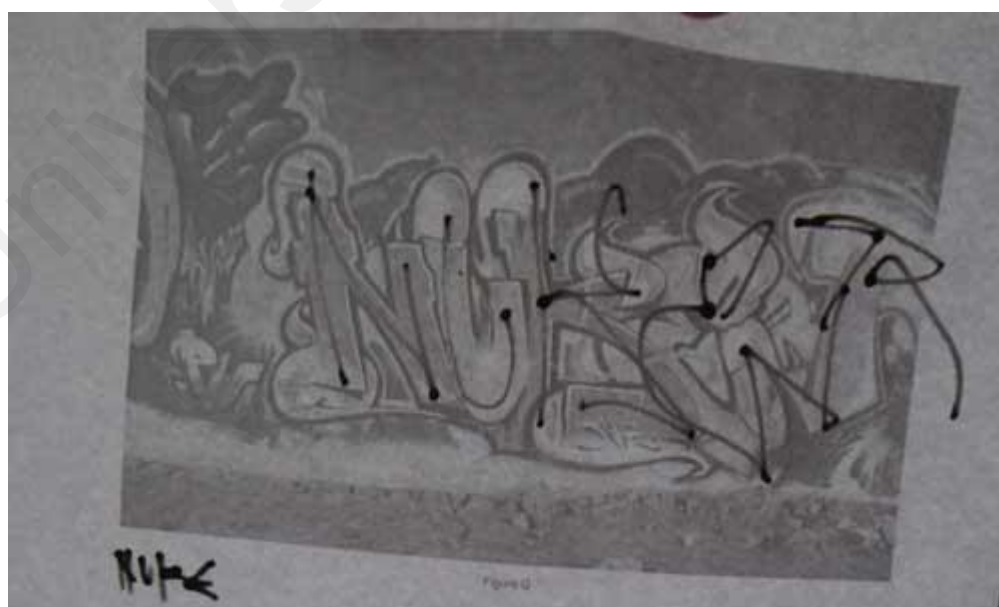


Figure E.79 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure Q as: NUKE.



Figure E.80 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure R as: ERPEL.



Figure E.81 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure S as: TA.



Figure E.82 MIRA2 deciphered the piece in Figure T as: SIEK.

App. E: 1.2 Control Group Example: Results for POIS



Figure E.83 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure A as: KERS.



Figure E.84 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure B as: CA.

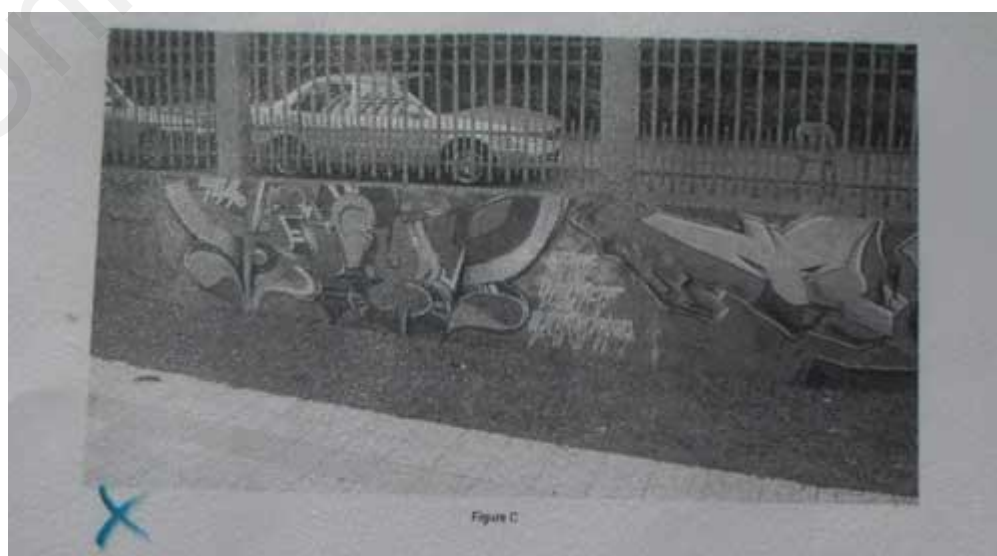


Figure E.85 POIS did not decipher the piece in Figure C.



Figure E.86 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure D as: K E.



Figure E.87 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure E as: DESYR.



Figure E.88 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure F as: C PE.



Figure E.89 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure G as: SE.



Figure E.90 POIS did not decipher the piece in Figure H.



Figure E.91 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure I as: DESYR.



Figure E.92 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure J as: CA PE.



Figure E.93 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure K as: KIO E.



Figure E.94 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure L as: DAEK.



Figure E.95 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure M as: NUKE.



Figure E.96 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure N as: CASPET.



Figure E.97 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure O as: KIOVE.



Figure E.98 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure P as: OEK.



Figure E.99 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure Q as: NUKE.



Figure E.100 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure R as: CARPET.



Figure E.101 POIS did not tried to decipher the piece in Figure S.



Figure E.102 POIS deciphered the piece in Figure T as: SIEK.

APPENDIX F: Sample for Visual Content Analysis



Figure F.1 Skull in clouds above the word '+OVERDOSE'.
By NAS-EL



Figure F.2 Skull. By NENOK.



Figure F.3 Many skulls or alien-humanoid heads in a 3-D style piece. By JUON.



Figure F.4 NENOK replaced in his 'NENOK' piece the letter 'O' with a skull wearing a baseball cap.



Figure F.5 A street by night with a deep, single vanishing point in between the pieces by SIEK and PHOBIA.

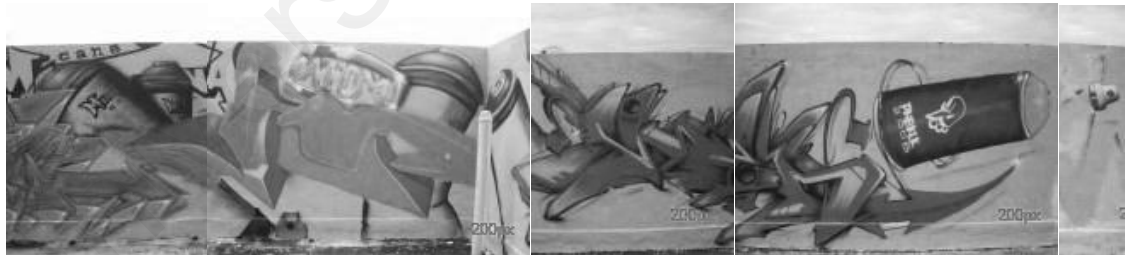


Figure F.6 Production by CARPET, KATUN, DATOM and SIEK dedicated to Montana Cans.



Figure F.7 Futuristic collaboration between SLACSATU (piece) and KATUN (sci-fi character).



Figure F.8 A big eye in a THA-B piece.



Figure F.9 Urban – KL – skyline in a silver piece by PHBKLK. [Crossed by TSS.]



Figure F.10 Bullet holes and split designs in a silver piece by PHBKLK.



Figure F.11 : A walking butt with sunglasses. By THA-B.



Figure F.12 Futuristic collaboration between SIEK (3-D style piece) and KATUN (sci-fi characters).



Figure F.13 SNOZZE, KL throw-up and SNOZZE's trademark spray paint character wearing a fumes mask.



Figure F.14 Grinning character with baseball cap and sunglasses (reflection of KL skyline in glasses). By CARPET.



Figure F.15 SIEK's 'MANGO SEASON' piece surrounded by CCTV cameras.



Figure F.16 KATUN's bulldog accompanied with the comment 'WE PLAY HARD!'



Figure F.17 KAY's futuristic robot/machine.



Figure F.18 BONE replaced the letter 'O' with a skull.



Figure F.19 KIOUE enhanced his KIOUE piece with a portrait of an attractive woman.



Figure F.20 KATUN painted, on the right side of the PHBKLLK production, a 'dark' looking woman portrait.



Figure F.21 MIST149 painted this attention grabbing face onto a tennis wall (see the tiny ear).



Figure F.22 Clown painted as part of the circus production. By KATUN.



Figure F.23 NENOK 's skull as a letter 'O' in a 'NENOK' piece.



Figure F.24 Skull by NENOK with a comment 'STILL SKULLING'.



Figure F.25 A hip-hop (b-boy) character with a t-shirt, baseball cap and sunglasses. By NBA (NEWBA).



Figure F.26 Tough looking character by NENOK.



Figure F.27 A winged fumes mask on the Phobia Klik store (PHOBIA).



Figure F.28 KL city skyline, street images and a girl by PHBKLK graffiti artists.



Figure F.29 VLT's character suggesting the Kuala Lumpur City Hall to 'GIVE THIS WALL!' to the graffiti artists.



Figure F.30 KATUN's three-headed monster as representation of 'PHB', 'ZNC' and 'DPT' crews.



Figure F.31 Skull by SIEK.



Figure F.32 KAY's character insulting another local, KL rival graffiti art crew.



Figure F.33 KIOUE's characters' suggest to the Kuala Lumpur City Hall to 'Berikami Ruang' [GIVE US SPACE].



Figure F.34 BONKS accompanied his piece with 'strong language' comments.



Figure F.35 SNOZZE's spray man character holds a sign 'DBKL' [Kuala Lumpur City Hall] as a protest after whitewashed walls.



Figure F.36 SIEK painting a big, dominant bulldog.



Figure F.37 CARPET's character mixing colours under a lamp.



Figure F.38 CARPET's angry looking 'oldschool!!' hip-hop DJ character.



Figure F.39 SIEK placed an eye into his piece and he painted two skulls in between his and CARPET's piece.



Figure F.40 KATUN's realistic representation of a graffiti artist.



Figure F.41 Attractive woman by MEDEA.



Figure F.42 Attractive woman by ??.



Figure F.43 City skyline and urban space as a background to a PHOBIA piece.



Figure F.44 Fumes mask next to DATOM's 'EXPERIMENT #1.' 3-D style piece.



Figure F.45 Meeting of Character: characters driven on a truck by BIBICHUN, MOGOT and THEY (SEAK, VLT, SNOZZE).



Figure F.46 Meeting of Character: KL skyline, characters driven on a truck by SEAK, VLT, SNOZZE (, MOGOT and THEY).



Figure F.47 Two characters by CARPET (a graffiti artist and a hip-hoper).



Figure F.48 THEY expressing his hip-hop association with a character; and a heart and the letters KL ('LOVE' FOR KL).



Figure F.49 BONE's character with a beard and a baseball cap positioned sideways as is common in hip-hop fashion style.



Figure F.50 Skull in a hood. By NENOK.



Figure F.51 AKES character.



Figure F.52 Skull with a spray paint. By BONE.



Figure F.53 Girl character. By KAY.



Figure F.54 Attractive girl with a bloody knife in hand. By KATUN.



Figure F.55 CARPET's hip-hop DJ with an afro-style hair.



Figure F.56 Cute skull with a worm in the eye whole. By BLACK FRYDAY.



Figure F.57 CARPET's graffiti artist on top of his 'CARPET' piece.



Figure F.58 Hooded hip-hop style character by SHAGGY.



Figure F.59 Break dance character with a spray paint can in hand. By BLACK FRYDAY.



Figure F.60 Hip-hop b-boy with sneakers, hat and a stereo. By PHOBIA.



Figure F.61 Hip-hop b-boy with sneakers showing a thumb up hand gesture. By PHOBIA.



Figure F.62 Hip-hop b-boy with sneakers and baseball cap with a hand gesture. By PHOBIA.



Figure F.63 Two DJs (one in a baseball cap). By KIOUE.



Figure F.64 Fumes mask; worn by a skull with a pair of wings as background. By BUZY.



Figure F.65 A hip-hop character wearing a baseball cap and headphones. By NBA (NEWBA).



Figure F.66 A frontal depiction of a skull replacing the letter 'O' in a NENOK piece.



Figure F.67 Various 'URBAN MONSTERS'. By BLACK FRYDAY and SHERYO [SG].



Figure F.68 BONKS2 and KOS pieces in a Wild-West letter typeface, with designs of bullet holes.



Figure F.69 A character with a Cangol hat and a gun shooting paint. By NBA.



Figure F.70 A 'PHATZ' piece by PHANTOM adorned with a gas mask.



Figure F.71 A three-headed monster. By CLOAK.



Figure F.72 A BONKS2 piece featuring a crown and a small character – a man with sunglasses and a hat.



Figure F.73 A wild wasp's character with a sharp, shining sting next to a PHENUT piece.



Figure F.74 A frog with a spray paint. By AKEN.



Figure F.75 : An aggressive looking dog. By SPUXS.



Figure F.76 SpongeBob SquarePants character with a smirk. By CLOAK.



Figure F.77 A clown with a crown. By BONE.



Figure F.78 A 'SIEK' piece in collaboration with KAY; a KL skyline surrounded with Koi carps in waves.



Figure F.79 A KATUN & CARPET collaboration. An urban, hip-hop, graffiti art theme with a KL skyline including a mosque.



Figure F.80 Fantasy, sci-fi robot mask and 3-D style. By ESCAPE.



Figure F.81 Fantasy, sci-fi cyborg mask. By ESCAPE.



Figure F.82 Urban skyline as background to KATUN's piece.



Figure F.83 A 'dark' woman with spray paints and nozzles in a KATUN piece.



Figure F.84 A skull surrounded by spray paints and an eye replacing the letter 'O' in BONE's piece.



Figure F.85 Graffiti artist with a paint bucket and paint roller; spray paint cans. By WITHOUTMOTIVE.



Figure F.86 Urban landscape as background in a piece. By PHANTOM.



Figure F.87 Sunset (or sunrise) behind the KL skyline and an attractive woman. By REEZE and PAKEY.

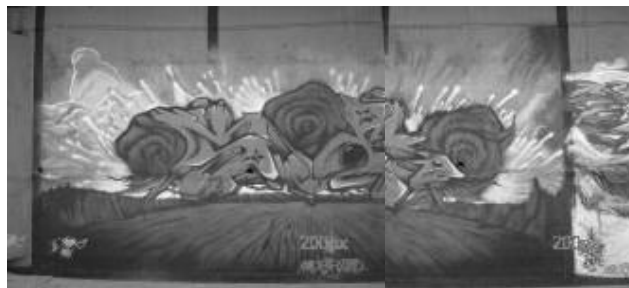


Figure F.88 An explosive background in a SIEK piece. Including roses and a tiny urban skyline. By SIEK and KAY.



Figure F.89 CARPET piece on a small, sky-island by KATUN and a small city on another island in the background; a crown.



Figure F.90 BUDEAN's and BONE's projection of a future KL city; 'IT COULD BE K.L.'s FUTURE..'.
200px



Figure F.91 A mixture of an evil skull and a clown's mask. By BONE.



Figure F.92 KL skyline background by KOS, in a 'KL' piece.



Figure F.93 Mojo Jojo character by BONE and urban skyline by SIEK; chain designs.



Figure F.94 KL skyline; chains and fire designs. By SPUXS, SIRA and JIMBIT.



Figure F.95 KL skyline background and a space ship by PEROLDZ; piece by BUZY.



Figure F.96 Pirates in a ship and an 'ICE' train as alongside origami 3-D letter-style. By BUDEAN and VOLRE.



Figure F.97 Fight between two robots, in an urban landscape. By BLACK FRYDAY and CLOAK.



Figure F.98 Screaming skateboard deck. By BALY.



Figure F.99 'Recycling the City' graffiti art work featuring a fantasy robot. By KATUN.



Figure F.100 Fantasy, sci-fi mural with a 3-D origami lettering style and a kind of 'Stargate'. By BUDEAN and VOLRE.



Figure F.101 Party time in an urban landscape including spray paint, barbed wire, a TV and hip-hop clothing.



Figure F.102 KL skyline and a character with a baseball cap having 3-D lettering style in his backpack. By ANOKAYER and MEDEA.



Figure F.103 A 3-D style piece by DON2, executed as a woodcarving.



Figure F.104 VIOLENT while finishing his character; the black splatter designs are considered as 'spirits'.



Figure F.105 JENG's cigarette boxes designs and KIOUE's piece in the colours of the Malaysian National flag.



Figure F.106 Demonstrational painting of Islamic geometrical patterns by THA-B.



Figure F.107 KIOUE painting the letters 'KI' in the shape of the traditional Malaysian 'Wau' kite.



Figure F.108 Portrait of a female with covered hair; a black scarf. By NAS-EL.



Figure F.109 Work dedicated to elder people; Islamic geometrical pattern and the portrait in the centre by THA-B; two other portraits by KIOUE.



Figure F.110 Work dedicated to babies and young kids; two abstract characters: BARBIE; baby: SPUXS; portrait of boy in baseball cap: KIOUE; large face: NAS-EL. Islamic geometrical pattern: THA-B.



Figure F.111 Work dedicated to elder people; Islamic geometrical pattern and portrait on the right: THA-B; portrait on the left: KIOUE.



Figure F.112 On the extreme left: a piece in the colours of the Malaysian National flag by KIOUE.



Figure F.113 Images of a Malaysian banknote and KL's symbols – Twin Towers and LRT. By KIOUE and THA-B.



Figure F.114 A girl's half portrait in a scarf. By ANOKAYER.



Figure F.115 Women portraits by NAS-EL and FLIP; urban skyline in background; the right woman's hair covered in scarf.



Figure F.116 On the right are four characters by VLT surrounded with splatters symbolizing 'spirits'.



Figure F.117 Islamic art-geometrical design elements in THA-B's piece.



Figure F.118 A 'walking hat' with the 'Victory' gesture and a speech bubble: 'I ♥ MALAYSIA!' By SEVEN.



Figure F.119 Character clad in a traditional Malaysian dress. By KIOUE.



Figure F.120 KIOUE's character and the letters 'KIOU' as a traditional headgear on the characters head.



Figure F.121 A male (wearing a songkok) and a female character (wearing a scarf – hijab). By BARBIE.



Figure F.122 The wish to the community: 'SELAMAT HARI RAYA'. By NAS-EL.



Figure F.123 KIOUE's character and the letters 'KIOU' as a traditional headgear on a wayang kulit character's head.



Figure F.124 Line sketches of the Twin Towers, LRT and of a hibiscus flower by ??.



Figure F.125 Character celebrating Hari Raya with firework and wearing songkok. By NENOK.



Figure F.126 Character celebrating Hari Raya with firecrackers and wearing songkok. By NUKE.



Figure F.127 KIOUE piece in an 'Arabic calligraphy' style.



Figure F.128 NENOK suggests to: 'VISIT SHAH ALAM'.



Figure F.129 'ONE MALAYSIA FACES' by KIOUE and MIST149; see Tun Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad on the left.



Figure F.130 A man having a scarf over his mouth, stretching out a hand holding a bag with the inscription 'F5E'. By RN.



Figure F.131 A Muslim woman wearing a niqab. By ??.



Figure F.132 An ANOKAYER piece, where the single letters are replaced by symbols.



Figure F.133 A letter oriented piece by THEY in the 'batik' textile inspired style.



Figure F.134 A letter oriented piece by THEY in the 'batik' textile inspired style.



Figure F.135 Characters with typical Islamic dress references, accompanied with Arabic script. By RN.



Figure F.136 'TEBABO BURGER' street stall. By SHIEKO.



Figure F.137 An early stage Minangkabau architecture letter style piece by SNOZZE, with three images of elephants.



Figure F.138 A wayang kulit puppet character by BIBICHUN [right center].



Figure F.139 An alien, ET-like character by BIBICHUN wearing a Kangol like type of beret.



Figure F.140 Elephant. By SNOZZE.



Figure F.141 A tuned car by NENOK, as a character next to DAMIS's piece.



Figure F.142 A tuned car as character replacing the letter 'O' in NENOK's piece.



Figure F.143 Wayang kulit inspired characters in a collaboration piece by BIBICHUN and THEY.



Figure F.144 A letterform piece in the Minangkabau architecture style. By SNOZZE.



Figure F.145 A letterform piece in the Minangkabau architecture style. By SNOZZE (after being crossed with tags).



Figure F.146 A letterform piece in the Minangkabau architecture style. By SNOZZE [bottom].



Figure F.147 Wayang kulit inspired characters by BIBICHUN [top].



Figure F.148 'MALAYSIAN FACES' in profile, including different ethnics and animals.



Figure F.149 A tuned car on a road on the side of a PW production. By NENOK.



Figure F.150 A girl in the traditional *baju kurung* Malaysian women dress. By ANOKAYER.

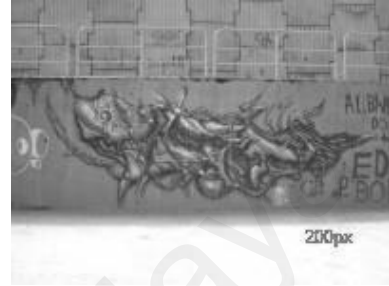


Figure F.151 Batik design inspired THEY piece.



Figure F.152 Batik design inspired THEY piece.



Figure F.153 A letterform piece in the Minangkabau architecture style. By SNOZZE (crossed by a tag and throw-up).



Figure F.154 CLOAK (CHERN) representing a tiger.



Figure F.155 Batik design inspired THEY piece.



Figure F.156 On the left KIOUE's portrait of a man wearing the Malay Muslim hat *songkok*.



Figure F.157 Tag of local food names. By BIBICHUN.



Figure F.158 Japanese ghosts. By VLT.



Figure F.159 Insects-inspired piece in an organic graffiti art style. By NENOK.



Figure F.160 Insects-inspired piece in an organic graffiti art style. By NUKE.



Figure F.161 Piece by MILE09 adorned with three mosquito larvae.




Figure F.162 Piece by MILE09 adorned with two mosquito larvae.



Figure F.163 Octopus and a wave on a black background. By BALY.

APPENDIX G: Rule Set for Visual Content Analysis

	
FIGURE No.: Description and author	
1. FORM: tag, throw-up, character, piece, production	TAG THROW-UP PIECE CHARACTER
>>> Decision based on the focused form in the work	
2. AUTHOR/-S	A80S AKEN AKES ANOKAYER ASWER BALY BARBIE BIBICHUN BLACK FRYDAY BONE BONKS BUDEAN CARPET CLOAK DAMIS DATOM DON2 DREW ESCAPE FLIP JENG JUON KATUN KAY KIOUE KOS MADNUZ MEDEA MILE09 MIST149 MOGOT MONCHE NAS-ELNENOK

	NEWBA NUKE ORKIBAL PAKEY PEROLDZ PHANTOM PHBKLK (crew) PHENUT PHOBIA PW (crew) REEZE RN SEVEN SHAGGY SHIEKO SIEK SIRA SKORE SNOZZE SOPEY SPUXS SYNDICATE (crew) THA-B THEY TSS (crew) VDS VIOLENT VOLRE WSS (crew) WITHOUTMOTIVE
3. LOCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Blue” wall at Bukit Bintang • Abandoned building Imbi • Bangsar Rooftop • Central Market • Damai wall • Dato’ Keramat • Gombak Highway • Imbi shop house wall • Jelatek wall • Kajang • Kajang KTM Train Bridge walls: River Chua • KLCC area • KLCC Cinemas • KTM Batu Tiga tunnel walls • Las Vegas/Chocolate wall at Bukit Bintang • Lorong Pudu 14(KIOUE & THA-B’s faces.) • Lot 10 Mall park house • Lot 10 Mall area • LRT Setiawangsa wall • Maharajalela Monorail wall • Masjid Jamek area • Melawati tennis wall • MIA at Jalan Ampang • Mont Kiara – Rakan Muda Sport Complex • National Visual Arts Gallery • Parking place wall (Jalan Bukit Bintang and Jalan Tong Shin opposite the Royale Bintang Hotel) • Pasar Seni

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pavilion Mall • Pudu-Chinatown wall • PWTC • Secret spot • Setia Jaya KTM • Shah Alam (other) • Shah Alam "Old" skate park • Shah Alam tennis wall • Shah Alam tunnel walls • South City Plaza Mall • Sungai Wang • Sunway Pyramid • Taman Jaya • Taylors College Sunway • Tennis Wall LRT Jelatek • Wangsa Maju (Carrefour) 	
4. BASED ON LETTERING vs. NOT	LETTERING	NOT LETTERING
5. OFFICIAL EVENT vs. SPONTANIOUS	OFFICIAL EVENT	SPONTANIOUS
6. YEAR PHOTOGRAPHED	2008 2009 2010 2011 2012	
7. MOBILE vs. STATIC SURFACE	MOBILE	STATIC
8. SINGLE ELEMENT vs. MULTIPLE	SINGLE	MULTIPLE
9. SCENE vs. OBJECT	SCENE OBJECT BOTH	
10. REALISTIC vs. OTHER DEPICTION	REALISTIC	OTHER
11. SPECIFIC vs. GENERIC	SPECIFIC	GENERIC
<i>If at least one of the objects or sceneries can be specified => specific</i>		
12. OPEN AIR vs. INDOOR SCENE	OPEN AIR	INDOOR
13. GRAFFITI ART THEME	Spray paint Nozzle (cap) Paint roller Name belt Fume mask Mixing of colors Paint bucket	
14. LOCAL ARTS	Woodcarving Shadow play Calligraphy Islamic geometrical patterns Wau kite Textiles (Batik...) Architecture Lion Dance	
15. ACTIVITIES/HOBBIES/SPORTS	DJ Vinyl B-boy MC Microphone	

	Stereos/Boxes Skateboarding Car tuning Tattoo Motocross Quad bike BMX Silat Paintball Music playing Cycling Archery Origami
16. DARK THEME	Alien/Monster Skull/skeleton/bone Clown Dark/Gothic Evil/Devil Pirate Halloween pumpkin
17. FAUNA	Dog Spider Worm Frog Fish Monkey Ram Cat Elephant Hornbill Tiger Insects (Dragonfly, Grasshopper...) Octopus Bear Tapir Bird Rabbit
18. FLORA	Rose Fruits Flowers Hibiscus Palm tree Liana/Vines Tree Mushroom Strawberries
19. TECHNOLOGY/FANTASY	Cybernetic organism(Cyborg) Robot

	Machinery Wire TV CCTV camera Mobile phone Train Car Motorbike Engine Space ship Futuristic Technomorphic Anthropomorphic Zoomorphic Hybrid Dragon
20. HUMAN BODY FRAGMENTS	Eye Hand Head Leg Bottom Upper body Whole Body Inner organs Long hair Brain Teeth
21. WEAPONS or WAR RELATION	Bullet/Bullets wholes Knife Sword Gun Machine gun Gas mask Chain Laser Barbed wire Brass knuckles Rocket Dead people Sting
22. FASHION/GARMENTS/ACCESSORIES	Sunglasses Baseball cap T-shirt Bikini Shirt Clown nose Beret Hat Headphones

	Crown Sneakers Shoes Hood Sweatshirt Trousers Shorts Glove Backpack Head scarf – <i>hijab</i> Scarf <i>Niqab</i> <i>Baju kurung</i> Traditional head gear <i>Songkok</i> <i>Sarong</i> Chain Bandage Mask Nude Dress Full body dress Suit Blindfold Monocle Crutch Glasses Jacket
23. GENDER	Man Woman Beard/Mustache Age: baby- teenager/adult-senior
24. LOCAL CULTURE, ISSUE, ETHNIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe in spirits • Firework/Firework crackers • Banknote image • Personality/Celebrity • Event/Story/Concern • Chinese horoscope • Ethnic: Malay, Indian, Chinese, <i>Bumi</i>, Western • Social issue • Local food
25. NOT LOCAL CULTURE, ISSUE, ETHNIC	Japanese (ghosts) Japanese hannya mask Mexican dead skull Gaza war Personality/Celebrity
26. SLOGAN/COMMENT/QUOTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech bubble • Slogan • Warning • Comment on an

	event/festival/celebration • Script: Arabic /Chinese/Indian	
27. POPULAR CULTURE: ENTERTAINMENT	Movies Actors/Celebrities Tron Burlesque The Green Hornet John Carter Thing Mojo Jojo Hulk ET Transformers Star Wars Master Yoda General Grievous Pathfinder SpongeBob Squarepants Marilyn Monroe Gundam robot Dita Von Teese Ironman Stargate	
28. CARTOON/COMICS	Cute figure Good turned bad Mickey Mouse Others	
29. PERSONAL REFERENCE	From own life Auto portrait Friend's depiction	
30. ADVERTISEMENT: brands, logos	Brand Montana Rakan Muda Nipon paint Adidas Digi Swatch KFC RTM Telephone number Web address	
31. COMMISSIONED vs COMPETITION	COMMISSIONED	COMPETITION
32. CITY SCENE	Skyline Street Architecture Sightseeing sites	

	KLCC	
33. OTHER SCENE	Space Landscape Mountainous Room Laboratory Clouds/Sky Nature (fertile) Water Sun Rocks Explosion Road	

University of Malaya

APPENDIX H: Survey Questionnaire for Gaza War Murals

QUESTIONNAIRE⁹²¹

This questioner about graffiti art activism is consisting out of 14 questions. The average time to answer the 14 questions is 4 minutes.

★ *Please fill in the answer to the questions 1-6:*

1. Tag Name:
 2. Birth Year:
 3. Gender (M/F):
 4. Nationality:
 5. Ethnic:
 6. Religion:
-

★ *Please answer the questions 7-14 on the following pages by highlighting/selecting a number which best expresses your opinion/stand.*

Example:

"Graffiti art is important to me":

Not at all important Neutral Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7

Answer value: 6

- 1 – Very untrue of me
 - 2 – Untrue of me
 - 3 – Somewhat untrue of me
 - 4 – Neutral
 - 5 – Somewhat true of me
 - 6 – True of me**
 - 7 – Very true of me
-

⁹²¹ Likert-Type Scale Response Anchors. Citation: Vagias, Wade M. (2006). Likert-type scale response anchors. Clemson International Institute for Tourism & Research Development, Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management. Clemson University, accessed May 27, 2012, http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/enrd_assets/pdf/Guidance-on-Surveys/Likert-scales-responses.pdf.

7. Pacifism is the opposition to war and violence.
I consider myself a pacifist.

Very untrue of me Neutral Very true of me

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Answer value:

- 1 – Very untrue of me
 - 2 – Untrue of me
 - 3 – Somewhat untrue of me
 - 4 – Neutral
 - 5 – Somewhat true of me
 - 6 – True of me
 - 7 – Very true of me
-

8. I think that graffiti art works should express political views.

Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Answer value:

- 1 – Strongly disagree
 - 2 – Disagree
 - 3 – Somewhat disagree
 - 4 – Neither agree or disagree
 - 5 – Somewhat agree
 - 6 – Agree
 - 7 – Strongly agree
-

9. I create my graffiti art works generally for the public. I do not create graffiti art works generally for other graffiti artists.

Never 50% Every time

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Answer value:

- 1 – Never
 - 2 – Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances when I could have
 - 3 – Occasionally, in about 30% of the chances when I could have
 - 4 – Sometimes, in about 50% of the chances when I could have
 - 5 – Frequently, in about 70% of the chances when I could have
 - 6 – Usually, in about 90% of the chances I could have.
 - 7 – Every time
-

10. The artistic execution of the letter styles is more important for me than a message to other people.

Strongly disagree

Neutral Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Answer value:

- 1 – Strongly disagree
 - 2 – Disagree
 - 3 – Somewhat disagree
 - 4 – Neither agree or disagree
 - 5 – Somewhat agree
 - 6 – Agree
 - 7 – Strongly agree
-

11. My religion is important to me:

Not at all important

Neutral Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Answer value:

- 1 – Not at all important
 - 2 – Low importance
 - 3 – Slightly important
 - 4 – Neutral
 - 5 – Moderately important
 - 6 – Very important
 - 7 – Extremely important
-

12. I am a human rights activist.

Strongly disagree

Neutral Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Answer value:

- 1 – Strongly disagree
 - 2 – Disagree
 - 3 – Somewhat disagree
 - 4 – Neither agree or disagree
 - 5 – Somewhat agree
 - 6 – Agree
 - 7 – Strongly agree
-

13. I believe that it is important to keep track of political developments.

Not at all important Neutral Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Answer value:

- 1 – Not at all important
 - 2 – Low importance
 - 3 – Slightly important
 - 4 – Neutral
 - 5 – Moderately important
 - 6 – Very important
 - 7 – Extremely important
-

14. I am watching the developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Answer value:

- 1 – Strongly disagree
 - 2 – Disagree
 - 3 – Somewhat disagree
 - 4 – Neither agree or disagree
 - 5 – Somewhat agree
 - 6 – Agree
 - 7 – Strongly agree
-

NOTE:

Results of this quantitative research survey will be possibly published in scientific journal.

APPENDIX I: Pixel Analysis for Gaza War Murals

App. I: 1.0 Figure 4.191: FLIP and NAS-EL

Verification count has nearly no difference – 0%.

ELEMENTS	PIXELS
WomanFlip:	1511183
WomanNasel:	766532
Rocket:	331716
Flag:	318587
PoisonPills Flag:	337683
BurningBuilding:	320480
BackgroundColor:	121924
TOTAL:	3708105

VERIFICATION CUT	
TOTAL:	3719423

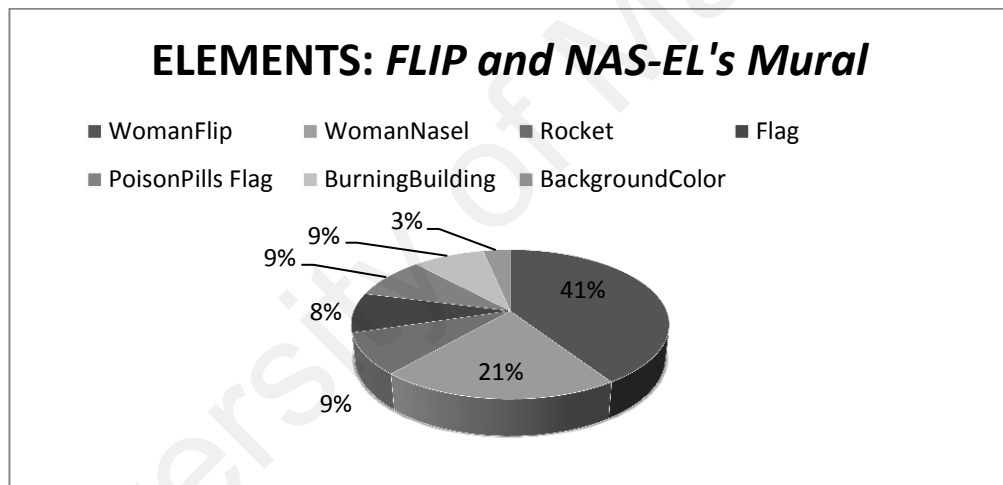


Figure I.1 Single elements percentages (of Figure 4.191).



Figure I.2 a) Original photograph.



Figure I.3 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's traced outline forming the 100%.



Figure I.4 (ii.a, vii.) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's '2 Woman' (WomanFlip) and 'Crying Woman' forming 40% of the 100%.

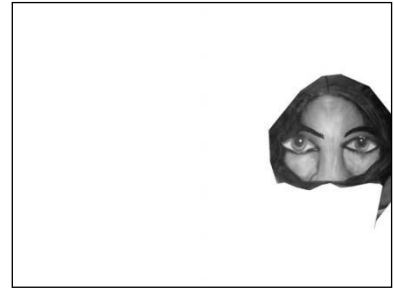


Figure I.5 (ii.b) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's '2 Woman' (WomanNasel) forming 21% of the 100%.

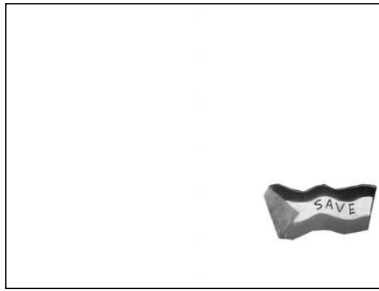


Figure I.6 (iii.) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Correct' (Flag) Palestine flag forming 9% of the 100%.



Figure I.7 (iv., v.) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'On Rocket' (Rocket) Star of David forming 9% of the 100%.



Figure I.8 (viii.) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Houses' (BurningBuilding) forming 9% of the 100%.

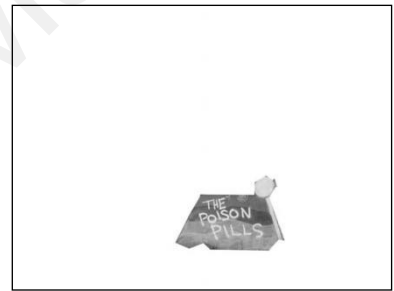


Figure I.9 (+a) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'THE POISON PILLS' (PoisonPills Flag) forming 9% of the 100%.



Figure I.10 (+b) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Background' (Background) forming 3% of the 100%.

App. I: 1.1 Figure 4.193: KIOUE

Verification count has a difference of 1%.

ELEMENT	PIXELS
Flag:	429281
Fighter:	282616
Tags:	108113
Background:	196922
KIOUE:	1264470
TOTAL:	2281402

VERIFICATION CUT	
Total:	2293903

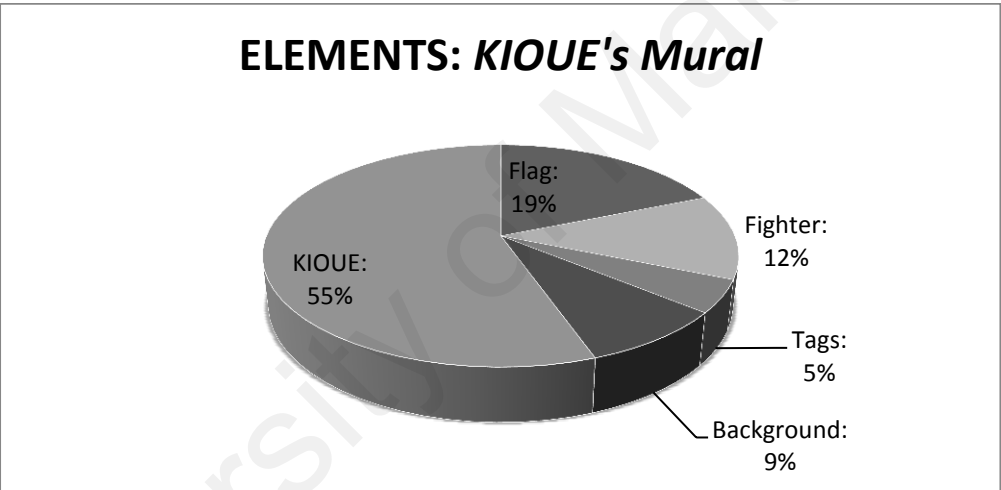


Figure I.11 Single elements percentages (of Figure 4.193).



Figure I.12 Original photograph.



Figure I.13 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's traced outline forming the 100%.

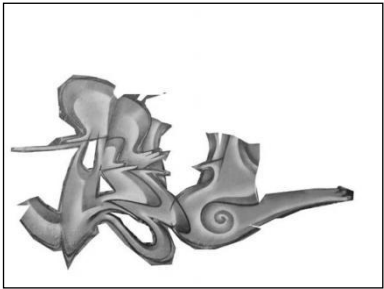


Figure I.14 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'The KIOUE'



Figure I.15 (ii., iii., vi.) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's

(KIOUE) piece forming 55% of the 100%.

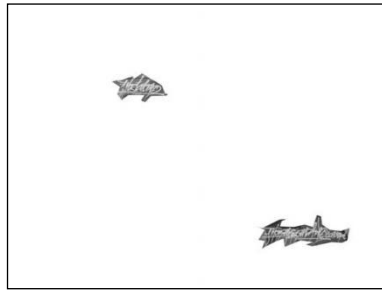


Figure I.16 (+a) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Signatures' (Tags) forming 5% of the 100%.

'Protester' (Fighter) forming 12% and the 'Incorrect' (Flag) Palestine flag forming 19% of the 100%.



Figure I.17 (+b) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Background' (Background) forming 5% of the 100%.

App. I: 1.2 Figure 4.195: BURP and THEY

Verification count has nearly no difference – 0%.

ELEMENTS	PIXELS
THEY-IsrDevil	1118712
Isr Eye	74565
PIECE	241185
They Tag	25209
TheyWhChar	492697
Gile!	120098
Burp Tag	43706
FREE	249103
Flag	67352
Burp Char	663349
TOTAL:	3095976

VERIFICATION CUT
TOTAL: 3088107

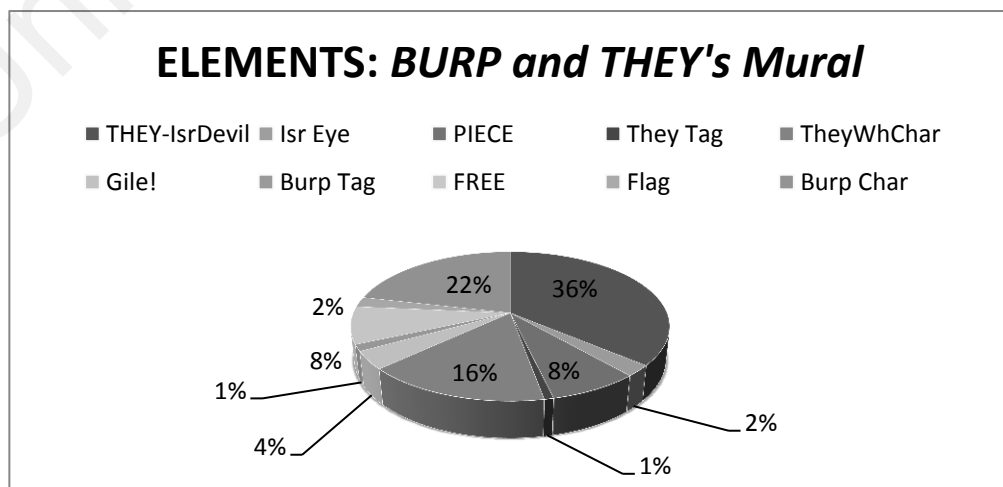


Figure I.18 Single elements percentages (of Figure 4.195).



Figure I.19 a) Original photograph.

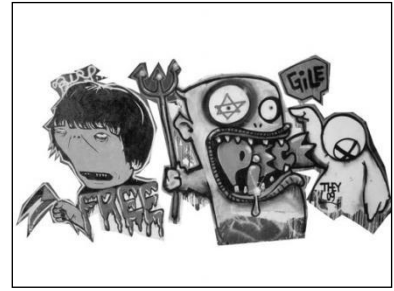


Figure I.20 b) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's traced outline forming the 100%.

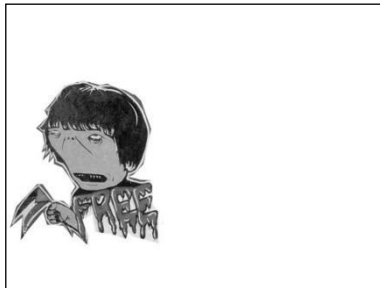


Figure I.21 (ii.a, iii., +a) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Man(&devil)' (Burp Char) forming 21%, the 'Correct' (Flag) Palestine flag forming 2% and the 'Dedication' (FREE) forming 8% of the 100%.



Figure I.22 (ii.b, iv., v.) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Man(&devil)' (THEY-IsrDevil) forming 37% and the 'Devil's eye' (Isr Eye) with the Star of David forming 2% of the 100%.

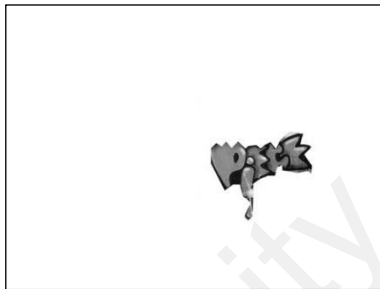


Figure I.23 (+a) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Statement' (PIECE) forming 8% of the 100%.

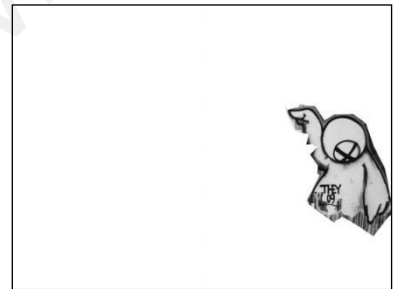


Figure I.24 (+b,c) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Trademark character' (TheyWhChar) forming 16% and the 'Signature' (They Tag) forming 1% of the 100%.



Figure I.25 (+d) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Statement' (Gile!) forming 4% of the 100%.

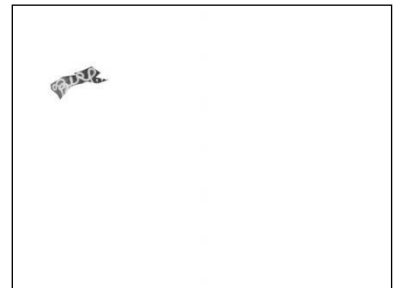


Figure I.26 (+e) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Signature' (Burp Tag) forming 1% of the 100%.

App. I: 1.3 Figure 4.196: KIOUE

Verification count has a difference of 2%.

ELEMENTS	PIXELS
KIOUE:	934258
Background Color:	137142
Ambulance scene:	738641
Fighter:	503185
Free Gaza:	54383
Pija:	16481
Ribbon:	133681
Tags:	254852
TOTAL:	2772623

VERIFICATION	
CUT	
TOTAL:	2716402

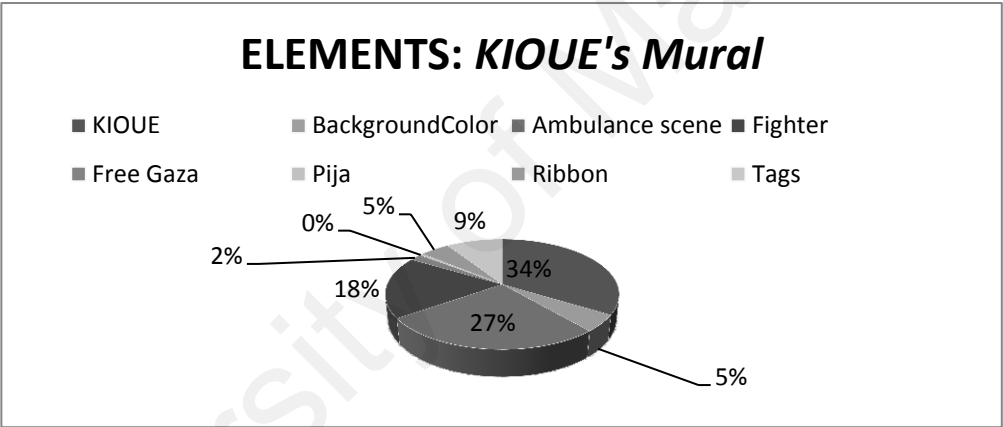


Figure I.27 Single elements percentages (of Figure 4.196).



Figure I.28 Original photograph.



Figure I.29 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's traced outline forming the 100%.

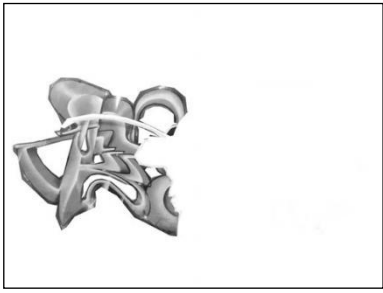


Figure I.30 (i.) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'The KIOUE[E]' (KIOUE) piece forming 33% of the 100%.



Figure I.32 (ii., v., vi.) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Fighter' (Fighter) forming 18% of the 100%.

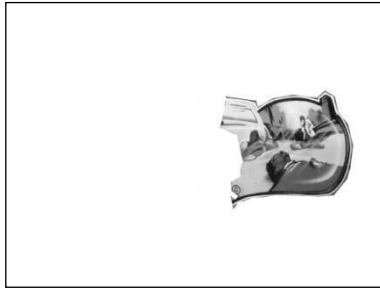


Figure I.31 (vii.) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Fighter' (Fighter) forming 27% of the 100%.

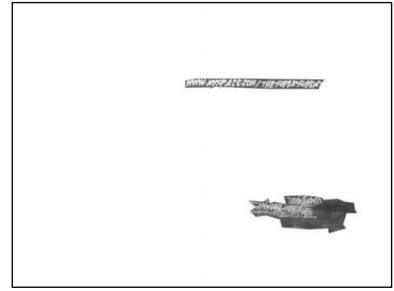


Figure I.33 (+a) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Signatures' (Tags) forming 9% of the 100%.

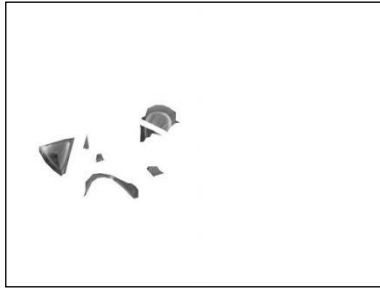


Figure I.34 (+b) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Background' (BackgroundColor) forming 5% of the 100%.



Figure I.35 (+c) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Decoration' (Ribbon) forming 5% of the 100%.



Figure I.36 (+d) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Dedication' (Free Gaza) forming 2% of the 100%.



Figure I.37 (+e) 'Cut' of the graffiti art work's 'Dedication' (Pija) forming 1% of the 100%.

APPENDIX J: Sizes of 268 Graffiti Art Works (Sample Data)



Figure J.1 W: 640 cm. H: 230 cm



Figure J.2 W: 505 cm. H: 190 cm



Figure J.3 W: 510 cm. H: 200 cm



Figure J.4 W: 410 cm. H: 203 cm



Figure J.5 W: 385 cm. H: 188 cm



Figure J.6 W: 354 cm. H: 174 cm



Figure J.7 W: 277 cm. H: 235 cm



Figure J.8 W: 400 cm. H: 200 cm



Figure J.9 W: 462 cm. H: 202 cm



Figure J.10 W: 440 cm. H: 165 cm



Figure J.11 W: 385 cm. H: 200 cm



Figure J.12 W: 390 cm. H: 190 cm



Figure J.13 W: 150 cm. H: 140 cm



Figure J.14 W: 270 cm. H: 170 cm



Figure J.15 W: 217 cm. H: 178 cm



Figure J.16 W: 500 cm. H: 205 cm



Figure J.29 W: 500 cm. H: 155 cm



Figure J.30 W: 38 cm. H: 48 cm



Figure J.31 W: 45 cm. H: 25 cm



Figure J.32 W: 143 cm. H: 197 cm



Figure J.25 W: 308 cm. H: 205 cm

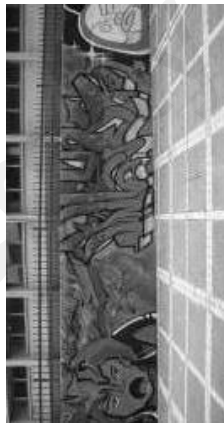


Figure J.26 W: 387 cm. H: 174 cm



Figure J.27 W: 455 cm. H: 271 cm



Figure J.28 W: 370 cm. H: 160 cm



Figure J.21 W: 380 cm. H: 155 cm



Figure J.22 W: 336 cm. H: 123 cm



Figure J.23 W: 316 cm. H: 156 cm



Figure J.24 W: 327 cm. H: 157 cm



Figure J.17 W: 567 cm. H: 225 cm



Figure J.18 W: 460 cm. H: 210 cm



Figure J.19 W: 545 cm. H: 235 cm



Figure J.20 W: 353 cm. H: 132 cm



Figure J.45 W: 101 cm. H: 143 cm



Figure J.46 W: 403 cm. H: 126 cm



Figure J.47 W: 274 cm. H: 163 cm



Figure J.48 W: 271 cm. H: 100 cm



Figure J.41 W: 317 cm. H: 73 cm

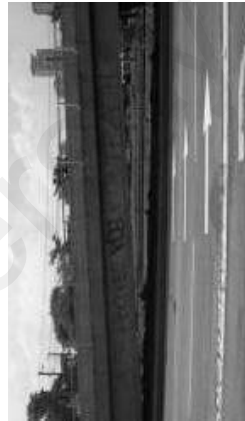


Figure J.42 W: 155 cm. H: 80 cm



Figure J.43 W: 182 cm. H: 140 cm



Figure J.44 W: 162 cm. H: 91 cm



Figure J.37 W: 143 cm. H: 192 cm



Figure J.38 W: 108 cm. H: 35 cm



Figure J.39 W: 292 cm. H: 110 cm



Figure J.40 W: 380 cm. H: 132 cm



Figure J.33 W: 130 cm. H: 93 cm



Figure J.34 W: 325 cm. H: 128 cm

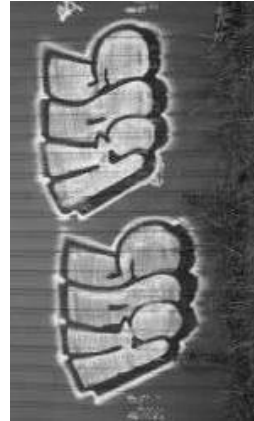


Figure J.35 W: 189 cm. H: 147 cm

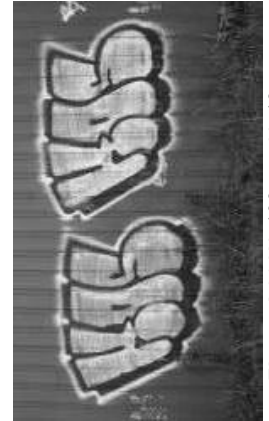


Figure J.36 W: 198 cm. H: 137 cm



Figure J.61 W: 330 cm. H: 145 cm



Figure J.62 W: 454 cm. H: 196 cm

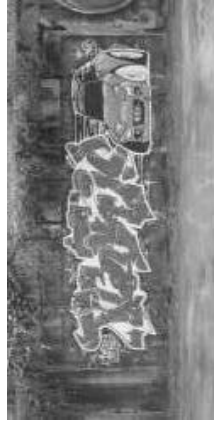


Figure J.63 W: 222 cm. H: 165 cm



Figure J.64 W: 115 cm. H: 102 cm



Figure J.57 W: 58 cm. H: 28 cm



Figure J.58 W: 51 cm. H: 26 cm



Figure J.59 W: 39 cm. H: 23 cm



Figure J.60 W: 57 cm. H: 30 cm



Figure J.53 W: 282 cm. H: 94 cm



Figure J.54 W: 303 cm. H: 87 cm



Figure J.55 W: 328 cm. H: 98 cm



Figure J.56 W: 144 cm. H: 112 cm

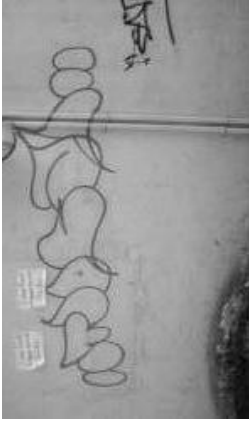


Figure J.49 W: 250 cm. H: 79 cm



Figure J.50 W: 332 cm. H: 134 cm



Figure J.51 W: 369 cm. H: 190 cm



Figure J.52 W: 270 cm. H: 163 cm



Figure J.77 W: 1045 cm. H: 270 cm

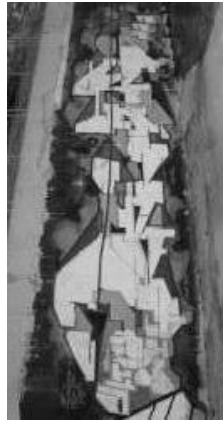


Figure J.78 W: 943 cm. H: 234 cm



Figure J.79 W: 644 cm. H: 259 cm



Figure J.80 W: 504 cm. H: 205 cm



Figure J.73 W: 144 cm. H: 39 cm



Figure J.74 W: 194 cm. H: 94 cm



Figure J.75 W: 320 cm. H: 99 cm

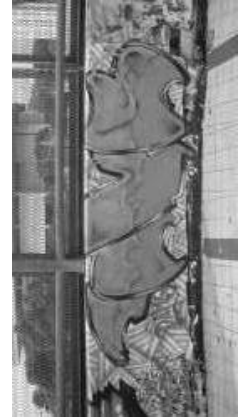


Figure J.76 W: 260 cm. H: 96 cm



Figure J.69 W: 392 cm. H: 187 cm



Figure J.70 W: 550 cm. H: 187 cm



Figure J.71 W: 675 cm. H: 234 cm



Figure J.72 W: 231 cm. H: 122 cm



Figure J.65 W: 461 cm. H: 248 cm



Figure J.66 W: 474 cm. H: 210 cm



Figure J.67 W: 605 cm. H: 242 cm



Figure J.68 W: 255 cm. H: 242 cm



Figure J.93 W: 477 cm. H: 202 cm



Figure J.94 W: 613 cm. H: 197 cm



Figure J.95 W: 557 cm. H: 210 cm



Figure J.96 W: 205 cm. H: 145 cm



Figure J.89 W: 570 cm. H: 213 cm



Figure J.90 W: 630 cm. H: 198 cm



Figure J.91 W: 433 cm. H: 183 cm



Figure J.92 W: 773 cm. H: 271 cm



Figure J.85 W: 118 cm. H: 162 cm



Figure J.86 W: 184 cm. H: 155 cm



Figure J.87 W: 445 cm. H: 188 cm



Figure J.88 W: 470 cm. H: 272 cm



Figure J.81 W: 517 cm. H: 177 cm



Figure J.82 W: 437 cm. H: 235 cm



Figure J.83 W: 531 cm. H: 226 cm



Figure J.84 W: 133 cm. H: 178 cm



Figure J.109 W: 546 cm. H: 242 cm



Figure J.110 W: 244 cm. H: 188 cm



Figure J.111 W: 490 cm. H: 253 cm



Figure J.112 W: 647 cm. H: 264 cm



Figure J.105 W: 409 cm. H: 268 cm



Figure J.106 W: 500 cm. H: 210 cm



Figure J.107 W: 482 cm. H: 213 cm



Figure J.108 W: 440 cm. H: 232 cm



Figure J.101 W: 528 cm. H: 245 cm



Figure J.102 W: 602 cm. H: 232 cm



Figure J.103 W: 493 cm. H: 182 cm



Figure J.104 W: 678 cm. H: 260 cm



Figure J.97 W: 273 cm. H: 228 cm



Figure J.98 W: 500 cm. H: 198 cm



Figure J.99 W: 241 cm. H: 156 cm



Figure J.100 W: 362 cm. H: 163 cm



Figure J.125 W: 314 cm. H: 172 cm



Figure J.126 W: 379 cm. H: 163 cm



Figure J.127 W: 480 cm. H: 234 cm



Figure J.128 W: 374 cm. H: 194 cm



Figure J.121 W: 344 cm. H: 133 cm



Figure J.122 W: 239 cm. H: 196 cm



Figure J.123 W: 90 cm. H: 80 cm



Figure J.124 W: 357 cm. H: 164 cm



Figure J.117 W: 217 cm. H: 199 cm



Figure J.118 W: 263 cm. H: 116 cm



Figure J.119 W: 323 cm. H: 208 cm



Figure J.120 W: 268 cm. H: 192 cm



Figure J.113 W: 460 cm. H: 187 cm



Figure J.114 W: 440 cm. H: 157 cm



Figure J.115 W: 475 cm. H: 189 cm



Figure J.116 W: 395 cm. H: 158 cm



Figure J.141 W: 185 cm. H: 206 cm



Figure J.142 W: 284 cm. H: 214 cm



Figure J.143 W: 283 cm. H: 229 cm



Figure J.144 W: 593 cm. H: 225 cm



Figure J.137 W: 396 cm. H: 177 cm



Figure J.138 W: 403 cm. H: 156 cm



Figure J.139 W: 383 cm. H: 149 cm



Figure J.140 W: 487 cm. H: 148 cm



Figure J.133 W: 439 cm. H: 179 cm



Figure J.134 W: 708 cm. H: 225 cm



Figure J.135 W: 767 cm. H: 236 cm



Figure J.136 W: 353 cm. H: 250 cm



Figure J.129 W: 445 cm. H: 170 cm



Figure J.130 W: 453 cm. H: 160 cm



Figure J.131 W: 151 cm. H: 155 cm



Figure J.132 W: 470 cm. H: 144 cm



Figure J.157 W: 605 cm. H: 199 cm



Figure J.158 W: 619 cm. H: 191 cm



Figure J.159 W: 203 cm. H: 241 cm



Figure J.160 W: 689 cm. H: 212 cm



Figure J.153 W: 612 cm. H: 197 cm



Figure J.154 W: 752 cm. H: 221 cm



Figure J.155 W: 257 cm. H: 212 cm



Figure J.156 W: 363 cm. H: 184 cm



Figure J.149 W: 403 cm. H: 187 cm



Figure J.150 W: 316 cm. H: 187 cm



Figure J.151 W: 601 cm. H: 228 cm



Figure J.152 W: 418 cm. H: 180 cm



Figure J.145 W: 356 cm. H: 200 cm



Figure J.146 W: 394 cm. H: 176 cm



Figure J.147 W: 394 cm. H: 139 cm



Figure J.148 W: 392 cm. H: 173 cm



Figure J.173 W: 144 cm. H: 164 cm



Figure J.174 W: 433 cm. H: 201 cm



Figure J.175 W: 156 cm. H: 148 cm



Figure J.176 W: 264 cm. H: 114 cm



Figure J.169 W: 351 cm. H: 207 cm



Figure J.170 W: 136 cm. H: 121 cm



Figure J.171 W: 385 cm. H: 180 cm



Figure J.172 W: 229 cm. H: 146 cm



Figure J.165 W: 432 cm. H: 214 cm



Figure J.166 W: 335 cm. H: 203 cm



Figure J.167 W: 466 cm. H: 206 cm



Figure J.168 W: 655 cm. H: 225 cm



Figure J.161 W: 412 cm. H: 233 cm



Figure J.162 W: 447 cm. H: 200 cm



Figure J.163 W: 314 cm. H: 178 cm



Figure J.164 W: 345 cm. H: 153 cm



Figure J.189 W: 212 cm. H: 126 cm



Figure J.190 W: 117 cm. H: 147 cm



Figure J.191 W: 228 cm. H: 70 cm



Figure J.192 W: 236 cm. H: 167 cm



Figure J.185 W: 65 cm. H: 25 cm



Figure J.186 W: 110 cm. H: 51 cm



Figure J.187 W: 58 cm. H: 24 cm



Figure J.188 W: 116 cm. H: 35 cm



Figure J.181 W: 300 cm. H: 95 cm



Figure J.182 W: 91 cm. H: 27 cm



Figure J.183 W: 99 cm. H: 31 cm



Figure J.184 W: 131 cm. H: 32 cm



Figure J.177 W: 242 cm. H: 133 cm



Figure J.178 W: 201 cm. H: 134 cm



Figure J.179 W: 216 cm. H: 160 cm



Figure J.180 W: 60 cm. H: 37 cm



Figure J.205 W: 48 cm. H: 49 cm

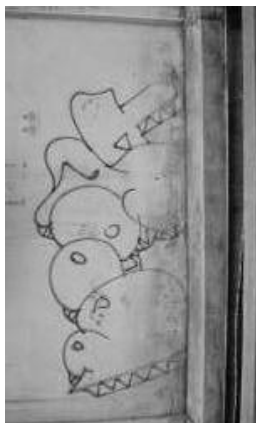


Figure J.206 W: 317 cm. H: 142 cm



Figure J.207 W: 252 cm. H: 113 cm



Figure J.208 W: 96 cm. H: 124 cm



Figure J.201 W: 239 cm. H: 137 cm



Figure J.202 W: 276 cm. H: 151 cm



Figure J.203 W: 202 cm. H: 157 cm



Figure J.204 W: 97 cm. H: 49 cm



Figure J.197 W: 487 cm. H: 164 cm



Figure J.198 W: 503 cm. H: 187 cm



Figure J.199 W: 265 cm. H: 169 cm



Figure J.200 W: 382 cm. H: 160 cm



Figure J.193 W: 180 cm. H: 73 cm



Figure J.194 W: 134 cm. H: 97 cm



Figure J.195 W: 331 cm. H: 86 cm



Figure J.196 W: 314 cm. H: 96 cm



Figure J.221 W: 621 cm. H: 209 cm



Figure J.222 W: 552 cm. H: 210 cm



Figure J.223 W: 554 cm. H: 244 cm



Figure J.224 W: 478 cm. H: 264 cm



Figure J.217 W: 157 cm. H: 168 cm



Figure J.218 W: 706 cm. H: 178 cm



Figure J.219 W: 550 cm. H: 198 cm



Figure J.220 W: 486 cm. H: 210 cm



Figure J.213 W: 348 cm. H: 115 cm



Figure J.214 W: 463 cm. H: 175 cm



Figure J.215 W: 391 cm. H: 216 cm



Figure J.216 W: 421 cm. H: 214 cm



Figure J.209 W: 214 cm. H: 90 cm



Figure J.210 W: 222 cm. H: 88 cm



Figure J.211 W: 324 cm. H: 97 cm



Figure J.212 W: 127 cm. H: 144 cm



Figure J.237 W: 238 cm. H: 225 cm



Figure J.238 W: 522 cm. H: 182 cm



Figure J.239 W: 663 cm. H: 232 cm



Figure J.240 W: 681 cm. H: 224 cm



Figure J.233 W: 145 cm. H: 228 cm



Figure J.234 W: 667 cm. H: 237 cm



Figure J.235 W: 730 cm. H: 176 cm



Figure J.236 W: 222 cm. H: 187 cm

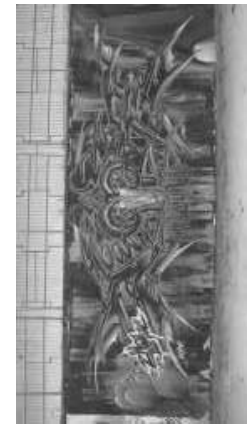


Figure J.229 W: 618 cm. H: 225 cm



Figure J.230 W: 244 cm. H: 238 cm



Figure J.231 W: 454 cm. H: 181 cm



Figure J.232 W: 498 cm. H: 206 cm



Figure J.225 W: 361 cm. H: 193 cm



Figure J.226 W: 544 cm. H: 242 cm



Figure J.227 W: 404 cm. H: 210 cm



Figure J.228 W: 176 cm. H: 191 cm



Figure J.253 W: 469 cm. H: 157 cm



Figure J.254 W: 497 cm. H: 217 cm



Figure J.255 W: 467 cm. H: 221 cm



Figure J.256 W: 263 cm. H: 290 cm



Figure J.249 W: 432 cm. H: 191 cm



Figure J.250 W: 780 cm. H: 228 cm



Figure J.251 W: 217 cm. H: 186 cm



Figure J.252 W: 639 cm. H: 218 cm



Figure J.245 W: 687 cm. H: 208 cm



Figure J.246 W: 550 cm. H: 191 cm



Figure J.247 W: 234 cm. H: 117 cm



Figure J.248 W: 219 cm. H: 99 cm



Figure J.241 W: 64 cm. H: 65 cm



Figure J.242 W: 438 cm. H: 258 cm



Figure J.243 W: 447 cm. H: 201 cm



Figure J.244 W: 468 cm. H: 193 cm



Figure J.265 W: 509 cm. H: 179 cm



Figure J.266 W: 421 cm. H: 170 cm



Figure J.267 W: 423 cm. H: 197 cm



Figure J.268 W: 525 cm. 189 H: cm



Figure J.261 W: 234 cm. H: 200 cm



Figure J.262 W: 356 cm. H: 156 cm



Figure J.263 W: 504 cm. H: 209 cm



Figure J.264 W: 244 cm. H: 115 cm



Figure J.257 W: 483 cm. H: 226 cm



Figure J.258 W: 644 cm. H: 221 cm

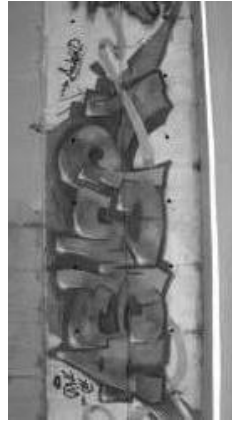


Figure J.259 W: 538 cm. H: 203 cm

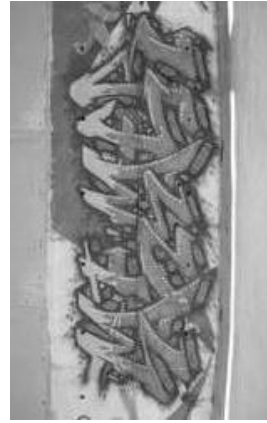


Figure J.260 W: 581 cm. H: 222 cm

Figure J.269 Volkswagen 1302 BEETLE - 1972



Width:	408cm	Height:	150cm	Note:	<Depth: 158,5cm> <i>One of world's most sold cars.</i>
Location:	http://www.carfolio.com/specifications/models/car/?car=39237				
Date:	Acc:08July2011 < http://static.cargurus.com/images/site/2009/07/03/16/34/1972-volkswagen-super-beetle-pic-40349.jpeg >				

Figure J.270 Proton SAGA car – Second Generation



Width:	425,7cm	Height:	150,2cm	Note:	<Depth: 168cm>
Location:	http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5e/Proton_Saga_%28second_generation%29_%28front%29,_Serdang.jpg				
Date:	Accessed: 8 th of July 2011 < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proton_Saga >				

Figure J.271 KATUN



Width:	480cm	Height:	→	Note:	296cm is the highest point of the △.
Location:	Jalan Wangsa Delima 1; (Crossroad Jalan 8/27A); Carrefour Wangsa M.				
Date:	Thursday, March 31, 2011, 12:37:50 PM				

Figure J.272 BLOB!



Width:	410cm	Height:	203cm	Note:	-
Location:	Shah Alam KTM bridge – facing the road to the KTM station.				
Date:	Saturday, May 08, 2010, 8:26:46 AM				

Figure J.273 WASER



Width:	385cm	Height:	188cm	Note:	-
Location:	Shah Alam KTM bridge – facing the road to the KTM station.				
Date:	Saturday, May 08, 2010, 8:26:38 AM				

Figure J.274 DESYR



Width:	567cm	Height:	225cm	Note:	-
Location:	Shah Alam KTM bridge – facing the road away from KTM station.				
Date:	June 03, 2011, 12:30:44 PM				

Figure J.275 KEAS



Width:	440cm	Height:	157cm	Note:	-
Location:	River Klang Bank Wall, near Dato Keramat LRT – same side – to KLCC.				
Date:	June 17, 2011, 4:12:56 PM				

Figure J.276 THE KIOUE THA→B



Width:	217cm (K.); 263cm (T.)	Height:	199cm (K.); 116cm (T.)	Note:	THA-B erased his tag.
Location:	Under Monorail station Bukit Bintang.				
Date:	June 16, 2011, 4:01:26 PM				

Figure J.277 B! [by BLOB] <ASWER>



Width:	150cm	Height:	140cm	Note:	-
Location:	Inside construction of the Shah Alam KTM bridge. <Next to BP SA.>				
Date:	June 03, 2011, 12:34:18 PM				

Figure J.278 →(ASIAN FINEST) .KL.SG.HK. – 2011 –



Width:	205cm	Height:	145cm	Note:	Including arrow.
Location:	River Klang Bank Wall, Dato Keramat LRT – same side – to KLCC.				
Date:	June 17, 2011, 3:57:00 PM				

Figure J.279 TheSUPeRSUNDAY©



Width:	144cm	Height:	39cm	Note:	-
Location:	Walkway bridge end - view point at Central Market.				
Date:	February 03, 2009, 5:18:44 AM – wrong time				

Figure J.280 ←RASH→



Width:	767cm	Height:	236cm	Note:	-
Location:	River Klang Bank Wall, near Dato Keramat LRT – same side – to KLCC.				
Date:	July 07, 2011, 3:32:10 PM				

APPENDIX K: Interview Questions

Some examples of interview questions asked especially during interviews and during photo elicitation sessions:

1. In what year were you born?
2. What do you write?
3. Why do you write this name?
4. Since when do you write?
5. What was the reason you started writing?
6. What is a tag, throw-up, character and piece to you?
7. Can you tell me how a tag, throw-up, character and piece should look like?
8. Are there some rules for tags, throw-ups, characters and pieces?
9. When you want to 'read' a graffiti art work, how do you go step by step? What is the 'deciphering, decoding' process like?
10. What catches your eye in the visual catalogue (VI-CA)? Which tag, throw-up, character and piece is or is not appealing to you?
11. What can you tell about your interaction during a production with another graffiti artist? How does it work? Is it aggressive or collaborative?
12. What is the content of graffiti art works?
13. Do you have any explanation of this particular graffiti art work?
14. What do you think about the content in graffiti art works?

APPENDIX L: Interview Examples

On the following pages, I present examples of interview transcripts with participants taking part in this present study. However, the first interview transcript is only an extract, not the full transcripts. English language was used as a bridge language, as *lingua franca*.

App. L: 1.0 JABA Interview: 25 February 2012, at Central Market, KL



Figure L.1 JABA in front of his work produced during the KUL SIGN FESTIVAL 2012. 26 February 2012. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.

DN: Why [do] you paint [the name] JABA?

JABA: There is no real meaning. I mean, I am painting it for 22 years now. I just liked the letters when I started.

DN: OK. Nothing with Star Wars.

JABA: Yeah.

DN: You like the letters.

JABA: Yeah.

DN: Which years, year are you born in?

JABA: 1974

DN: You paint 22 years in a row.

JABA: Oooh, no I never paused, never stopped.

DN: You started in which country?

JABA: In Belgium.

DN: Now you live in Southeast Asia?

JABA: Yeah, in Singapore.

DN: You traveled a lot during your 22 years of graffiti? You traveled a lot? Have you seen graffiti in many countries?

JABA: Yeah. I have been let's say in 90% of Europe. Like almost all the countries. South America, US and now I am trying to paint maximum in Asia. I am traveling a lot in Asia now. I think.

DN: That is very interesting. Can you do some summaries of your travels? Like can you compare the countries US, Europe, Asia? And can you do also some comparison with the year?

JABA: I didn't know the scene. I came into Asia 2007. I mean I am quite new. It is for 5 years. I don't know how the scene was at that time. I don't know. I have no idea. I know a bit about Singapore. I don't know for the rest of the countries.

DN: How was 2007 Singapore?

JABA: Same as now. Not much.

DN: OK.

JABA: Yeah.

DN: What about KL graff?

JABA: KL graff is like more serious. I mean it has a real graffiti scene. In Singapore it is not for me like a real graffiti scene.

DN: What would you say it is? If it is not a graffiti scene? Like an art scene?

JABA: Yeah, mean it is like people who like graffiti, who paint the walls, but they are not necessary like writers for me.

DN: OK, so in KL is more like graffiti.

JABA: Of course. There is bombing, there is throw-ups, there is like pieces everywhere. And they have like the walls. So, they have the space to practice. In Singapore there is only like a skate park. I paint a lot in the skate park too, but I found it sad. There is not much in the street. MIMER is actually the only one to do illegal stuff. He is the only one that I can consider myself he is a real writer. A lot of people like have the mentality, they have the knowledge of historiography etc., but they are not in the street. And yes, so its 'amigos'.

DN: So graffiti needs to be seen in the street. It needs to be like...

JABA: Yes, but at the same time it is normal, because Singapore is such a clean city. So it doesn't really fit the graffiti. It doesn't fit really.

DN: Aesthetically?

JABA: Yeah, I think when you go to a village in the mountains in Switzerland graffiti doesn't fit also.

DN: That is interesting.

JABA: It is too clean, it is nice and it is good like this. I mean, let's say we have a crisis, let's say an economic crisis, something like that then it gets more rough or something. Then maybe it becomes naturally... [more graffiti.] But the thing is the law are so strong in Singapore. You think twice, before doing something. And when you get caught you cained, jailed. It is quite serious. So I myself I don't do illegal in Singapore. Because I have a job. I don't want to lose my job. I don't think it is worth it. I don't do. I don't want to take risk in Singapore.

DN: Have you been in Thailand or Indonesia?

JABA: Yeah. I have been to Bangkok, Yogyakarta. I have been in India, Vietnam, Cambodia. Everywhere.

DN: You painted in all these countries?

JABA: Yeah.

DN: What about graff in Cambodia?

JABA: It is just starting. I was painted in Pnom Phen. It is just starting.

DN: When? 2011?

JABA: 2011. Yeah.

DN: Some local writers already?

JABA: There is a few. Yeah.

DN: Locals or they are foreigners living there?

JABA: There is locals and foreigners. But mostly it is foreigners.

DN: From where? From Europe?

JABA: Yeah. England. France...Yeah.

DN: Travelers.

JABA: Yeah. People living in Phnom Phen.

DN: What about Indonesia? What is your opinion?

JABA: For me, so far what I have seen in Southeast Asia it is for me the best scene. I mean Yogyakarta.

DN: Why? Why is it the best?

JABA: Yogyakarta. Just because all the people are super friendly and you can just... Here I mean in KL you can do it too, but you are painting in a long "town?" I mean, it is not very glamour. It is a bit OK. It makes the space nice, but. In Yogyakarta it is in the center of the city. Almost in every street you have graffiti. And then you have bombing also, you have tag all over. And the city itself is really all about art. Not only graffiti. Everything. Everything is art. Yeah.

DN: And in Yogyakarta it is a kind of legal, the walls?

JABA: Yes. Yeah. I mean, because they are very open minded in everything related to arts. It just blends naturally, it just flow naturally. There is also bombing there is everything. You can paint a big, huge wall with 15 guys, no problem.

DN: What about Vietnam? You painted with CRAZ?

JABA: Hmmm..

DN: From ZNC.

JABA: No.

DN: You painted with somebody?

JABA: I was in Hanoi. I painted with ART. His name is like ART.

DN: How was that experience?

JABA: It was great. I love Vietnam. Really cool city. The city itself was beautiful. It is very new, growing.

DN: What do you thing about KL SIGN FESTIVAL? Is it a good thing to do?

JABA: Why not? Why not? I mean these sort of events happen also in Europe. People do big jams and everything. Yeah. I mean I am not against it, because in the end of the day, there is real graffiti writers in KL who do bombing and you see like BONKS, or KOS or CARPET. They are really present in the street so, I mean it is not like, I don't feel the scene sell out or something. It is like good energy. So yeah, why not? Yeah. And the space is perfect for doing like legal walls. It is not for bombing. This is really... It is like a big hall of fame. Maybe the biggest hall of fame in Southeast Asia. So, why not, yeah?

...

...

...



Figure L.2 MR. WANY in front of his bird character produced during the KUL SIGN FESTIVAL 2012. 27 February 2012. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.

DN: What do you write?

MR. WANY: I write MR. WANY.

DN: Any meaning or why?

MR. WANY: I started in the 1990. 22 years ago. I was like a child when I started. I was 12 years. I was the smallest in my crew. In my first crew. I was painting only characters. After 1 or 2 years – I don't remember – I started doing letters.

DN: When you born?

MR. WANY: I am born in south Italy in 1978. I am 34 years old.

DN: What do you think about this event?

MR. WANY: I am really happy. It is the first time [for me] in Malaysia. And I know the movement go up in this place. You have to take into account, that in my country hip-hop and graffiti arrived in 1983.

DN: Like in Europe.

MR. WANY: Yeah, like the European. It is really old. And here it is so young. I think here they have a good base for the start, but they need to study little bit more about the [hi]story. Because, for example, I said, while I was making the jury, this is a mix of street art and graffiti. The new perception of graffiti. It is not really... Before it was just graffiti. Now it is really mixed with street art. It is a different thing. Before it was impossible to see in a graffiti jam guys with a pencil or (??). It is crazy. But now it is possible. Because now a new generation started.

DN: So it is a very good example of street art and graffiti?

MR. WANY: I think so. Yeah, I think so!

DN: You are as a judge here. Can you explain to me what your job is?

MR. WANY: My principal job is a job as an artist, with a gallery and museum. I am one of the most famous street artists in Italy. I made the most important exhibition in Italy, Biennale di Venezia, this year. And I sold so many canvases. In 2007 I sold 120 canvas.

DN: Cool. You do with aerosol spray?

MR. WANY: Mixed media. The first canvas was all with a spray. Now, mixed media is the best, because I do illustration. I think graffiti is on the wall. OK!?

DN: Yeah.

MR. WANY: On the canvas it is a different thing. I am not closed, my mentality is really open, but graffiti is just graffiti I feel. You cannot change that. You can make some experiment, but I am born as a graffiti artist. And the street art is because I did it just as a joke. The first time. I did it just as a joke.

DN: The canvas?

MR. WANY: No, no, no. In the street.

DN: ...

MR. WANY: [When] I started making street art. For example, I go back home from a graffiti jam. And I was really tired. And I wrote on the bet, near the thrash, [where] a guy was asleep. I did not know that I am doing street art, but I was doing street art. You understand me?

DN: Yeah, yeah. Ok.

MR. WANY: I started doing street art in 2003, I think. And I did balance between street art and graffiti, street art and graffiti, illustration, everything.

DN: You are judging now the international competition here?

MR. WANY: Yeah.

DN: What will be your criteria for choosing what is good and what is not? Do you have something you will be looking for?

MR. WANY: Yeah, I see that the style here is a little bit down referred to the European standard, you know. But I look at the complete job. I don't know... When you are very good in imagination, very good in graphics and you have characters and letters too and you have the planning of the wall, OK, the concept, the character is here, the letter is here.

DN: The composition.

MR. WANY: Yeah composition. And for me the winner, [is the] one guy [who] makes everything. Because performing the just way is the complete way.

DN: OK, the composition. It should include all elements. The character, tag, ...

MR. WANY: Yeah sure. The tag not so big, only little bit, smaller, because of the composition.

DN: Can you elaborate on this? ... Or you know, can we talk about the examples in [the VI-CA] in my book? I would like to talk about tags, throw-up, and character?

What is a tag in graffiti? What is it?

MR. WANY: I don't understand the question, sorry.

DN: I see in the street a tag. What does it express?

MR. WANY: Aaah yeah. I think, for me, it is a really instinctive drawing. When I paint on the wall, especially illegal the instinct is so fast! You know, it is the movement! It is the flow of the letters. You move all your body. This is a big difference when I paint the canvases for example. I use usually impact colors, because you are catching the eyes of the guys, [who] do not know anything about graffiti, you know. You need the color powerful, [so] all people can see: Ohh shit! This is crazy color. Yeah, impact, you know.

DN: So you use even like for tagging even colors?

MR. WANY: No, no. Just for bombing, piece or... Yeah, for the tag is just the flow, the movement, cool letters, good spot. The spot is so important for the tag for example! I don't know the roof top, or I don't know the line track or something (xxx?). Fifty percent of the tag is the spot! When you decide the location, you know, I think it is so important, because if you do a tag in your room, it is OK, yeah, it is nothing special! Yeah! OK!?

DN: So, it is like marking the territory.

MR. WANY: Yeah, sure, sure, but with style! It is important!

DN: How must a tag look like? Some rules? Do you distinguish tags in good tags and bad tags?

MR. WANY: Yeah.

DN: How to recognize? Or what do you look like? In terms of style.

MR. WANY: As I told you before. For me, the flow of the letters and the movement. And after the study of the letters is important. Continued.

DN: Like one liner?

MR. WANY: Like one liner, not really like one liner, but just so the movement is continued.

DN: Flowing.

MR. WANY: Flowing and after if you use the fatcap, not the skinny caps, because you can make the open line, close the line, open line, close the line.

DN: With the fat cap.

MR. WANY: Fat cap. And it is bigger, more possibility. It is important.

DN: Like Malaysia, for example. [At this moment I pointed to the piece of MR. WANY, which was across the river Klang, where we were sitting. See Figure L.3-Figure L.4.]



Figure L.3 MR. WANY's piece and character completed in 1 hour during the KUL SIGN FESTIVAL 2012. 26 February 2012. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.



Figure L.4 Detail of Figure L.3. See the fatcap tag 'MALESIA 2012'.
26 February 2012. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.

MR. WANY: Yeah it is a 1-hour piece. The first one just to check the colors.

DN: Because I see the tag Malaysia with the fat cap.

MR. WANY: Yeah, yeah...but it is not really a tag. It is more like ...

DN: Calligraphy?

MR. WANY: Yeah, not really calligraphy, but something...

DN: OK. Can you comment on these examples [in the VI-CA selection]?

MR. WANY: This is LA [Los Angeles in Figure L.5].



Figure L.5 REVOK MSK; tag no. 133.

DN: You like it, yeah?

MR. WANY: Yeah, yeah, yeah. This is a REVOK tag. This is style of LA.

DN: Definitely.

MR. WANY: This is so cool [Figure L.6]. This is with a spray, with a special spray.



Figure L.6 *THE KIOUE © *THE SUPER SUNDAY* *MALAYSIAN*; tag no. 172.

DN: Calligraphy cap.

MR. WANY: Yeah, it is like pencil. You know. I make a lot of tag with this spray can. It is 'Spider' [tool].

DN: Actually, it is probably the local can – Pylox. He used only calligraphy cap.

MR. WANY: I think it is nice [Figure L.7-Figure L.9].



Figure L.7 "MALAYSIA* SINGAPORE!!; tag no. 97.



Figure L.8 MALAYSIAN LARGEST TAGGIN; tag no. 98.



Figure L.9 LOVER WALL; tag no. 95.

MR. WANY: I think a good tag. This is good [Figure L.10].



Figure L.10 AIGOR; tag no. 36.

MR. WANY: This one is not so good [in Figure L.11]. The letters is odd [old?]. And the flow is just: 1, 2, 3, 4 letter.



Figure L.11 "KURT"; tag no. 94.

DN: This one is better?

MR. WANY: Yeah, so, so.

DN: Middle?

MR. WANY: Yeah it is middle [Figure L.9].

MR. WANY: You see this one is good letters and good flow [Figure L.12].



Figure L.12 *KIOUE"[20]07...; tag no. 91.

MR. WANY: This one is special font style, different from typical style [Figure L.13].



Figure L.13 .SLACSATU.; tag no. 145.

MR. WANY: They bombing too [Figure L.14].



Figure L.14 UTAH ETHER; tags no. 175.

DN: What about throw-ups? What is a throw-up? What does it stand for?

MR. WANY: You can make a lot of different throw-ups: one line, bombing...and different style. You can decide it when you see the place. If you need more time. For example if you are in a tunnel, train tunnel, you have more time. If you are in the street you can make one line, in central street for example.

DN: So you decide like what throw-up you do depending on the place.

MR. WANY: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

DN: Is there again some rule, how a throw-up should look like?

MR. WANY: When I arrive in Malaysia I thought: "*Not too much bombing, not too much tag.*" In Milan, I think in Milan just in one street you have all the bombing and tag what in Malaysia. Yeah, because it is really a destroyed city and not cleaned much.

DN: OK. I see. So, do you like again some throw-up [in the VI-CA]?

MR. WANY: (?)... I see good flow. This one...[in Figure L.15].

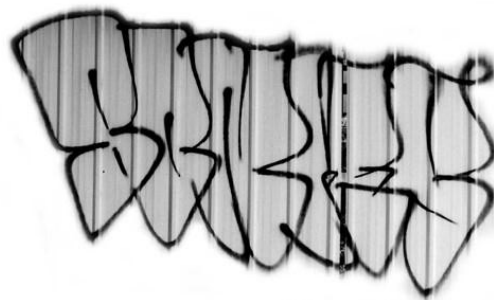


Figure L.15 BONKS; throw-up no. 219.

MR. WANY: This is not really throw-up [Figure L.16]. It is more piece.



Figure L.16 'DREAM'; throw-up no. 237.

MR. WANY: This is really style [Figure L.17]. ROID. Is an original style! My crew.[Laughing.]



Figure L.17 ROID!; throw-up no. 290.

MR. WANY: I see KOS everywhere [in Kuala Lumpur's streets]. But this style is not so top [in Figure L.18], but it is everywhere! Yeah, if you write too much it is more important than style, because the guys see you everywhere. You know, this is a strange play, graffiti is strange play.



Figure L.18 KOS; throw-up no. 262.

DN: Sometimes style [is important], sometimes getting up [is important].

MR. WANY: Yeah. Yeah, you can decide to make.... I prefer the way, make too much, with the style is the best way. But if you make too much the guys know your name and that is the bomber idea of graffiti. Yeah. OK?! We are OK?! Cool.

DN: What about characters? You are also a specialist in characters. What is important about characters?

MR. WANY: I am not too much in realistic [style of characters].

DN: You don't like realistic [characters]?

MR. WANY: No, not too much. But, I know a guys who are really top of realistic. And I think you can make realistic [characters] also, if you make top realistic [characters]. No strange faces with...

DN: Distortion.

MR. WANY: Yeah, distortion. And I love cartoon style [characters], because it is more fresh. More fresh. And usually I don't love the realistic because is sometimes is just photos copy on the wall. ... It is just technique. Nothing stylish, really. But with the carton you can make something more fresh, more movement. Cool.

DN: Like fresh.

MR. WANY: Yeah. Yeah, here you see the style of the characters the guy who won, nice, the spray is nothing of a cool to make a top piece.⁹²² If he can use, I think, a better spray he can do better. But, you can see, it is with the same spray. When I started in 1990 you had that bullshit spray and this one is better than bullshit [spray].



Figure L.19 KATUN finishing in heavy rain his first prize-winning mural *Recycling the City* at Kulsign Festival 2012. 26 February 2012. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.

DN: What about pieces? Again like, what is a piece? Or, like what does it stand for?

MR. WANY: Some pieces are more fresh, some is with the old school concept of letters. But I think we need a bit of all. I didn't see only the Malaysian style. I see European, America, LA style [here in Kuala Lumpur at the Kulsign Festival 2012]. On the wall is honestly nothing just original. Just JABA was really original [Figure L.1, p. 750], but he was born in Belgium I think. But the rest of the letters is honestly nothing original. But it is normal, because everybody copy little bit when start and after evolve herself in one way, you know. It is normal. It is not bad. It is just evolution. Yeah. You need to take before. Because this is a form from New York. And after if the guys start now they take from Europe, New York, everywhere.

DN: Mix everything.

MR. WANY: It is just evolution. I also from 5, I don't know 10 years. Some guys put over the cool style from here, some original style from here.

DN: So, for example JABA was outstanding for you?

MR. WANY: Yeah. It is more original.

DN: I don't want to hold you up.⁹²³

MR. WANY: Yeah I need to finish.

⁹²² MR.WANY refers here to the Malaysian graffiti artist KATUN, who won the international KULSIGN FESTIVAL 2012 competition. I inserted KATUN's first prize winning graffiti art work, as in Figure L.19.

⁹²³ I had to break up the interview at this point, as I was holding up MR.WANY from finishing his huge mural in Figure L.2.



Figure L.20 SLACSATU in front of his mural produced during the KUL SIGN FESTIVAL 2012. 26 February 2012. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.

DN: So you write SLAC[SATU]?⁹²⁴

SLAC: Yeah.

DN: I wanted to ask you about this competition. What do you think about this event, KL SIGN 2012?

SLAC: Well, basically I think it is a very good event to have.

DN: Can you speak louder?

SLAC: Especially there is a lot support in KL. And also the region. So, I can see from the registration, there is a lot of writers who want to join in this event. So, I guess on the long run is good. You know, maybe in the future if there is a lot of international writers who want to come, it will be even better for the Southeast Asian [graffiti art] scene and Asian scene also.

DN: So you think, if foreign writers come, like it is good for the development of style? Or what is good?

SLAC: I think it is good, because right now we are always, you know, we know about them, the international writers, but versa, they don't really know about what we can, you know put on the table. Yeah, so I think we have a lot of good Asian writers as well so I think we also need to show what we can do to them also.

DN: And you traveled quite a lot in Southeast Asia, right?

SLAC: Ehhh, yeah. Mostly.

DN: Can you make some comments on the Southeast Asian scene? Maybe country by country. What would you say like about...

SLAC: Ehhmmm, ...well actually...

⁹²⁴ 'Satu' means in the Malay language 'one'. Therefore, understand the tag name SLACSATU as SLAC ONE.

DN: If you look at Singapore, Malaysia, maybe I don't know, Indonesia, Thailand. Can you make some comparison?

SLAC: OK. For Singapore I guess, ehmm, most of us used... The illegal scene is not really as big as in KL or in Indonesia, I think. That is why Singapore... We basically quite versatile. We have a lot of detailed production. So, because every time we paint on a legal wall we really put some effort to plan and all. But over in KL the good thing is, you can still bomb everywhere, you know. So, is good. Same like Indonesia. I think they need to have a balance between you know legal production and also the illegal stuff, you know, to keep the so called tradition of graffiti alive. Yeah.

DN: So you think there is no balance between legal and illegal. Or not to say like...

SLAC: Ehmm, at least it is not to say it is a good or bad thing. I just say that it is a fresh thing to have. Because in Singapore I can't do illegal. But when I come here or Indonesia it is like, wow! I am not really, ehmm, you know, I want to do illegal much more then I want to do a production or graff demo here.

DN: OK. You have the possibility.

SLAC: Yeah, yeah. So, because even for them to come to Singapore it is very hard for them to paint. Because there is only about 1 or 2 legal walls over there.

DN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SLAC: Yeah. So I think overall each country has its own strength, you know, and basically even in Singapore I think we still lacking of walls. So, yeah.

DN: Yeah, yeah. Because you have only the Somerset skate park and the Escape? Or? [Figure 3.56-Figure 3.57, p.171]

SLAC: Yeah. It is still there, still there. But yet again most of the writers are not painting there anymore.

DN: Where? In Escape?

SLAC: Ehh...the Somerset.

DN: Somerset.

SLAC: Yeah, because of some issues.

DN: With the Gaza painting? Or?

SLAC: Yeah, still with the Gaza painting and with the new management around also...

DN: So you still need to give a sketch and need approval. So, it is still ongoing.

SLAC: Yeah, yeah. It is still ongoing right now. Even though they don't... I don't think there is anyone really painting there. Like...

DN: In Somerset.

SLAC: Yeah, in Somerset. Usually we paint there every weekend, but nowadays I think maybe once every 3-4 months.

DN: Oh, OK.

SLAC: Yeah.

DN: Because I saw last, I think this, no in October.

SLAC: Hmm.

DN: A production from ZNC like with the sketchbook or something.

SLAC: Yeah. Usually when we really know we want to paint a large production, maybe we will go there. But for me myself I don't really paint there anymore for quite some time already. Yeah.

DN: And do you know anything about this issue with this Gaza painting? I asked already like, I don't remember who did it, but I saw it on Youtube. And was it really like a big issue?

SLAC: Ehmm, basically it is not really a big thing, but I think the management just blew it out of proportion. You know. They just exaggerated it a bit to be like very political kind of thing. So I think it is unnecessary for them, to, you know, to...

DN: To exaggerate.

SLAC: Yeah, yeah.

DN: And it was like, ehhh, it is like the City council or...? If you talking about the management or it is the skate park management?

SLAC: Ehh, it is actually start with the skate [park] management, but they eventually bring the authorities in. So, that make it worse, I guess.

DN: OK, OK, I see, I see. So, what, any future plans like of yours? Like what is actually going on in your life about graffiti and yourself?

SLAC: Personally, because right now I am start to teach an art workshop in school.

DN: OK, I saw it on your Facebook.

SLAC: Yeah, so I try to, you know, to introduce more graffiti and street art to the schools, ehhm, to the government schools in Singapore so it opens up. And, so called to educate the society more about what is graffiti and what is vandalism.

DN: Ohh, OK.

SLAC: And so far. And of course I would love to really travel, this year. You know, to really go out of Southeast Asia.

DN: Go where?

SLAC: I don't know, maybe Asia first or just Melbourne or Australia or somewhere. Nearby first.

DN: OK.

SLAC: Yeah.

DN: And this education thing, ehh, what..., it is sponsored by the government or something? Or some project or grant?

SLAC: Ehhm, I am just a certified art instructor under this art and music scheme, from Singapore. So I am certified to teach in Singapore government school, so they can, you know, like engage me for about 8 weeks workshop. It is just basically like, just like teaching art, but I can train them in a more detailed and specific way of acrylic painting or even spray painting.

DN: OK.

SLAC: Yeah.

DN: And actually, what about this education, that sounds quite interesting. What do you educate, like, the kids? Is it a specific age? Or does it depends on the school, who they want to introduce it to?

SLAC: It depends on the school. I started with primary 3. I think about around 10 years old, so we start with the basic of the painting. If the teacher of the school wants me to come in to teach graffiti art, I can do it too. Maybe just basic graffiti, you know the letters.

DN: The letters.

SLAC: Yeah and what is the... I teach them some theory where does graffiti origin from.

DN: OK.

SLAC: So, it is a really good start. You know. To teach all this.

DN: So, some teachers approached you already about teaching graffiti?

SLAC: Yeah, yeah. So, I was quite surprised, because 10 years ago I didn't imagine teaching graffiti art in school.

DN: Yeah, yeah. Definitely.

SLAC: So, I teach a few schools right now. Although I would... I still want to..., because I love doing art. So even if acrylic or batik workshop I will definitely come down to the school and teach the kids.

DN: If you teach the kids about letters, you introduce to them like tags or throw-ups or like piece letters? How is it?

SLAC: Basically, ehhm, I try to let them know about everything. From just tagging to throw-up and what can be, what is good, what can be done and what should have

been done. You know, because all this, I need to talk with kids. Because this so called one of the school's agenda. You know, we need to show and let them know what is legal and what is illegal.

DN: OK.

SLAC: Yeah.

DN: And actually about the aesthetics of letters. Like...

SLAC: Yeah.

DN: Is there like, can you somehow like, explain like, how a good piece or how a good letter should look like? Or is there any, like something you follow? I mean it is a difficult question to answer. But can you elaborate on style? Like something. It is a quite open question?

SLAC: Ehhm, nowadays, because back then it is very basic, you know, very...

DN: Oldschool times?

SLAC: Yeah oldschool times. You just need to make it clean, you know and the letters must flow. But nowadays it is more abstract, plus this here, collaboration of this and that. Even something, ehhm, something like, ungraffiti like also can be considered graffiti as long as you use aerosol it is still graffiti art. So, yeah, I think for me a good graffiti writer should be versatile. That's all. Like he does not just practice one style. Maybe he can try to do 2D, 3D maybe try some character. That would be good I think. Yeah.

DN: Thanks.

Here I broke up my interview, but as there was still the possibility and time to ask SLAC further questions I started again recording and wanted to talk with SLAC about the samples in the VI-CA.

DN: If you anything like or dislike [here in the VI-CA]...I will later...

SLAC: Yeah, actually it is kind of hard to give a comment about.

DN: What is hard about it?

SLAC: Yeah, because I believe in individual style, you know like, ehh, there is no right or wrong, you know?⁹²⁵

DN: OK.

SLAC: I respect like individual writer's style. What he believes in, you know. In what is art and what is graffiti art to him, himself.

DN: OK.

SLAC: Yeah. Although, there is one thing about flow. I think that is the most important, where we can really know from a tag whether is he a toy or one who really had done it for some time. Yeah, so...definitely even if it is, you know, a shitty job, or wack graffiti, I mean...ehhm...because I start...I can feel that last time I was there too also. You know like, my style not really good, you know, then I don't have someone to guide. Because last time when I learn graffiti is all about just watch some photos and try to learn as I go. And I don't have any...ehhm.

DN: Guidance.

SLAC: Guidance and legal practice wall. It is just we practice on the street. You know like. You doing illegal so is like...you know...you wasting the time and you know... you know...either the cost(?)...

DN: What about the flow? You mentioned flow is important. Ehhm, is there any like definition or something like about that?

⁹²⁵ SLAC did not want at this point to make any evaluation of the works in the VI-CA.

SLAC: Ehhm, I guess is all about the control of your can. Can control.

DN: You mean the technique.

SLAC: Yeah. Maybe, last time when we started is all about: “OK, don’t, try to make it not drip a lot. You know. Try to control the line. But... Nowadays even the drips we can just put it in. You know. Ehhm, just because we want to put it in the drips. That is for artist style or just the excess of graffiti as well right now. So I think right now is basically more about you know ehhm making everything balance. Yeah making everything balance. That’s how.

DN: Hei, thank a lot man! Which year are you born again?

SLAC: Ehhmm, 1980.

DN: OK, hei thanks!

SLAC: No problem.

Here I broke up my interview for the second time, but our conversation with SLAC naturally continued, as there was still time at the registration for the Kulsign Festival 2012. SLAC brought up some very interesting points and I asked him once again on record about the aesthetics in graffiti art.



Figure L.21 SLACSATU finishing his by batic style inspired mural produced during the KUL SIGN FESTIVAL 2012. 25 February 2012. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.

DN: We were just talking SLAC about this originality or...you mentioned something that it is difficult nowadays...

SLAC: Even for us nowadays as graffiti writers is very hard to paint our own style, original style. Because as NYC 1960s I think a lot of styles has pop out on the street. But I guess even from there way before that there is a lot of art medium that already more or less use some, you know, style whether is just basically realistic painting or abstract. Same just like this I think French artist Jean Dubuffet [1901–1985]. His style is very abstract, but I can see that he can also... I can visualize it also as a graffiti art also.

DN: Ohh, OK.

SLAC: Same like Keith Haring [1958–1990]. Something simple, but yet also relate to graffiti as well. So, I guess, more or less if, it will be good to do some research and

maybe...just look up some aesthetics medium of art, you know, to start get some new ideas as well. Because even old art can, you know, give some fresh ideas I guess. Because sometimes I do that also. Yeah.

DN: I mean you look for example for inspiration in some older art forms?

SLAC: Yeah. Something like an Indonesian batik painting. Because now I am also trying to experiment with batik using aerosol on the wall, but has this flavor of batik painting.⁹²⁶ So, there is it a lot to explore I guess! It is not just here. That is why I like to say and tell all my crew mates as well in Singapore, to you know, keep on: "Try new style." I guess.

DN: Exploring.

SLAC: Yeah. Exploring new style.

DN: What about your style actually? Was there any influence from some graffiti artist? Have you some idol or some hero or...?

SLAC: Hmmm.... Back in the days I always looked up to 3D writers, you know like TOTEM, and also of course MSK Crew, these I can't deny, because their style really stand out.

DN: OK, the LA guys.

SLAC: Yeah, Yeah. But right now I am... Even not just the legends. But I guess when I look at some new guys painting also, you know sometimes I just... Ehm, maybe give them some tips. Maybe their style, you know, can give me an idea also, you know. So is good, you know, to learn from each other I guess. Not just you know, not just want some people to ask you question, but you should also ask question, do some research as well. Yeah, so, yeah. That's it.

DN: And last year you did here at the KL FESTIVAL [2010] this 'wasp' [piece in Figure L.22].

SLAC: Yeah, Yeah.



Figure L.22 The 'Wasp' SLAC piece with insects' legs produced during the KUL SIGN FESTIVAL 2010. 02 February 2011. Pasar Seni, Kuala Lumpur.

DN: What about the wasp? Like is there any story to that? Or?

SLAC: The, the...which one?

DN: With the wasp. With the insect. The yellow.

SLAC: Ehhm. Actually most of my style are always just freestyle. So it is just about the moment kind of thing. Maybe I want to do a flow that I have always done, but sometimes I now and then I always want to just freestyle something different. But I guess during that time when I do the wasp, it is just a random thing, you know, something I think most graffiti writers, most of us like to paint something very fierce and...

⁹²⁶ SLAC produced such a batik style inspired piece at the Kulsign Festival 2012 as in Figure L.21.

DN: Ohh, OK. Fierce?

SLAC: Yeah, very...! [Laughing] I don't know, I don't know...

DN: OK.

SLAC: Yeah. Something, ehmmmm, so called very... I don't know. Trying to overdo each other, you know!?

DN: Ooh, OK. Like overkill.

SLAC: Yeah, maybe it is just my style. I am, I just like to do something fierce and dark I guess. But, of course, there is always room for, you know, to change, you know, to make something "cute!" I guess [laughing].

University of Malaya

APPENDIX M: Geographical Google Maps Location's Coordinates

Coordinates 1-24 were all generated by the end of April 2012 in the Google Maps environment.⁹²⁷ However, these coordinates were still valid by the end of July 2014. The coordinates were generated at the center point of the appropriate wall, with the function 'What's here?' by right clicking the exact area in a satellite image in the *Google Maps* environment. The generated coordinates were then copied into the Table below.

Table M.1 Google Maps coordinates for graffiti art locations in GKL.

Graffiti Art Locations in GKL	<i>Google Maps:</i> Longitude and Latitude
1. Pasar Seni (First graffiti art in this location)	3.141818,101.694758
2. Masjid Jamek wall	3.148668,101.696137
3. Jelatek wall	3.164512,101.733779
4. Dato' Keramat	3.16489,101.730499
5. Damai wall	3.164368,101.72427
6. "Blue" wall	3.143936,101.711637
7. Las Vegas/Chocolate wall	3.143184,101.711865
8. Abandoned building/construction site Imbi	3.143425,101.713013
9. The Imbi shop house wall	3.144097,101.713477
10. Lorong Pudu 14	3.143821,101.707702
11. Parking place wall (Jalan Bukit Bintang and Jalan Tong Shin opposite the Royale Bintang Hotel)	3.144606,101.708231
12. The high above ground spot (REVOK, KIOUE, THA-B...)	3.142664,101.708102
13. Melawati tennis wall	3.230381,101.747649
14. Shah Alam "Old" skate park	3.047121,101.516064
15. Shah Alam tunnel walls	3.05548,101.523064
16. Shah Alam tennis wall	3.05829,101.53588
17. Wangsa Maju (Carrefour)	3.197161,101.744728

⁹²⁷ "Google Maps," <https://www.google.com/maps>.

18. Tennis Wall LRT Jelatek	3.166877,101.734744
19. Kajang KTM Train Bridge walls: River Chua	2.992102,101.783373
20. LRT Setiawangsa wall	3.17666,101.736327
21. KTM Batu Tiga tunnel walls	3.073889,101.55561
22. Pudu-Chinatown wall	3.141772,101.697073
23. Maharajalela Monorail wall	3.138698,101.699447
24. Bukit Kiara – Rakan Muda Sport Complex	3.140789,101.645437

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APPENDIX N: Malaysian Graffiti [and Street] Artists

Some of the below listed names can be considered to represent graffiti artists and some names represent rather street artists. Some of the below listed individuals create different works than the here, in this thesis, discussed graffiti art forms. For a portion of the here listed names is graffiti art a way of life, for some only a temporary hobby, which will fade away in weeks or months. Such ‘temporary’ graffiti artists would be considered in the graffiti art culture as ‘toys’; as graffiti artists, who do not achieve individual style of graffiti art, do not develop appropriate techniques and participate in the graffiti art culture for a short while, without acquirement of any deeper knowledge about it. Nevertheless, some here listed graffiti artists can be contrary considered as ‘kings’; as graffiti artists, who achieved distinct individual style, contributed to the graffiti art culture and acquired deep knowledge about the culture and a sense of technique.

Table N.1 Malaysian Graffiti [and Street] Artists.

No.	Tag Name	Birth Year	Notes
1.	360		
2.	A80S		Writing since 2006.
3.	AJUAN		
4.	AKEN [AKEN, KENDETA]	1994	Writing since 2010.
5.	AKES	1985	
6.	AKEY	1990	
7.	AL-FIQUE		
8.	AMOE	1993	
9.	ANOKAYER [PATOX, AKID]	1986	
10.	ASHIE		
11.	ASKOE	1985	
12.	AYIE		
13.	BADUT		
14.	BALY	1985	Writing first time in ~2003.
15.	BARBIE		
16.	BIBICHUN	1983	Writing since 2006.
17.	BLACK FRYDAY [BFD, KENJI]	1982	
18.	BLOB [POKE]	1983	
19.	BOMBR [BMBR]		
20.	BONE	1982	

21.	BONKS [BONKS2, BONKERS, GIVE]	1990	<i>Writing since ~2006.</i>
22.	BOOYA		
23.	BOTAX		
24.	BUDEAN		
25.	BURP	1988	<i>Writing since 2008.</i>
26.	BUZY		
27.	CARPET [CASE2]	1986	<i>Writing since ~2003.</i>
28.	CAKE		
29.	CLIMATE	1994	<i>Writing since ~2007. [?]</i>
30.	CLOAK67 [CHERN]	1991	
31.	CRAKEN		
32.	CRITIC06		
33.	CUZ	1989	
34.	DAMIS	1987	<i>Writing since 2007.</i>
35.	DATOM [52LATION, NAEZ]	1987	<i>Writing since ~2002.</i>
36.	DEFY		
37.	DEKS		
38.	DIVE		
39.	DODGE		
40.	DON2	(198? –201?)	
41.	DOZE		
42.	DREW [APEK, GHOST]	1983	
43.	DREW2		
44.	DWANE2		<i>Writing since 2007.</i>
45.	EH?		
46.	ESCAPE [ERKS]	1986	<i>Writing since 2006 [?].</i>
47.	FIDOW711	1989	
48.	FISH		
49.	FREAKS		
50.	FREEZE52		
51.	FRO-G		
52.	G-MIC		
53.	GRIND		
54.	HERE		
55.	HEMOS [HEMO]		
56.	ISH		
57.	JENG	(1985–2010)	
58.	JEPS	1987	
59.	JIN		
60.	JOJO		
61.	JUON		
62.	KAMO		
63.	KASI	1985	
64.	KATUN	1986	<i>Writing since 2003.</i>
65.	KAY		<i>Writing since 2007.</i>
66.	KDM		<i>Writing in 2008.</i>
67.	KEAS [SPLIF1231, KOSEA, HATE]		
68.	KENNY		
69.	KHALIL	1989	

70.	KING BUBU (?)		
71.	KIOUE [BOB]	1984	<i>Writing since ~2000.</i>
72.	KOLA [CARLZ]		
73.	KOS		
74.	KURN	1990	<i>Writing since 2006.</i>
75.	KURT		
76.	LAU		
77.	MAD		
78.	MADNUZ	1985	<i>Writing since 2003.</i>
79.	MADS	1994	<i>Writing since 2009.</i>
80.	MAGIC [MAGT]		
81.	MEDEA	1975	<i>Writing since 2005.</i>
82.	MEOW		
83.	MILE09	1987	<i>Writing since ~2003.</i>
84.	MIST149 [INSANE, ROSAK]	1985	<i>Writing since ~2000.</i>
85.	MISTAWHY		
86.	MOGOT [NAY2]	1984	<i>Writing since 2007.</i>
87.	MOJO		
88.	MOSH		
89.	MR. JIMBIT		
90.	MUID		
91.	NAS-EL	1987	<i>Writing since 2008.</i>
92.	NASZ		
93.	NEKO		
94.	NENOK [KLONE, ROSTEK]	1983	<i>Writing since 1999.</i>
95.	NESTWO [MUNDEN]		
96.	NEWBA	1983	
97.	NJOT		
98.	NOYZ		
99.	NUKE [DESYR]	1985	<i>Writing since 2002.</i>
100.	OH		
101.	ORKIBAL		
102.	PAKEY		
103.	PARSE		
104.	PELAT		
105.	PEREZ		
106.	PEROLTZ	1988	
107.	PHANTOM [PHATZ]		
108.	PHEANUT	1994	<i>Writing since 2008.</i>
109.	PHOBIA [BEE, SPARKLING, DEAD MOJO]	1983	<i>Writing since ~1998.</i>
110.	POOSAD		
111.	RASH	1974	
112.	RAT	1980	<i>Writing since 2000 (~1993).</i>
113.	REBEL		
114.	REEZE	1991	
115.	RESK		
116.	RESCUE		
117.	RN		

118.	ROOTY		
119.	SAINT	1985	<i>Writing since ~2000.</i>
120.	SCID		
121.	SCHIZZOW		
122.	SCHIZO		
123.	SEEK		
124.	SENG		
125.	SEVEN		
126.	SHAGGY		
127.	SHINOBI [DOMER]		
128.	SIEK [CYCLONE, CIEK]	1984	<i>Writing since 2003.</i>
129.	SIRA	1987	
130.	SIXTHIE		
131.	SKORE	1988	<i>Writing since 2007.</i>
132.	SMASK	1994	
133.	SMITH		
134.	SNORT		
135.	SNOZZE	1988	<i>Writing since 2006 (~2002).</i>
136.	SOME70	1987	<i>Writing since 2005.</i>
137.	SONA [PSIGANE, STAR]	1988	<i>Writing since ~2000.</i>
138.	SONEA	1988	
139.	SOPEY	1986	<i>Writing since ~2003.</i>
140.	SPADE		
141.	SPOKE		<i>Writing since 2006.</i>
142.	SPOON		
143.	SPUXS114	1987	
144.	SRJ		
145.	STACK		
146.	STRUNG		
147.	SUBWAY		
148.	SUGA52 [SHIEKO]	1976	<i>Writing since ~2003.</i>
149.	THA-B	1977	<i>Writing since 2005.</i>
150.	THEY	1982	<i>Writing since ~2004 (~2002).</i>
151.	THINK		
152.	TOURIST		
153.	TRIBE		
154.	TRUF		
155.	TWIGGY		
156.	UTARED		
157.	VAKTO	(1983–200?)	
158.	VDS212 [DREAMY]	1985	<i>Writing since ~2000.</i>
159.	VLT [VIOLENT]		<i>Writing since 2007.</i>
160.	VOLRE [DEMON, SEPET]	1987	
161.	WALLY	1995	
162.	WAN TP		<i>Writing since ~2003.</i>
163.	WARN		
164.	WAZER [CHECK, ESCON, STYL3, WASER, ASWER]	1985	

- 165. WITHOUTMOTIVE
- 166. WHYONE
- 167. YAK-YAK
- 168. YUMZ

1993

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