

Art Techniques Student's Guides

Graffiti Spray Painting



Curated by
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Introduction:

Graffiti and street art have always fascinated me because they exist in the same place where life happens: walls, streets, alleys, trains, abandoned buildings, bridges. Unlike traditional art inside museums, street art belongs to everyone. It questions power, celebrates identity, honors culture, and transforms cities into open-air galleries.

This guide is for students who feel energized by color, movement, rhythm, and visual storytelling. Graffiti teaches line work, lettering, scale, composition, and courage. Street art teaches purpose, activism, community, and how art interacts with space.

And like everything else in Visual Arts and IB, this guide will ask you to think about your intention:

What do you want to say, and why say it publicly?

WHAT IS GRAFFITI? WHAT IS STREET ART?

Graffiti

- Letter-based, stylized writing (tags, throw-ups, pieces)
- Historically linked to youth culture, identity, territory, movement
- Expressive, rebellious, rhythmic

Street Art

- Includes murals, stencils, wheatpaste, stickers, collage, installations
- More image-based
- Often message-driven: social, cultural, or political

Both share:

- Public visibility
- Personal voice
- Cultural expression
- Creative risk-taking
- Urban identity



Historical + Cultural Background

- Early graffiti: ancient Rome, Pompeii walls, Arabic calligraphic inscriptions



Graffiti in Pompeii

- Modern graffiti: 1970s NYC subway trains



NYC Trains, 1976

- Street art movements: 1980s–2000s global explosion



1980' Graffiti
Explosion

Street art today is international, multicultural, and deeply connected to identity and social issues — perfect for IB thematic research.

KEY ARTISTS TO KNOW

Keith Haring (USA)

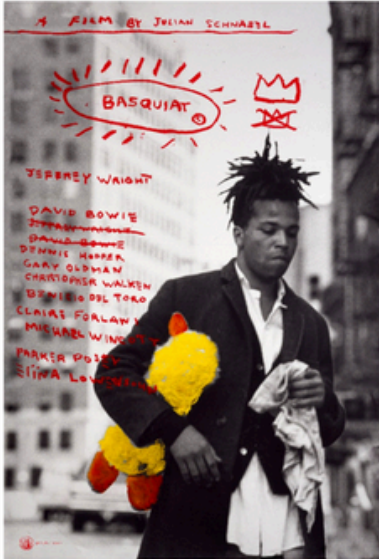
Bold lines, symbols, activism, equality.



KEY ARTISTS TO KNOW

Jean-Michel Basquiat (Haiti/USA)

Graffiti roots → Neo-Expressionist paintings. Identity, heritage, critique of power.



KEY ARTISTS TO KNOW

Banksy (UK)

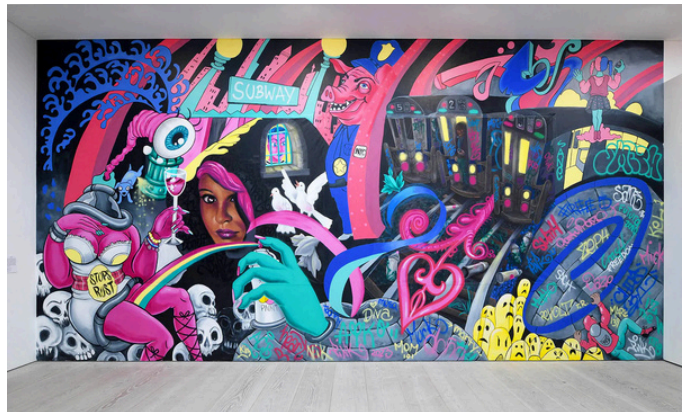
Stencils with humor, politics, social commentary.



KEY ARTISTS TO KNOW

Lady Pink (Ecuador/USA)

One of the first women in NYC graffiti. Themes: empowerment, urban identity.



KEY ARTISTS TO KNOW

Os Gêmeos (Brazil)

Twin street artists using color, folklore, dreams, Brazilian cultural symbolism.



KEY ARTISTS TO KNOW

Eduardo Kobra(Brazil)

Geometric colorful patterns on portraits, honoring great icons of civilization

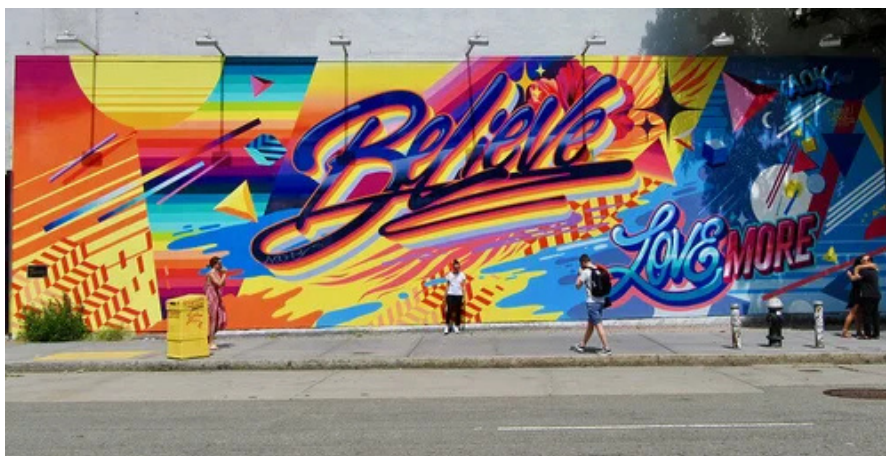
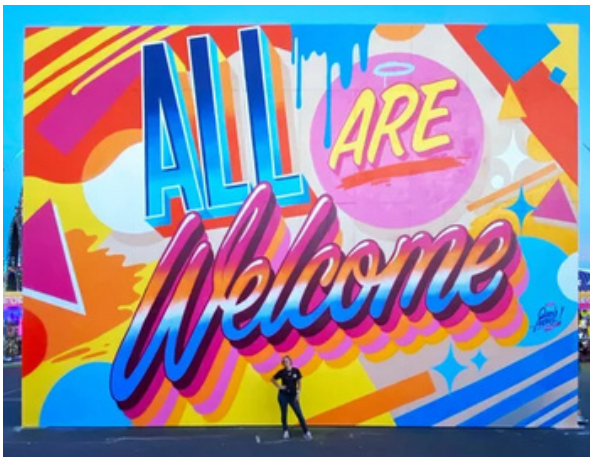




KEY ARTISTS TO KNOW

Queen Andrea (USA)

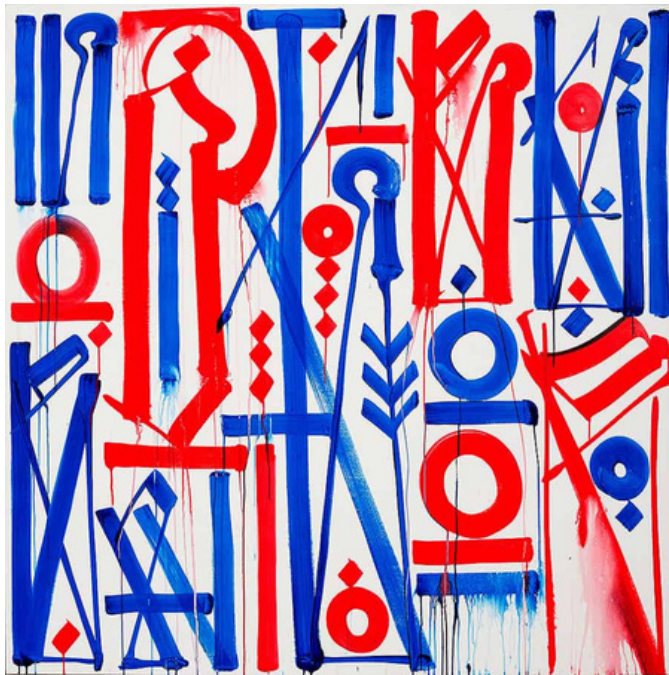
Bold colorful empowering positive messages with lettering and graffiti calligraphy



KEY ARTISTS TO KNOW

RETNA (USA)

Calligraphy + cultural fusion (Latin, Hebrew, Arabic influences)



KEY ARTISTS TO KNOW

JR (France)

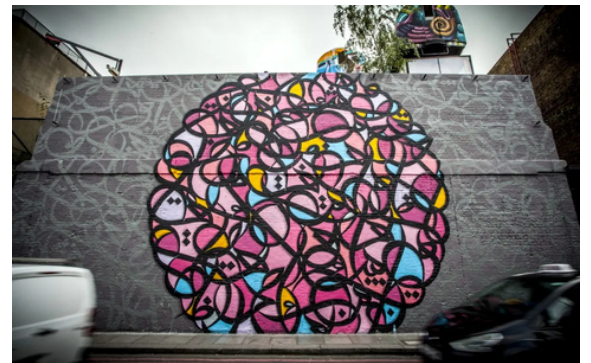
Large-scale photographic wheatpaste murals focusing on human stories.



KEY ARTISTS TO KNOW

elSeed(France/Tunisia)

eL Seed is a French-Tunisian artist known for his signature style of 'calligraffiti'—a fusion of Arabic calligraphy and contemporary street art.



GRAFFITI: FOUNDATIONAL TECHNIQUES

1. Tagging (signature style)

- Consistent, rhythmic writing
- Emphasis on line, gesture, repetition

EVERY INCH MATTERS \$UCKA FREE "KIRK"
'RIP' 'ED THE SPREAD' 'ADERATION'
GROWTH SENDER EXAMPLE "LET'S GET WILD"
CROSSFED OAK

RIP X STREET "ART" \$ CASH #TAG
KURBAN CRAZY FREEDOME CROWN WOW
ONLY ONG

GRAFFITI: FOUNDATIONAL TECHNIQUES

2. Throw-Ups

- Bubble or block letters
- Quick execution
- Bold outlines

A B C D E F G
H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T
U V W X Y Z



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 . , ? !

BUBBLE
GRAFFITI

GRAFFITI: FOUNDATIONAL TECHNIQUES

3. Wildstyle

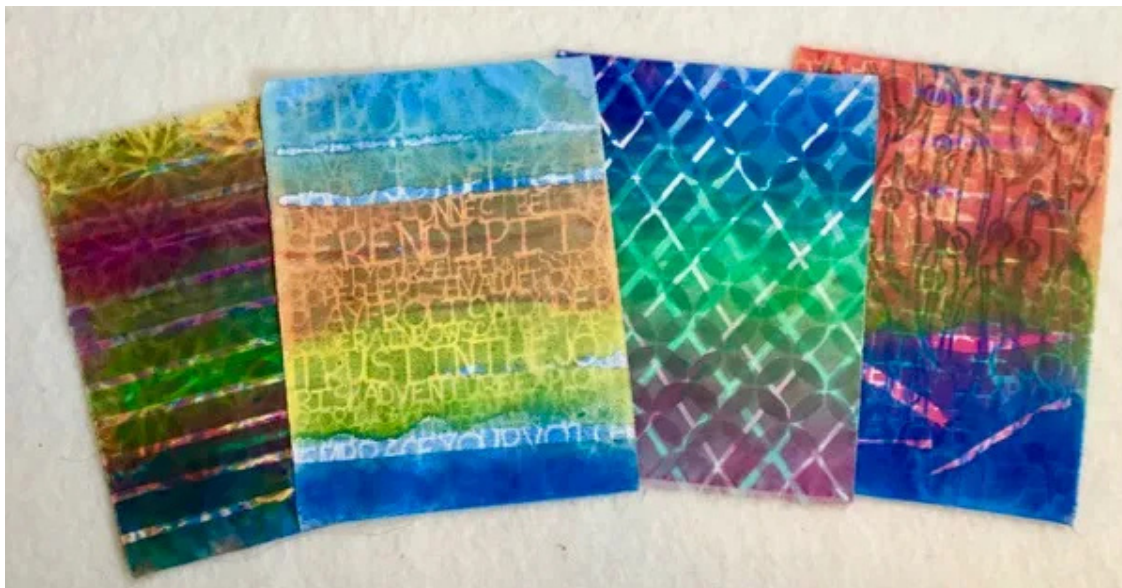
- Overlapping letters
- Arrows, connections, interlocking forms
- Complex, expressive, advanced



GRAFFITI: FOUNDATIONAL TECHNIQUES

4. Color Blending (Spray Paint Skills)

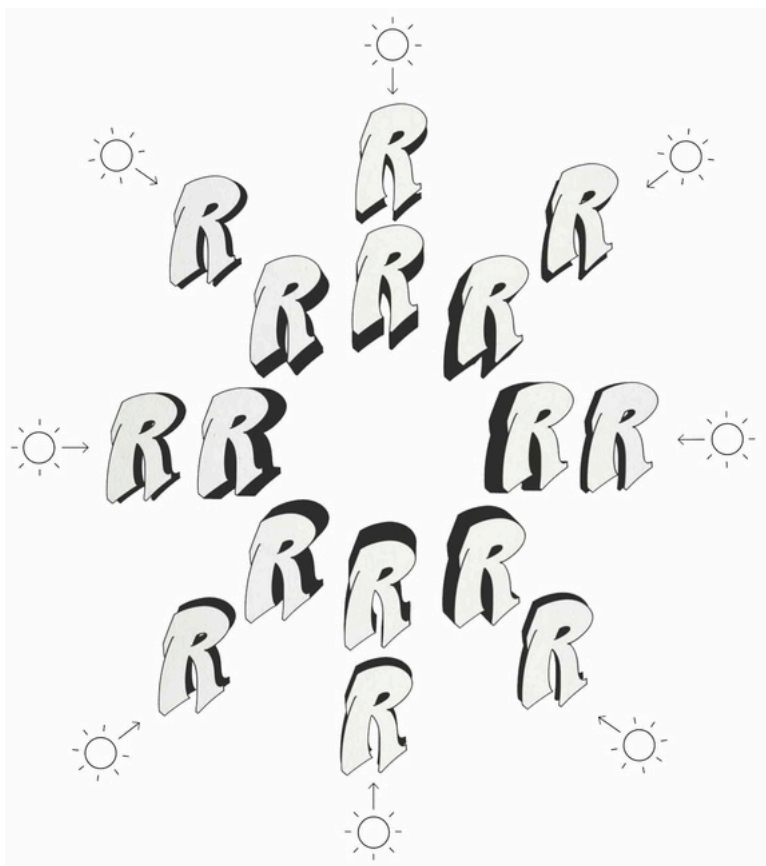
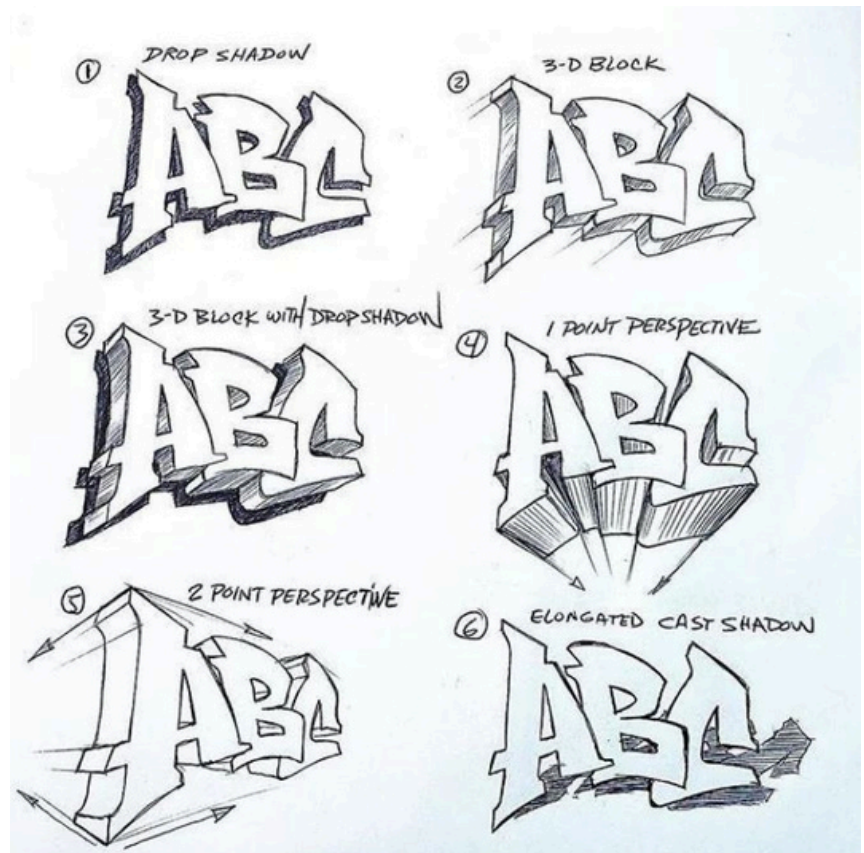
- Soft transitions
- Overspray + distance control
- Layering



GRAFFITI: FOUNDATIONAL TECHNIQUES

5. Outlining & Shadows

- Strengthens legibility
- Adds depth



STREET ART TECHNIQUES

1. Stencils

- Cut designs → spray or paint
- Great for repetition
- Used by Banksy



STREET ART TECHNIQUES

2. Wheatpaste Posters

- Print or draw on paper → paste onto walls
- Fast, impactful



STREET ART TECHNIQUES

3. Stickers (Slaps)

- Quick messages or illustrations
- Portable street identity



STREET ART TECHNIQUES

4. Murals

- Large-scale painting on walls
- Requires planning, color theory, proportion



The Wynwood Murals make up one of the largest and most famous open-air street art installations in the world. Centered around Wynwood Walls in Miami's Arts District, this vibrant neighborhood features massive, world-class graffiti and wall paintings from international artists

MATERIALS NEEDED

(CLASSROOM-SAFE VERSION)

Since we avoid spray paint indoors:

- Acrylic paints
- Markers (paint markers, permanent markers)
- Thick paper or cardboard
- Craft knives (for stencils) + cutting mat
- Wheatpaste (flour + water mix)
- Stickers + label sheets
- Chalk pastels (large-scale sidewalk art)
- Digital tools (Procreate for mock-ups)

This preserves graffiti energy without safety issues.

IB VISUAL ARTS CONNECTIONS

Investigate

- Street culture, social movements, city identity
- Artists + visual languages of graffiti
- Materials (markers, stencils, wheatpaste, surfaces)



Image Credit: Banksy



*Image Credit:
OAK OAK*

IB VISUAL ARTS CONNECTIONS

Generate

- Lettering drafts
- Symbol experiments
- Repetition + variation
- Mock-ups on photos of real walls



Image Credit: Queen Andrea



IB VISUAL ARTS CONNECTIONS

Refine

- Compare different versions
- Evaluate legibility, composition, message



IB VISUAL ARTS CONNECTIONS

Resolve

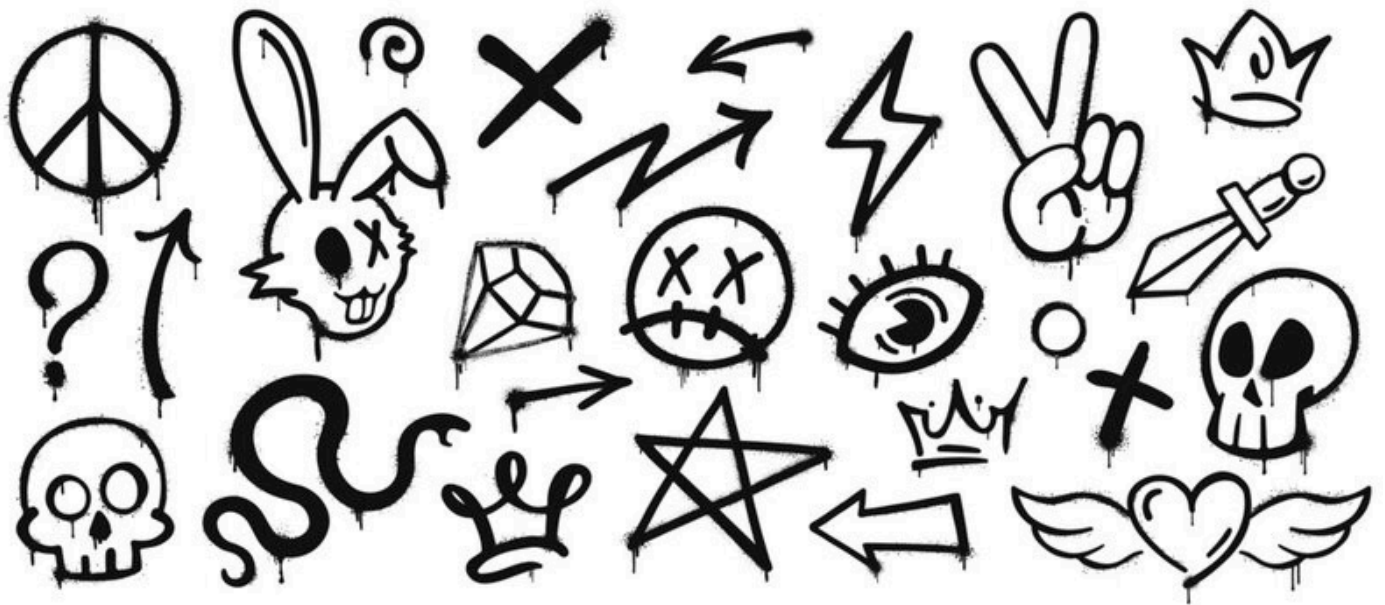
- Final mural concept
- Final stencil series
- Final graffiti lettering piece
- Installation photos of work on plywood/boards



Image Credit: Jason Naylor

IB REFLECTION PROMPTS

- What message or identity does your graffiti or street art communicate?
- Which visual strategies did you borrow from real graffiti artists?
- How does scale affect your meaning?
- How does working publicly (even hypothetically) change your artistic intention?
- Which cultural symbols appear in your work, and why?



MINI TASKS (5, 10, 20 minutes)

5-minute drills

- 10 quick tag variations
- Create a one-word message
- Sketch a symbol representing your culture



MINI TASKS (5, 10, 20 minutes)

10-minute tasks

- Combine lettering + symbol
- Create a two-layer stencil design
- Draw a throw-up using complementary colors



MINI TASKS (5, 10, 20 minutes)

20-minute challenges

- Wildstyle lettering exploration
- Mixed media graffiti collage
- Sticker sheet of 6 designs



DO'S AND DON'TS (Classroom Version)

DO:

- ✓ Explore graffiti history and culture respectfully
- ✓ Study lettering movement and rhythm
- ✓ Plan compositions before painting
- ✓ Experiment with texture, shadow, color
- ✓ Think conceptually — message matters
- ✓ Work on paper, boards, or digital photos of walls

DON'T:

- ✗ Do not imitate illegal tagging
- ✗ Do not use harmful materials indoors
- ✗ Do not copy exact artworks
- ✗ Do not use hateful or disrespectful messages
- ✗ Do not assume graffiti = vandalism

Graffiti is an art form with deep cultural roots deserving respect.

FINAL MESSAGE

Graffiti and street art are powerful because they speak directly to the world outside the classroom. They were born from a need to be seen, to express identity, to reclaim space, and to tell stories that matter. When you create graffiti-inspired art, you're not just drawing letters or painting walls; you're practicing the courage to have a visual voice.

Your work does not need to be perfect. It needs to be intentional. Every choice you make: color, line, symbol, message, and it becomes part of how you communicate who you are and what you care about.

Whether you're designing a mural, experimenting with stencils, or inventing your own urban symbols, remember this: street art belongs to the people, and your art belongs to your story.

Ms. Mila



