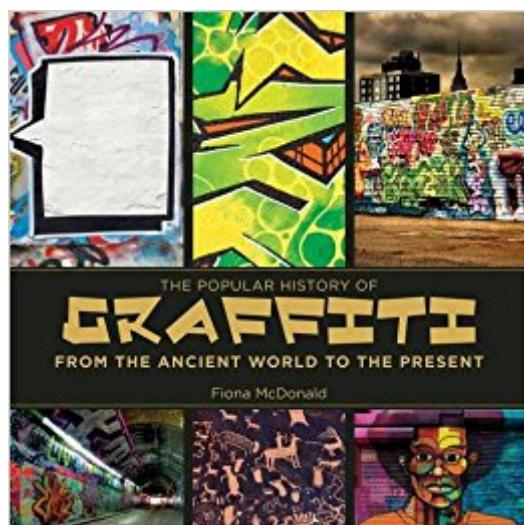


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# The Popular History Of Graffiti: From The Ancient World To The Present



## Synopsis

What is graffiti? And why have we, as a culture, had the urge to do it since 30,000 BCE? Artist Fiona McDonald explores the ways in which graffiti works to forever compel and simultaneously repel us as a society. When did graffiti turn into graffiti art, and why do we now pay thousands of dollars for a Banksy print when just twenty years ago, seminal graffiti artists from the Bronx were thrown into jail for having the same idea? Graffiti has not always been imbued with a sense of aesthetic, but when and why did we suddenly decide that it is worthy of consideration and criticism, just within the past few years? Throughout history, graffiti has served as an innately individualistic expression (such as Viking graffiti on the walls of eighth-century churches), but it has also evolved into a visual and narrative expression of a collective group. Graffiti brings to mind not only hip-hop culture and urban landscapes, but petroglyphs, tree trunks strewn with carved hearts symbolizing love, and million-dollar works of art. Learn about more graffiti artists and rebels such as: the band Black Flag, Lee Quinones and Fab 5 Freddy, Dandi, Zephyr, Blek le Rat, Nunca, Keith Haring, and more! Illustrated with stunning full-color photos of graffiti throughout time, *The Popular History of Graffiti* promises to be an important and dynamic addition to graffiti literature.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Skyhorse Publishing; 1 edition (June 4, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1616088680

ISBN-13: 978-1616088682

Product Dimensions: 9 x 9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.9 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #756,424 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #138 in Books > Arts & Photography > Other Media > Graffiti & Street Art #169543 in Books > Textbooks

## Customer Reviews

Fiona McDonald has wanted to make beautiful things for a living since she was a little girl. To further this dream, Fiona spent four years of intensive study at the Julian Ashton Art School in Sydney, Australia. From there she moved to the Blue Mountains and began making painted cloth dolls and figurative sculpture. After Fiona's son was born, she enrolled at university to study literature. Fiona had two grown up children and a granddaughter. She lives with her three dogs, cat, rabbit,

and one ancient hen.

The history of graffiti has been misstated repeatedly. This may be the only telling that does not grossly simplify the very long history of graffiti. Although it's commentary on the political ramifications of an art movement arising from the criminal act of vandalism is thin and its conflation of graffiti with other forms of street art is arguably misguided, these are technical matters relating to my perspective on graffiti. This book is the only statement of graffiti history that I will cite as a reference. It is not the definitive history of the subject but it is the only book in the field that is close.

I chose to read this book because I am teaching a 9-week class about graffiti in the Fall. This book is a good resource for the class as it asks important questions about what is classified as graffiti, and what it has meant to society.

This is a wonderful book about an intriguing subject--graffiti and street art, which have always been with us even though we often think it's just a modern phenomenon. The author takes us on a fascinating journey through history which clearly shows that this most ephemeral of arts is also paradoxically one of the most permanent: from the beginning of time, it seems, people have felt the desire to express themselves on walls, and what they express runs the full gamut from true poetic and artistic sensibility to the crudest of sentiments, and the need to assert identity, from the runes of Varangians inscribing their names on Roman lintels to 'Kilcoy was here' and the tags of today. From vandals to poets, rebels to highly-paid cult figures, graffitiists themselves vary as much as what they create, and cultural backgrounds also determine very different styles: the street art of Paris, for instance, which I know well, is very different in approach, media and style to that found in American cities. From the ubiquitous spray can to the startling use of icing sugar, the materials used to create vary enormously too, and there's even 'fake graffiti' which exists only as Photoshopped creations in cyberspace..The book is beautifully produced, lavishly illustrated with lots of color photographs(including some of my own, of Paris street art)and very well designed. Recommended.

I don't like graffiti, I'll say that now. Or rather I didn't until I found 'A Popular History of Graffiti' by Fiona McDonald. This book covers graffiti from all areas of history and Fiona's use of language made me interested enough to keep reading. Did you know that in Ancient times it was OKAY and almost expected to Graffiti on a regular basis? Even rude stuff! She has also sourced fantastic images of graffiti from around the world, including some that I recognised from my home town in the

Blue Mountains in Australia.I've been a fan of Fiona's for years, especially her graphic novel 'Ghost Doll and Jasper' as well as her series of knitting books. Is there anything this woman can't do???

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