

5.3 Tools Used To Graffiti

The screenshot shows the Bombing Science website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo 'bombing science' and links for 'GRAFFITI BLOG', 'SHOP', 'GRAFFITI PICTURES', and 'FORUMS'. A search icon and 'UPLOAD PICTURES' link are also present. Below the navigation bar, there are logos for brands: KRINK, Markal, POTENTATE, MOLOTOW, FLAME, and Ironlak. A central menu features icons and lists for various categories: PAINT (Molotow, Ironlak, Flame, Kolor), CAPS (All Caps, NY Caps, German Caps, Wingcaps, Other), MARKERS (Ink Markers, Paint Markers, Sketching Markers, Refills, Empty Markers, Replacement Nibs), CLOTHING (T-shirts, Hats, Sweatshirts, Jackets, Bags, Socks), MEDIAS (Books, Magazines, DVD, More), and OTHER (Prints, Housewares, Designer Toys, Clearance Sale, Free Stuff). Below this is a 'GRAFFITI BLOG' section with three featured items: 'Flicks of the Week' with a graffiti wall image, 'Graffiti Video: Buchawrestlers' with a street scene image, and 'HONE' with a graffiti piece image.

Bombing Science Website

Most of the products used to graffiti can be purchased from paint stores, department stores, shoe stores, convenience stores, etcetera. Some stores are entirely dedicated to the sale of graffiti products; however, one of the easiest places to purchase material is online. Countless websites offer every graffiti product imaginable. If you have a credit card and an address you can have these items shipped directly to your doorstep without anyone knowing.

Some people use household items to graffiti as well, such as shoe polish, brake fluid, hydrofluoric acid, wheatpaste, etc. Basically, anything can be used to graffiti with and sometimes people can be very creative, which can often make the removal process more challenging. It is important to be able to recognize what was used to graffiti with in order to properly determine what the best removal process would be.

The following are examples of some of the tools used. Keep in mind that this is not a definitive list and that there are always new products and tools being created and used.

Acid Etching Tools: Acid etching is very dangerous for the person applying it because it can cause severe burns and disfigurement. Special solvents such as hydrofluoric acid or brake fluid is often placed in either a pen or bingo dabber and then used for etching into glass or stone, metal surfaces, or any other material that the specific acid can eat away at.



Body Sprays: Special methods are used to fill many common household containers, such as cans of body spray, with paint or inks. This helps disguise or hide their tools used to graffiti, so even if they are searched by police or parents, the tools might not be recognized or seized.



Crayons: Wax crayons are sometimes used on both flat and rough surfaces. Crayons are very simple to remove when you have the right equipment.



Etching Tools: Etching tools are used to cut/scratch into a surface such as glass, metal, plastic, or wood. These are easily concealed and can include anything from a key to a scalpel.



Fire Extinguishers: Occasionally used to graffiti with. A silver, black, or chrome extinguisher (not a red one) will be filled with paint and wreak havoc on an area. The extinguisher must have a “bicycle tire” valve near the top.



First they will completely empty the extinguisher and release all of the pressure within it. Then they open it using a wrench and will funnel a water-based paint into the extinguisher until it is $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Then they fill the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ with water, seal it again, and fill it with air via a bike pump or compressor. They will usually only hit one or two buildings at a time because it uses a lot of paint very quickly.

The buildings that get hit are usually hit extremely bad. This type of graffiti application is a nightmare for a property owner as it needs to be dealt with much sooner than most other tags. It can be seen from blocks away as the size is larger than any other type of tag. It will often cost them anywhere from \$700 to several thousand to clean because of the large area and overspray. However, because it is one layer and a watered down latex paint that is used, the removal process can be slightly quicker.

Markers: Easy to conceal and come in a variety of colours and sizes. Different markers are used for different effects. They can be fat, skinny, or leave drip marks that run down the entire surface.

Most markers are reusable and can be filled with either paint or ink. A very common marker (Meanstreak) is an oil based paint marker. Each stick can be removed from its holder and split laterally with a razor blade. Two pieces from separate markers



can be placed back into a container and used to create a two-toned tag in an oil based paint.

Many paint markers that are sold today are specifically made for the purpose of graffiti. They are made so they can write over dirt or other materials, will not rub off, and can be used on wet surfaces.

Markers are mostly used on flat surfaces such as metal or glass, but it is not uncommon to see it on brick and concrete. The ingredients of the ink/paint used in the markers can vary and removal dwell time will also vary depending on what the material is.

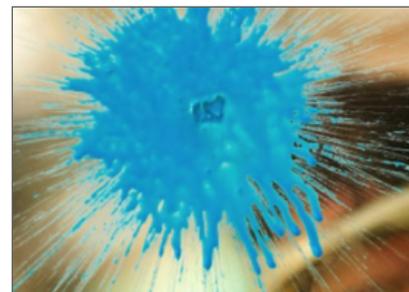
Oil Paint Sticks: A paint stick (aka pigment sticks, oil sticks) is an oil paint in an easy to use stick. It is made with a combination of highly refined pigments and linseed oil in pure wax. They are odourless and dry very fast. The sticks are covered with a paper wrapper that makes them easy to handle. When you first use them you peel the “skin” off the top of the oil stick. This skin develops after it is used and protects the remaining paint from becoming hard and unusable. Once the skin is peeled away it is ready for use again. These will write on almost any surface.



Paint Rollers: Using a paint roller is popular for creating large, thick letters with minimal effort. These are harder to carry around, which is why you do not see this very often.



Paintballs: Paintballs can definitely be a form of graffiti on a property. Even though there is no specific design or signature it is still a form of paint vandalism by placing something on a property without the permission of the owner. Paintballs are spherical gelatine capsules containing primarily polyethylene glycol, other non-toxic and water-soluble substances, and dye. The brightly coloured fill is often easy to clean; however, the ball's shell is often more difficult to remove, especially when the sun has baked it onto the surface.



Posters & Wheatpasting: As discussed before, anything unwanted that is placed onto a property without the permission of the property owner is considered graffiti. Usually when a poster is put on a building it is not for graffiti purposes and is often hung with tape or staples. When posters are used for graffiti purposes they are often stuck on with something that will make the poster very difficult to remove. An example of this is wheatpasting. Wheat paste can be made at home with wheat flour and water and can be applied with either a small roller or a paintbrush. Removing a poster that has been wheatpasted is not an easy task. Often it will come off in pieces leaving the white sticky residue behind, which must also be removed. In some cases a pressure washer may be needed to complete the removal process.



Shoe Polish: A very common household product that is used for tagging windows and any other smooth surfaces.



Spray Paint: One of the most common products used to graffiti. There are thousands of different types of spray paints available. They come in every colour and can even be customized. The cans vary in size and different tips can be bought to change the type of spray it produces. They also come in different finishes such as matt, semi-gloss, metallic, or resistant to high heat such as barbecue paint. High heat paints can make the removals more challenging and are more resilient to graffiti removal products and hot water pressure washing.



Stencils: Often used to quickly tag a specific design that normally would be very difficult to tag. Spray paint is generally used with the stencil.



Stickers: Very popular for high profile areas. They are very easy to conceal and apply. They are normally made in high volume well before being stuck onto something.



+ MODULE 5 EXERCISES

1. Discover some local graffiti in your city and try to follow a tagger's path. Once you discover one tag, you should be able to find more. Practice how you will organize taking photos and sort them for when you are back at your computer/phone.

+ LINKS

Broken Windows Theory

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broken_windows_theory

Wikipedia: Graffiti

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graffiti>

Bombing Science

<https://www.bombingscience.com>