

# PHOT KONZ



Street Art Projects

a guide for new artists

# Phat Kanz

## A guide to Street Art

### So ya wanna do graff?

Phat Kanz is about inspiring others, passing on skills and knowledge and creating community art. We work with artists and youth supports and runs, fun, legal opportunities for people like you to have a go at street art.

We teach all the skills and knowledge you need to know for making great art work safely and legally.

We promote graffiti as the varied and skilled art form it is, separating it from the illegal 'tagging' and vandalism it is often associated with.

**"It's great to be sharing this skill whilst positively tackling the legal issues surrounding the art form."**



**"why would I do it illegally when I can take my time do something really sick in daylight ?"**



Brighton '07  
photos by Philip Watson

## Native's Story

I always liked art (my art) but was never allowed to do what I really loved at school: Graffiti / Urban art (Unlike now) there were no legal graffiti projects, proper equipment and only a few local writers to reference, but I did hook up with others and that kept me going.

I started in '82 like many others at the time, sketching out ideas, working on lettering, colour schemes and characters. I would go to London ALOT to check out new Graffiti artists & different crews. Our only outlet though was to do it illegally, which was only going to end up getting us in trouble.

And sure enough we started to get arrested for illegally hitting subway tunnels, backs of garages, alleyways, train tunnels, etc...And as we got older it started to get more serious - in the end my partner in crime spent two weeks in a cell and got a proper fine to pay which was a bit of a wake up call. I couldn't afford to go to college and work and bills started to take over and things went quiet.

Time moved on, new styles moved in, graffiti as it was not really on the scene anymore...it seemed to disappear.

Then in the mid nineties Graffiti / Urban Art was on the up again, It never went away it had just become more notable, more open. This time there was a definite difference between Graffiti as vandalism and Graffiti as an art form, now it was a major force on record labels, clothing, video and film, backdrops for clubs, pubs, local teams and promotions and to top it all galleries are now displaying pieces! Graffiti art as an art form is now viable.

I knew that the time was right to make use of all my years of experience - but this time doing it legally - which meant keeping safe, out of trouble, no fines no criminal records just having time to work on pieces with good paints and in daylight, (a nice change)!

Now I promote the art form exhibiting in galleries and running legal projects. So people interested in Graffiti, like you, can get the skills and understanding to express yourself without putting yourself at risk or having to tread the wrong side of the law, like I did.

Later



Native  
The Alter-NATIVE Art Foundation



• **GRAFFITI'S legal init?**

- o All graffiti is illegal and therefore vandalism unless permission from the landowner has been given.
- o Even then there are lots of tangles you can get into with local residents!
- o Everything belongs to someone and if they don't want it there then it's ruined or costs lots of money to remove.

• **OH - so if I don't get caught it'll be alright?**

- o There's a huge crack down on graffiti vandalism so I wouldn't count on it!
- o There are consequences even if u don't get caught then you are still putting your health at risk and causing damage to other peoples properties and lives.



## • Consequences of doing it illegally

o Consequences?! Don't make me laugh it's fun how can graffiti really affect me?

**YOUR future** - get yourself a criminal record or ASBO! 'racking' (stealing) spray cans, trespassing or damaging property will seriously affect what you can do in the future - even limiting your choices of job.

**YOUR cash** - wanna buy something nice? Sorry you could now be in big debt - one graff vandal racked up £300,000 in damages to pay back! Think how much of his life that's going to take to pay off! Most people's houses don't cost that!



**YOUR freedom** - fancy going out with your mates? Sorry you have community service to do! Or worse perhaps you have really limited your choices and got yourself banged up?

**YOUR conscience** - you do have one right? Property belongs to people - people who have lives, choices and feelings just like you or I. Think about how it would be if it happened to someone you knew? How would they feel? What could they do? Could they afford to pay for it to be removed?

**YOUR rights** - you want your stuff your way don't you? IS it ok for you to take that right away from others?

**YOUR safety** - so you like hanging out in dark dodgy alleys or dangerous railway sidings. You like falls from heights and running from police and dogs? Fun? Well perhaps it is until you it all goes wrong? How seriously wrong could it get? Or maybe at best you just enjoy the warm glow you get as a train passes - that is until you find out that's the toilets being flushed and the contents evaporating!

**YOUR health** - think paint messes up your threads? Just imagine what it does to your lungs - your lungs are pretty useful! So keep yaself breathing so you can carry on enjoying painting and life.

**Your LIFE** - Is vandal 'tagging fame' really worth all this? Don't get your rush's from illegal tagging - you, your life and your choices or other peoples will end up getting cut short. It might start off as a bit of fun but the more you do and the more involved you get the harsher these consequences.



## o ARGHHH!!! BUT I WANNA DO GRAFF!

SO you wanna do it legally - you need to get yourself some good kit (proper graff writers spray paint and special nozzles (caps) for different effects), and essentially the right face mask! Then you need somewhere outside to spray and something to spray on and of course **PERMISSION** to do it!

## o DON'T FORGET IT'S ILLEGAL TO BUY PAINT IF YOU ARE UNDER 16

Your best bet is to go on a legal project and save yourself all the hassle - they have dealt with all these problems and all you have to do is get creative.

## o If LEGAL GRAFF is the way forward? What's it all about

### o On a project you get

lots of time to experiment...

...and create your own style

help with your skills and lots of ideas!

to pick the brains of artists that make their living from it!

to use good equipment and paints

to work safely in daylight!

the chance to get your work shown off without the worry of getting in trouble

to do some really sick work!

And start getting really good! Follow our steps!

## • STEP 1

### o SETTING YOURSELF UP AS AN ARTIST NOT A VANDAL is also about QUALITY!

#### SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Resist the urge to sign your work! It can ruin a wicked piece!



"Legal projects have taken working illegally right off the horizon for me"

## • STEP 2

- o **PRACTICE YOUR CAN CONTROL**
- o PROs don't drip! Set yourself up as a pro! Work out how to control your paint using different movements, distances, speeds and nozzles. Then try using stencils without making drips!
- o **CHALLENGE YOURSELF** or each other!
- o Fills - draw out shapes and fill em - over and over again.
- o Accuracy - It's easy to freestyle! Step up your game and get precise! Cut some lines of different thicknesses out of thick card and try spraying thru them without getting any paint on the card! Or get someone to freestyle a line for you - then follow it exactly with your spray!
- o Use practice squares to keep a record of your progress: Do a fill, with a blend and initials.

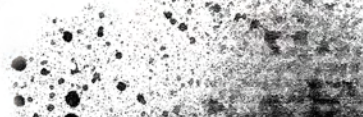


## • STEP 3

- o **DO THINGS IN THE RIGHT ORDER**
- o for a really tidy piece get your spray elements in the right order, as you get better you will develop your own style but a good way to start is:
- o First Map it out in a light colour with a skinny cap
- o DO your fills inside and outside your shapes with fat cap
- o Add your effects/patterning/shapes detail
- o ONLY THEN do your outline (doing it now keeps it crisp and tidy)
- o FINALLY add glints

## • STEP 4

- o **DZINES!**
- o Get drawing - all good graff work is underpinned by drawn designs.
- o All serious graff writers work out their designs and ideas in their own design bible: their black book.
- o The more you draw the more familiar you will get with your shapes and the tighter your spray work will be
- o Start your own black book and collect your ideas, plan your pieces and work out orders too





## • STEP 5

### o **GET STYLIN!** : Develop your own writer's style.

- o Take your name or a word that you like, definitely choosing something you want to write over and over again!
- o Start off with your own handwriting, as this flows in the same way your hand will when your spray. Draw the word large on a sheet of paper in pencil. Experiment with all capitals, all lower case or a mixture until you have something you like.
- o Now draw loosely around the letters, retaining the original flow of the letters: to make them a basic bubble style - It's good if you draw big and make the letters overlap at this point. Rub out the pencil line of your original handwriting to leave just the bubble letters.
- o Work into the basic bubble shape by tweaking the shapes adding exaggerated bits, flourishes, angles, spikes, cut out sections. As you go rub out sections of the basic letter shape you no longer need so you always have a letter outline. Push the letters further into overlapping or look at ways you might want to link letters up. Try to keep tweaks consistent and mimic patterns - not just in the solid shapes but also in the gaps between letters.
- o Think about adding a 3D effect, a background shape that follows the letters...
- o Draw in shaded colours (your blends) and effects: you may want to divide up the letters in to different sections, or add shapes and lines or squiggles.
- o Finally draw in heavy marker around the outline of your letters, any 3D bits or shape.
- o Don't be afraid to start again or re-do stages until you are happy - let those shapes mutate and keep experimenting - you can get lots of different styles from the same start point following the same steps...

### o **Make your signature alphabet**

- o After you've been messing about with letters or a name for a while and you have settled into it and are very familiar with the shapes you might want to try the next step: making your own BASIC alphabet. It will take some time to create it so you will need a lot of patience and some very thin (see-through) paper as you will be tracing and re-tracing good letters and shapes and rubbing out and re-drawing others.
- o Take the drawings you have created of your name or other word you are very comfortable with. Then try other letters that you can make from that name, so that the letter style looks alike...
- o .... Little cheats are use the letter

- E to make L & F
- B to make K, P & R,
- O will make Q
- C is G
- M is N & upside down W,
- S is Z back to front!
- and vice-versa...



**"Its hard work at times but it looks so wicked when we are done!"**

- o Once you have completed a basic alphabet sheet re-trace the whole lot but this time add some extra bits, give the letters a bit of flare a bit of style
- o **Use other peoples style to get started but never NeVeR NEVER use someone else's letters or style unless they are cool with it.**

## • Got the basics?

### • **TIPS to keep on getting better... AND BETTER...**

- o **Watch other people**  
(ESPECIALLY IF THEY DON'T MAKE DRIPS or do something you wanna be able to!)

#### **Skills to look out for:**

- How close are they holding their can?
- How fast are they moving?
- How do they deal with mistakes?
- Are they pressing the nozzle all the way down?
- What movements are they making?
- Are they spraying all the time?
- What order are they doing things in?
- What caps are they using?
- Any new skills or techniques to rob?

#### **Design things to look out for:**

- What colour schemes are they using?
- How they make stuff stand out?
- Any interesting fills or effects?
- What makes their piece work?

### o **Learn from the pros!**

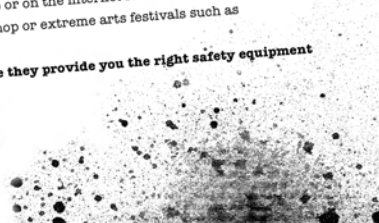
Get yourself to a graff jam or showcase.

Keep an eye out for info in your local paint suppliers/graff scene shop (Skate/Art/Music/HipHop/clothing etc) or on the internet for news of any up coming events.

Look out for graff events linked to hip hop or extreme arts festivals such as [www.whiteair.co.uk](http://www.whiteair.co.uk) and [www.bhhf.org](http://www.bhhf.org)

**If you are able to take part make sure they provide you the right safety equipment**

- eg face mask.



Inspiration/////



## o **Inspire yaself:**

### **Greedily devour other artwork**

Look at pictures of graffiti and get yourself lotsa IDEAS  
What styles, fills, shapes, backgrounds, 3D effects have been used?  
How was it done?

What order did they do it in?

Is there anything you can copy yourself?

### o **Get your hands on as many different images as possible**

There are endless graff sites on the internet and there's tonnes of books and DVDs available - if your local Book/scene shop does not stock them throw 'graffiti' into an Amazon.co.uk search to see some of what's about. Remember tho' they may not be images from a legal project you can still learn from their style and techniques

Find out about graff exhibitions/walls of fame near you and get yourself down there!

### • **Find a legal project near YOU:**

o some ideas of places to look and people to help you

Use the internet - search for street/urban/graffiti/graff and your town/county/areas and places nearby - look on graff sites/youth sites as well as local authority and even police sites!

Contact your local youth service - connexions? MV offices?

Try the Art/Leisure or Community development offices at your local district councils  
Youth charities, clubs and organisations

Local graff scene shops and other people with your interests...

### • **DRAWN A BLANK?**

#### o **How about kick-starting your own project?**

There's loadsa \$ out there for youth-led projects and people to support you to do it... start shouting about it! Try your art teacher, youth workers, anyone on the list above and well anyone else that will listen!...

We've made another pack to help you "**Phat Kanz Street Art Projects: a guide for youth organisations**" download it from [www.thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk](http://www.thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk) and give it to someone who

wants to help! It's packed full of tips on setting up and running street art projects - getting community support for it and funding! It will help you get your project going!

Legal!  
**HAPPY ^ SPRAYING ;)**



**"great memories!  
I look forward to the next project!"**

more inspiration ////



# KANZ

**“Phat Kanz recognises that our future depends on todays youth. It not only gives young people self esteem and confidence in their own abilities but it encourages a sense of social responsibility and citizenship. Young people learn that they can have fun without damaging their environment or harming themselves or others”**

**Police Sergeant Jon Taylor Metropolitan Police Service.**

**Wanna know more?**

**Contact [phatkanz@blueimpact.co.uk](mailto:phatkanz@blueimpact.co.uk)**

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