

[Databases selected:](#) Multiple databases...

Graffiti: Misunderstood Art Form Subject of Workshop

Heather Polischuk. **Regina Sun.** Regina, Sask.: Oct 5, 2008. pg. 26

Abstract (Summary)

A lot of people don't think writers, graffiti artists, have moralities, but growing up, when I was an illegal graffiti artist, I would never tag somebody's fence or somebody's garage because I knew that in the end it would be them taking their money out of their own pockets and painting over it.

Full Text (862 words)

Copyright Southam Publications Inc. Oct 5, 2008

To some, it's unappealing. To others, it's a crime. To Joshua Goff, graffiti is a misunderstood art form.

"It's one of those unknown mysteries," Goff said of graffiti's appeal. "It kind of just grabs your soul and takes ahold of it and then you just go with it. Years later, you don't even understand why you got into it. It's just a part of you now."

Goff, who refers to himself as an urban inspired artist, spent part of last Sunday afternoon teaching people about graffiti. The workshop, called "Up Against a Wall: Graffiti as Art," was presented as part of the Flatland Scratch Seminar and Workshop Series III. The workshop was held in conjunction with a powwow celebrating the life of late artist, Bob Boyer. Boyer's work is currently being featured at the MacKenzie Art Gallery, outside which both the powwow and the graffiti workshop were held.

Goff started doing graffiti about 11 years ago -- and promptly found himself in numerous run-ins with the law. Since then, he's been able to turn his colourful hobby into a small business under his tag, Truth. He's done work with the Craven Country Jamboree, various recreation centres, and even the City of Regina -- the latter of which has railed against the abundance of graffiti that turns up on people's fences, garages and businesses. As part of the war the city is waging against the often unwanted tags to private property, the city previously came up with a bylaw that forces property owners to clean up graffiti that turns up on their property.

Goff isn't a fan of the bylaw, saying he believes it may only fuel illegal graffiti artists. He said it also creates negative perceptions against artists who don't tag people's property.

"Right now there's no middle ground in between graffiti artists and the city of Regina," he said. "I shouldn't say it's all horrible though, because I've done work for the city of Regina and they do have an open mind towards things. It's just this whole thing of giving fines to people is just creating a bias against all the graffiti artists like myself that are trying to make a business of it because it just ruins what I'm doing and what I'm trying to put out there."

He added that he doesn't condone painting on people's homes or fences. In fact, part of his workshop was to focus on the difference between destruction and art, providing education on where graffiti is and isn't allowed.

"There are moralities inside of graffiti artists," he said. "A lot of people don't think writers, graffiti artists, have moralities, but growing up, when I was an illegal graffiti artist, I would never tag somebody's fence or somebody's garage because I knew that in the end it would be them taking their money out of their own pockets and painting over it."

He also sought to distinguish his work from the gang tags that have been coming up around the city.

"If you look at the true sense of the culture and the people that have pushed it to a higher level, those people have never been gang members ...," he said. "Gang members are involved with it but it's not like they're putting the forefront inside of the artistic part of the culture. So I look at that and say, 'okay, it's there but it's not what I'm following.'"

Charity Marsh, the University of Regina's Canada Research Chair, said the workshop is intended to open people's eyes about the artistic part of graffiti as opposed to the gang tags many associate with it.

"I'm really into graffiti and graffiti art that you can tell people have thought about, that there's something more behind it than 'This is just my claiming of this corner,' and moving it outside perhaps of that negative element of gang culture or just sort of vandalism that doesn't have a lot of thought to it ...," she said. "We're interested in looking at graffiti art in a variety of different ways, the importance of it as a political voice, as a social voice and as an artistic practice that everyone can be involved in."

She noted that Regina does have several graffiti walls that enable people to legally practise their art -- something Goff would like to see more of in the future.

"I think what the city needs to do is just drop this idea that they need to be penalizing people that have been victimized and go more into having the culture have an outlet so that it's viewed in a positive way, because if you really look at graffiti art, graffiti art has been around with us since the beginning of time ...," Goff said. "It's not like this is going to stop. People are always going to want to go out and vandalize or beautify their neighbourhood, so they can either move with it or move against it, but I know when they move against it all they're going to cause is conflict."

Credit: Heather Polischuk; Regina Sun

[Illustration]

Colour Photo: Troy Fleece, Regina Sun / Joshua Goff (white shirt) talks about graffiti. ;; Caption:

Indexing (document details)

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Subjects: | Graffiti, Art galleries & museums |
| Author(s): | Heather Polischuk |
| Document types: | News |
| Section: | News |
| Publication title: | Regina Sun. Regina, Sask.: Oct 5, 2008. pg. 26 |
| Source type: | Newspaper |
| ISSN: | 11813768 |
| ProQuest document ID: | 1569377281 |
| Text Word Count | 862 |
| Document URL: | http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1569377281&sid=1&Fmt=3&clientId=12307&RQT=309&VName=PQD |

Copyright © 2008 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.

University of Regina Library

