CHAPTER- I

The Framework of the Study
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The term Graffiti, a plural form of Graffito, is derived from the Greek word Graphien meaning to write, of institutionally illicit marks in which there has been an attempt to establish some sort of coherent composition in Graffiti drawing. It indicates drawing or scribbling on flat surfaces, such as walls or any exterior which is usually visually accessible to the general public understood as an expressive art form or human ‘need’ for communication. “Graffiti represents man’s desire to communicate” (Wechsler, 1974). “The word is related, both linguistically and in content, with the name of a particular technique of mural painting, that of ‘sgraffito’\(^1\) for which no official provision is made and which are largely unwanted” (Blume, 1985).

Graffiti is also a form of self expression. The art as ‘writing’ is a creative method of communicating with other writers and the general public. What it communicates is the artist’s identity, expression, and ideas. Judgments are based solely on one’s artistic ability. This type of communication is of value because it links people regardless of cultural, lingual, or racial differences in way that nothing else can. (Stowers, 1997).

Individualized or popular Graffiti include bathroom wall marking, signatures, proclamations of love, witty comments in response to advertisements,
and any number of individual, political, or social commentary (folk epigraphy). In general these Graffiti have no affiliation beyond the scope of the individual. It is close to impossible to locate their source.

Communities that produce Graffiti, as opposed to the individual ‘scribbler’, may target cryptic messages toward their own closed community, producing a seemingly confusing and unreadable product. The writers may not sign their real names; they instead employ the use of nicknames, codes, and symbols within stylized aesthetic systems. This type of Graffiti is geared toward people who already understand the messages and may act to enhance group solidarity. ‘Such Graffiti can easily be elevated to the category of ‘art form’ because the symbolic codes, generalized content, and aesthetic features of community-based Graffiti usually outlast the duration of an individual’s membership within the community.’ (Susan, 1996)

Graffiti art is recognized as a way of dealing with problems of identification of overcrowded or self-denying environments, and considered as outlets through which people may choose to publish their thoughts, philosophies or writings. Illegitimate counterparts of the paid, legitimate advertisements on billboards or signs, Graffiti utilizes the walls of garages, public toilets and goal cell for their clandestine messages.

Graffiti art is a cross-cultural phenomenon common to every literate and illiterate society alike. Graffiti personalizes depersonalized spaces, constructs landscape of identity, makes public space some sort of private space and act, and serves as diversity. In this way, Graffiti can be understood as concrete manifestations of personal and collective ideologies that are visually striking.
insistent and provocative and are worthy of continued attention for art historians, social scientists and policy makers alike.

It is a fact that language in Graffiti is a marker of identity. Foucault and Deleuze, among others, have pointed out that language, and in particular written language, is an instrument or form of power. In the rise of the state - systematic power worked on a large territorial scale, eventually global - coincides with the development of written language and is inconceivable without it. Today’s world capital also proceeds in the same way, more or less: advertising is largely incompressible without text; the idea of franchise, trade regulations, the transfer of funds, all depend on textual forms. Science also depends on repeatability of experiment, which in turn supposes the careful written description. Technology is cumulative in virtue of its textual encryptions. All forms of systematic power, we might say, are text-heavy, are forms of sentencing. So the language of Graffiti, especially those in English has to be studied at length for further understanding of the form and underlying message in it. But the text is also the primary vessel of the ‘shared culture’, ‘our history’, ‘our Country’: it’s the primary tool by which this ‘us’ is forged. And as we amalgamate it in others, we prohibit them from talking. ‘The text’ itself is nowhere and hence everywhere; it floats around us like a spirit environment, and flows through us too which graffiti seems to have multiplied. If the basic functions with regard to authority of the text are performed by its rigidity - its repeatability from context to context, apparently without alteration of information - the prestige of the text is essentially a function of its ontological status as an abstraction. This connects it with ‘mind’ in a Cartesian or Platonic way, and on a social scale with “civilization”: mind bloated precisely to the size of a political state represented through text vis-a-vis graffiti. Again,
Logoclasm or the eradication of text is one possible response. Pre-eminent among these, I suggest, are poetry and Graffiti: textual arts that are also at their essence is the concretizing of text. Poetry and Graffiti insists that, more or less like everything else that exists, text is particular and physical: that it cannot be separated from the occasion and location and the bristling particularities of its inscription. But Jacques Derrida has rejected the view that the written text is a representation of spoken language, and that much seems basically right to the researcher - text is its own animal, though as one can say it can perform on occasion as a representation of speaking. And it emerges at least as much from pictorial as oral communications, in the hieroglyph or ideogram. But people also get caught up in the sensible qualities of types: its beauty, or the appropriateness of its shape for expressing its meanings which graffiti adopts. Here is aesthetics of text as visual array as well as of significance. These two functions - the *sensible* and the *semiotic* - are complementary, but also often enough in tension, because while the semiotic function of text tries to draw you away from the concrete interaction you are having with the screen or page or the wall, the sensible can be trying to draw you back into it, or to mediate the meaning through the concrete sensible interchange. Graffiti with special intensity inhabits the particular zone between the picture and the text as *rap* inhabits a particular zone between the text and the spoken word/music. ‘Graffiti is essentially the name as particular painting, the text drawn into a physical ontology or a wall, a complete merging of type and token. Maybe this is in part a revival of the forms of writing current before Gutenberg, a kind of reincarnation of the scribe or creating beautiful and useful art in scroll so that they may get recognition. This is true in more ways than one in relation to Graffiti’ (Austin Jeo 2001). The ‘post-modern’ idiom in Indian art is
relatively in its developmental stage, gathering earth to firmly establish its feet and multiple ‘-isms’ as Graffiti of ‘post-colonial’ flavour has already entered the fray. But as Friedrich Hegel states ‘art to belong to the spirit it is made in’. Graffiti is on its march in India.

The present study therefore explored, analysed and interpreted the ‘Relevance of Graffiti Art as an Art Form in Indian Context’. Through individual research and by looking at various theorists the researcher made an attempt to establish some points of exploring Graffiti Art as a practicing art form and investigate the ways in which the art can get the legitimate status of ‘institutionalisation’ and can be authorised as an institutional art in academic sphere.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The survey of literature shows a mixed and controversial viewpoint on Graffiti art form. While some critique feels that Graffiti is an art form that lets one express his/her feeling on a wide range of issues, for others Graffiti is a form of vandalism destroying public and private property and hence contributing to gang activities and violence. Graffiti started out as a crime and Graffiti proper remains a crime. Varnedoe and Gopnik (1990) compare art and graffiti in their book where they see graffiti “as a whole is a composite phenomenon, part childish prank, part adult insult”. Abel and Buckley (1977) take an entirely different stance. They look at the writing of Graffiti as a psychological phenomenon, a form of communication that is both personal and free of everyday social restraints that normally prevent people from giving uninhibited reign to their thoughts.
The idea of art as a crime and a subversion of order is a rich one historically, but have rarely been quite so pointed. Graffiti is explicitly at its root an anti-authoritarian art, and that fact has informed its history, its look, its practitioners, its surfaces: in short, the medium is incomprehensible without the crime, or ‘the medium is crime’. The fundamental impulse of Graffiti is the anti-authoritarian impulse.

What researcher argues is that this is not only a matter of the sheer fact that the stuff is illegal; it’s not just a matter of racking paint and running from the cops. It’s inside the form and content of the art itself. This of course is not surprising, and the fact that the fundamental impulse of any given work of art is in some sense visible on its face is typical rather than the reverse. In this case it drives forward a saturated sign system of revolution that attacks the state and the schools by attacking the word, while also reclaiming the word or claiming a place in authority, claiming the power to remake the word and hence the world. We can say that it’s an attempt to revamp or rearticulate authority, to read it through a new set of codes, to take control of it and bounce it back and play with it, make something of it instead of merely knuckling under to it. It’s an attempt to take language back.

Several works on Graffiti has been carried out around the world. Some of these are as stated below:

Eugene E. Landy and John M. Steele’s article being the outcome of their research on “Graffiti as a Function of Building Utilization” (Landy & Steele, 1967) review their quantitative findings and conclude that specialised graffiti were found more often in specialised buildings rather than buildings with a more
general use. This is quite logical based on their research. However, they don’t stop there. They add the following statement— ‘Male toilet rooms had writing on almost all the walls, doors and cracks between tiles, on vertical and horizontal planes and were generally dirtier than female toilet rooms in the same buildings. The absence of graffiti and the greater evidence of smoking in female toilet rooms might reflect the need for phallic expression. Whereas males act out this need by creating graffiti, females smoke it out!’ This conclusion has no support from the data they gathered and is, quite frankly, just the opinion of the researchers. With no other data to draw on, they make a completely arbitrary link between females leaving cigarette butts in their restrooms and their ‘need’ phallic expression.

Terrance L. Stocker, Linda W. Dutcher, Stephen M. Hargrove, Edwin A. Cook Reviewed works, “Social Analysis of Graffiti”, (Stocker et al, 1972) American Folklore Society, In this review they showed Graffiti, as an aspect of culture, can be used as an unobtrusive measure to reveal patterns of customs and attitudes of a society. Observing Graffiti will reveal changes in customs and attitudes. Through studying Graffiti, Lindsay was able to reconstruct much about life in ancient Pompeii. To date, many projects have used the thematic content of Graffiti to posit certain motivational hypotheses about the individuals and the societal attitudes that produced it, but few studies have approached Graffiti by problem testing. There have been no diachronic studies de-voted to problem testing.

S. A Grider in one of the most interesting linguistic studies (Grider, 1973) involved the con safos Graffiti of Mexican-Americans. These writers use the term con safos or the initials C.S. around their tags and public Graffiti as a form of
protection for their writings. ‘Just as the reflection in Perseus’ shield killed Medusa, it throws the obscenity or slur back upon the defacer of the Graffiti name thus protected’. This article deals with the cultural and linguistic use of the term con safos within the community.

Norman Mailer 1923-2007 in “The Faith Of Graffiti” (Mailer, 1973) was one of the most important American voices of the twentieth century a journalist, essayist, novelist, poet, playwright, screenwriter, film director, and public intellectual. In 1973, author Norman Mailer teamed with photographer Jon Naar to produce The Faith of Graffiti, a fearless exploration of the birth of the street art movement in New York City. The book coupled Mailer’s essay on the origins and importance of Graffiti in modern urban culture with Naar’s radiant, arresting photographs of the young Graffiti writers’ work. The result was a powerful, impressionistic account of artistic ferment on the streets of a troubled and changing city and an iconic documentary record of a critical body of work now largely lost to history. This new edition of “The Faith of Graffiti”, the first in more than three decades, brings the vibrant works the seminal document on the origins of street art to contemporary readers. Photographer Jon Naar has enhanced the original with thirty-two pages of additional photographs that are new to this edition, along with an afterword in which he reflects on the project and the meaning it has taken on in the intervening decades. It stands now, as it did then, as a rich survey of a group of outsider artists and the body of work they created and a provocative defence of a generation that questioned the bounds of authority over aesthetics.
T. Cohan examines contemporary Graffiti as significant representations of the specific cultures they were studying (Cohan, 1975).

Aaron Sheon in his article which appeared in the “Art Journal” (Sheon, 1976) discussed about Caricature and write that it has had a minor role in history, and few writers have bothered to study it. But today the scholar can no longer only look at official documents. He must study everything which can shed light on men’s lives. For this reason Caricature is no longer being neglected and is regaining its importance. It is, with journalism, the voice of the people. It manifests the most personal sentiments of mankind. A tendency to burlesque and caricature appears, indeed, to be a feeling deeply implanted in human nature, and it is one of the earliest talents displayed by people in a rude state of society. Art itself, in its earliest forms, is caricature; for it is only by that exaggeration of features which belongs to caricature, that unskilful draughts men could make themselves understood when, before people cultivated either literature or art. In praising guys as a naive, barbare and childlike draftsman, the poet compared his style to the forms of primitive cultures and early civilizations, which had forms and perceptions in art that made a more vivid impact on the spectator than the work of trained artists. He also praised guys and children because they made their impressions of reality more direct, like Graffiti and thus more striking and profound when perceived by the observer. Rodolphe Topffer, the Swiss caricaturist in 1840, consciously tried to ‘lose’ his art training and regress to a drawing style of children. Most of his figures were born from hasty, accidental scribbles, and he analyzed. For example, in his Essai de physiognomonie, 1845, how a child can express facial character by slightly modifying a line or profile. His “Reflexions et menus propos”, 1853, Paris, incorporated his theories in an
essay about Graffiti and children’s art. Every society, he wrote, had created Graffiti ‘stick-men’ and these were reflections of an important universal art style. The child, like the caricaturist, made signs or hieroglyphs¹ to designate objects and this was his genius. His skill resulted from the economy of his means: art did not need to be more elaborate or realistic; for that would only destroy its effect. Thomas Wright, writer of “History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art” followed Topffer in assuming that Graffiti and caricature were the first manifestations of artistic activity, the ur-styles of civilization. In his history of caricature he theorized that the need to caricature or satirize was a natural instinct of the adolescent and the primitive. Published by the College Art Association.

Allen Walker Read, in his “The study”, (Read, 1977) appeared in the “Classic American Graffiti: Lexical Evidence from Folk Epigraphy in Western North America” presents Graffiti collected especially from public lavatories in the summer of 1928. Reed’s belief was that no emanation of the human spirit is too despicable to come under the record and analysis of the scientist. Read travelled to tourist attractions across the United States (mostly national parks) in the late 1920s and recorded the folk epigraphy he found. He provided little contextual information for these Graffiti but he carefully documented the date and location for each graffito. His motivation was to preserve these writings for posterity. Without contextual information, the only aspect of the Graffiti in Read’s collection that can be analysed is the words themselves.

E. M Bruner and J. P Kelso (Bruner & Kelso, 1980) reviewed various quantitative studies on Graffiti and conclude that there are indeed differences based on gender: “An inspection of the surface text reveals that male and female
restroom Graffiti differ in two major respects. The first is that women’s Graffiti are more interactive and interpersonal; one woman will raise a question and others will provide a string of responses and serious replies. . . . Men write about sexual conquests, sexual prowess and frequency of performance. . . . Women’s Graffiti are more conversational and deal with relationships; men’s are more individualistic and deal with isolated sex acts and organs.” Cole (1991) and Hentschel (1987) also used the gendered approach to analyse latrinalia and come to much the same conclusions as Bruner and Kelso.

Craig Castleman, in “Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York” (Castleman, 1982) used ‘Getting Up’ the term used by Graffiti ‘artists’ to describe their success in making their mark on the New York subway system. Through candid interviews, New Yorker Craig Castleman documents the inside story of the lives and activities of these young graffitists. A concise descriptive history of subway Graffiti... well organized, informative and well illustrated. No matter if one judge’s subway Graffiti to be art or pollution, one comes away from Getting Up admiring the ingenuity of the ‘young writers’. Robert R. Harris, the New York Times Book Review.

R. Blume in her Blume model has created categories for the various motivations for writing Graffiti (Blume, 1985). This approach essentially tends to examine the mind of the individual writing the graffito, rather than an entire culture or community. She found that there were two main groupings under the head ‘Mass Communication and Reflexive Communication’ and ‘Categorical and Individual Communication’. Within these two main groupings falls eight sub-groupings beneath them which include- existence proof; need to express oneself;
documentation of group membership; pleasure in aesthetic, physical and creative acts; boredom; expression of criticism, protest, rejection or agreement; marking out of territories and search for contacts.

Victor Bugin, in “The End of Art Theory, Criticism and Post Modernity”: (Bugin, 1986) book ‘Art theory’, understood as those forms of aesthetics, art history and criticism which began in the Enlightenment and culminated in ‘high modernism’, is now at an end. These essays, examining the interdependencies of advertising, film, painting and photography, constitute a call for a ‘new art theory’ - a practice of writing whose end is to contribute to a general ‘theory of representations’: an understanding of the modes and means of symbolic articulation of our forms of sociality and subjectivity.

John Bushnell (Bushnell, 1990) uses Graffiti to show what is important to the people in Moscow and this fascinating book touches on everything from politics to American rock bands. He uses Graffiti as a barometer, a way of measuring the effect of changes on the people of Moscow.

Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik while looking at the artistic qualities of Graffiti draw comparisons between Graffiti art and the works of Marcel Duchamp and Jean Dubuffet (Varnedoe & Gopnik, 1991).

Coffield’s book looks at the reality behind vandalism, stripping away myths, and discusses what can be done to reduce it. (Coffield, 1991) proposes many different ways to prevent Graffiti in Britain including Neighbourhood Watch programs, improved housing programs and education while still recognising the artistic factors involved in the creation of Graffiti.
J. Ferrell in an interesting book “Crimes of style: urban Graffiti and the politics of criminality” (Ferrell, 1993) that covers the topic of Graffiti in low-income neighbourhoods in various cities around the country catalogues a trip he takes around the country to examine different perspectives on this problem. The author interviews various Graffiti artists and provides many insights into the subculture, such as what is apparent in Graffiti art in relation to expressing one’s talents and abilities, artistically as well as in real-life. It also examines the attitude towards Graffiti by the police and other authorities in the cities. This book examines the intricate visual language, artistic symbolism, and distinct cultural heritage reflected in urban Graffiti in Denver, Colorado, as well as themes of deviance and social reaction that Graffiti depicts.

Collin Rhodes in “Primitivism and Modern Art” (Rhodes, 1994) identifies Graffiti as primitive, yet the street art does influence future works of art that can be seen on canvas, instead of on public property. It analyzes some of the psychology behind the creation of Graffiti, stating that it can be a harmful release of fears and desires, but is also sometimes considered to be drawn by the emotionally unstable.

J Marilyn Jahn, in “Cultural Counterpoints in Society and Art” (Jahn, 1994) focused on Today’s continuing redrawing of the boundaries of art in Graffiti art, in signage art, and in the various forms of appropriation of the art of predecessors reflects our continuing exploration of areas of experience in a complex and rapidly changing world. In his view, recent art reflects a series of strong responses to provocative circumstances with themes of hedonism, humour, pathos, sexuality, compassion and concern, and others, which are presented to
middle-class and non-middle-class audiences in a variety of traditional and non-traditional settings, from gallery to street corner to ballpark. Part of the puzzle and challenge in interpreting modern visual art is in the making of connections to what’s happening in society as well as to prior art and to the intentions and concerns of the artist. He quoted on sociologist ‘Diana Crane’ and points out in ‘The Transformation of the Avant-Garde’, there is no longer one clear minority of avant-garde artists confronting a traditional establishment of artists.’ However, she seems to indicate that this has resulted in the taming of artists, in a shift, for example, from iconoclast to leisure specialist, as artworks become commodities. In his view, this is too bland a description of current American visual art forms. Some recent appropriations of artworks provide a new twist on art as commodity. More generally, much diverse and interesting work is being done in many areas by artists putting new meanings into some of the prior forms and also by creating new forms. In a period of pluralism and cultural diversity, a wealth of new forms and new content in the visual arts will continue to provide opportunities for the sociological analysis of cultural counterpoints-and for more shared food and food for thought among friends.


Killian Tobin in “A Modern Perspective on Graffiti” (Tobin, 1995) explains the origin of Graffiti, back to ancient times, and why it re-emerged with such vigour in the early 1970s. He goes into detail about the early hip-hop
movement in New York City, and how complete intolerance to the movement at the time resonated and actually made the problem of Graffiti worse, as kids turned more to tags, or uglier, quick-hand Graffiti.

Bart Bosmans and Axel Thiel, in their “Guide to Graffiti-Research”, (Bosmans & Thiel, 1995) provides an extensive list of all kinds of Graffiti publications that is the size of a paperback book. One certain point they discussed in this book that is “Industrialized societies not needing future youth any more create some ‘atmosphere’ that is generating hate between classes of persons as well inducing intra-personal hate, so self-destructive as well as outward directed destruction is continual part of our lives. But any new generation must have their specific ways of ‘getting into’ society what ethnologists call ‘rites of passage’ or psychosocial moratorium where you must be allowed to ‘play around’ a little. This exactly has been time when certain young people started experimenting which is another way to say they have been creative.”

Lynn A. Powers in an article “Whatever Happened to the Graffiti Art Movement?” (Powers, 1996) addresses the Graffiti art movement as an example of a successful art movement within a subculture. New York City hip-hop subculture was subverted by the dominant culture, compelling it to conform to mainstream expectations. To a large extent, the success of the Graffiti movement derived from the cultural background of the artists and the historical background of the form. In most instances, the work’s popularity was grounded more in the novelty of the fact that it had been produced by poor minority criminals than in any inherent artistic value, and this novelty eventually wore off. This also book examines the decline in the number of Graffiti artists since the 1980’s and early 90’s. Graffiti
thrive during the time, at the same time and the rise of the hip-hop movement in music. However, hip-hop continued to grow and is a popular genre today. However, Graffiti has fallen out of style and is now considered cliched in some respects.

Michael Walsh in his book “Graffito” (Walsh, 1996) examines a form of Graffiti and this is also a documentary about Graffiti and the perceptions of both sides, the Graffiti writers and the people who appreciate it and the people who oppose it. Each page is alive with colour and the works are outstanding. This book gives an insight to the opinions of individuals who became a part of the sub-culture. Love it or hate it, Graffiti is part of society, and this is one of the references that can help people understand its existence.

Sara Rubin in her article “Art Crimes” (Rubin, 1996) takes a look at the radical crackdown on Graffiti writing in the capitol, Richmond. The article was written after two Graffiti-writers were sentenced to jail for their work. She analyzes how Graffiti is much less respected in art circles because it does not have any corporate basis or money-making opportunity. Therefore, it is looked down upon as a lower form of art.

Sarah Giller in a project entitled, “Graffiti: Inscribing Transgression on Urban Landscape” at Brown University (Giller, 1996) discusses how Graffiti is a outlet for the younger generation that feels that it has been shut out of the mainstream art world and it’s establishments. As a last resort to get recognition for their work, Graffiti artists take to the streets to make their work visible. Giller infers that the art world is ‘mono-cultural’ and that art houses and curators make up a cultural elite that is Eurocentric.
Robert Hughes in his article “American Vision” (Hughes, 1997) addresses the early forms of Graffiti art. It talks about how early cave paintings can be seen as early forms of Graffiti, with individuals expressing themselves freely on any medium that is available to them. It explains how Graffiti emerged in the early 1980’s and mentions how artists Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring were important in association with the emerging popularity of Graffiti art.

Staffan Jacobson in his doctoral thesis “The Spray-Painted Image: Graffiti Painting as type of art movement and Learning Process” (Jacobson, 1997) relates Graffiti to modern day culture and provides some theories on socialization into the Graffiti art world. He examines the social background and social patterns of the ‘writers’. They are found to be in general quite ordinary, but unusually creative. It also deals with the creation, expression, content and meaning of their art work and it is compared with several other traditions like Scandinavian ornaments, Art Nouveau, psychedelic art and traditional calligraphy.

Hoban Phoebe in his “Basquiat: A Quick Killing in Art”, (Hoban, 1998) portrayed “Basquiat was aware of how rarely blacks had been depicted in art and often portrayed black faces and himself in order to correct this, he did not want to be categorized as a black artist making black art for a black audience. His art synthesized many cultures and he made it for himself, his friends and intellectual equals as well as affluent white collectors whose motives were probably mercenary rather than cultural. In terms of his art’s content, there was much about the history of slavery, racism and black politics, which was surely intended to unsettle white viewers. Such was the demand for his canvases that collectors who visited his studio would buy and carry away paintings that were half finished.”
Marc Aronoson in his book “Art Attack” (Aronson, 1998) takes an interesting approach in looking at Graffiti. The author says that the Graffiti artist makes the wall into art by signing his or her name to it. It is a traditional way to express their art to the public, rather than featuring it in an art gallery. The author also considers the name signed on the wall to be art, not necessarily the wall itself. This book also talks about acts of rebellion in London where slogans and protests in the form of Graffiti appeared on walls in order for people to express themselves personally and artistically.

Woodward, Jason Dax in his Masters paper on “How to read Graffiti” (Woodward, 1998), begins by briefly siting Graffiti within the grand narrative of Western Highbrow art. This is not with the view to elevate Graffiti, but to allow a future diagnosis of the colonialsation of Graffiti and the subsequent misrepresentation of the art form. He discussed references to aesthetics within Graffiti art and then broadens the limited references and have found with the view to develop a language that appropriately describes aesthetics and criteria for quality judgment for a Graffiti piece. He has also given an outline of the standard subcategories of this art form. In particular he discussed the importance of tags; throw ups, pieces and burners. And defined criteria for discussing and appraising work and styles. He also looks at the importance of space and the politics of surveillance and ended with an informal timeline on the chronological development of styles and shifts within this Graffiti movement. Finally, in the last of the study he discussed about the Criteria for the judging of quality in a ‘Graffiti Art’ piece, is very similar to a lot of criteria used in other forms of formal art criticism. Other types of critical readings can also be used and a combination of these methodologies is always preferable. For Graffiti Art is not just an art form, it
is also a culture. To properly review the work one must consider each piece in its full context. If the residue of the painting process, the painting itself is to be critiqued, it can be done on formal qualities alone though. These qualities always include and control by the painter’s hand, colour and other forms of stylistic innovation, flow, funk, the nature of the site and are the work of an illegal or legal nature. These qualities must be appropriate for the form that it is within ‘Graffiti Art’ and for the type of artist involved.

Omar Bakirer, “The Story of Three Graffiti”, in Muqarnas, (Bakirer, 1999) begins the story with the discovery of a graffito at Divrigi, in the province of Sivas in Central Anatolia, in the early 1970’s. A second one, again at Divrigi, turned up in 1994, and a third turned up in 1996 at Ani in the province of Kars in the mountainous north-eastern region of Anatolia. The Great Mosque is actually a mosque-hospital complex, dated ca. 626. The two different locations from which these three Graffiti were recovered are not only geographically disconnected from each other but also have very different historical, political, and cultural backgrounds. Yet the Graffiti show that they do have the use of a similar geometric language in common. This makes it possible to assume that the two towns shared the introduction of some previously unknown aspect of thirteenth-century architecture and can perhaps yield some hints about the working methods of medieval Anatolian architects, masons, and artists.

Stephanie Barron and Zelevansky Lynn in “Jasper Johns to Jeff Koons: Four Decades of Art from the Broad Collections” book (Barron & Lynn 2001) features a great explanation of how Graffiti became a large part of the New York City art scene by the 1980’s. It represents Graffiti as art rather than as an act of
vandalism, alluding to its colourful and strong visual aspects. The art was successful on walls, subway cars, and sides of buildings, but it was not as successful on canvas. It also talks about the new art movement in the 1980’s, based on Graffiti art.

Cynthia Freeland’s book on “But is it art?” (Freeland, 2001) addresses the argument about whether Graffiti is really ‘art’ or not. The author addresses the fact that some Graffiti art has actually become marketable, but many Graffiti artists reject this idea completely. Artist Barry McGee creates both street art and art that is displayed in galleries, however most Graffiti artists will not agree to this idea.

Curwen Best, in his article “Reading Graffiti in the Caribbean Context” Published in ‘The Journal of Popular Culture’ (Best, 2003) has raised a number of questions with regards the relationship between Barbadian youths and the wider society. It becomes clear from this article that some members of the younger generation those who are the main writers of Graffiti, are engaged in a practice or process of giving public expression to their own opinions about the society in which they live. The direct, often crude, and transgressive tone of many Graffiti texts, speaks of what is arguably an attitude of scorn and resentment that some youths hold toward officialdom and the status quo. All of this suggests an absence of consensus within Barbadian society. It points to a generational dislocation within society, one that is based on differences in language, values, style, attitudes, and aspiration, among other things. He also noted that in the late 1990s newspaper articles have drawn attention to the number of tags within volatile communities. This interest in Graffiti came about as journalists perused some
troubled districts for clues to the growing spate of deviance in contemporary Barbados. So they stumbled across Graffiti that had been put up a long time ago. Theirs was a reaction to a situation already developed. But Graffiti research in Barbados, and in the Caribbean, must perforce also consider Graffiti writing as a foreshadowing of what is to come. To this end, the writing being done in school buses by pupils and the Graffiti put up in communities are a premonition of what this leading developing nation could face in the next decade.

Dr Lachlan MacDowall in his paper on “Graffiti media: How graffiti functions as a model for new media futures’, in Proceedings, Vital Signs: Creative Practice and New Media”, (MacDowall, 2005) examines the popularity of Graffiti as a model for new media production and the ways in which this interest rewrites the history of Graffiti as a form of popular media. From text recognition in Palm-Pilots to the digital tagging of mobile locative media, the generic practice of Graffiti has provided a compelling model for both the aesthetics and function of new technology. ‘Playground ZEDZbeton 3.0’ an outdoor projection by Maurer United Architects projects Graffiti images that ‘emanate architectural power,’ producing urban space ‘as a variable, treacherous terrain’. In John Geraci’s Grafedia interactive media project, Graffiti functions as a model for the democratic use of public spaces usually controlled by ‘companies with big advertising budgets.’ It is the qualities compatible with the late capitalist urban subject that are most evident in new media’s appropriation of Graffiti: an individualistic, self-promoting, highly-mobile and spatially engaged consumer, literate in popular culture and the transformation of archaic written forms into contemporary visual ones. Graffiti’s appearance in the branding of new media also makes evident Graffiti’s own status as a form of popular media whose global
proliferation has been underwritten by the circulation of films, magazines and more recently, the Internet and digital technology. At the same time however, government and law enforcement organisations have adopted new technology to restrict Graffiti production: intelligent security cameras, international information databases, electronic matching of Graffiti tags and collation of Geographical Information System (GSI) statistics on Graffiti have been among the anti-graffiti measures involving new media tech.

Pop N. Jay in “Graffiti Culture- A scholarly essay”, (Jay, 2005) analyzes the history, subculture, recent movements, and Graffiti as a social change. He takes a closer look at ‘culture-jammers’ who are Graffiti writers who take pleasure in ‘parodying advertisements and hijacking billboards in order to drastically alter their massages’. These culture-jammers are a radical element within Graffiti culture that is trying to retain complete non-commercial involvement in the movement.

Christian Hundertmark in his book “The Art of Rebellion 2”, (Hundertmark, 2006) features an up to the minute international survey of street art, spotlighting dozens of new and unknown protagonists alongside many well known and respected artists who have been at it for years. Since the publication of the first volume, there has been a surge in street art activity and a growing awareness of the art form in the public eye, this volume takes the reader on a lush visual journey through that artistic explosion and features tons of New Work with original styles, techniques and intent. The book also presents a selection of the best exhibitions and collaborations between artists and apparel and fashion brands. Featured Artists include: Miss Van, Kid Acne, Faile, Blek le Rat, El Pussycat, Jon
Burgerman, Heavyweight, L’Atlas, Zevs, DOMA, Erosie, Thundercut, Skewville, Derrick Hodgson, Koralie, Inkunstruction, Adam Neate, Darius and Downey, Dan Witz, Asbestos, Dave the Chimp and many others all brought to life through photos, interviews and quotes.

Nicholas Ganz, in “Graffiti Women: Street Art from Five Continents”, (Ganz, 2006), from the author of the enormously successful Graffiti World comes this spectacular follow-up, celebrating the contributions of women to contemporary Graffiti and street art. Female writers have always been in the vanguard of the Graffiti movement, though often shunted to the sidelines by their male counterparts. This exhaustive volume places them front and centre, featuring 1,000 full-colour illustrations from some of the world’s most prominent artists, including Brazil’s Nina, Japan’s Sasu, Mexico’s Paste, and the Americans Lady Pink, Swoon, and Miss 17. Two eight-page fold-out collages, a fold-out poster jacket, and an authoritative text round out the impressive package. The first and only comprehensive survey of its kind, this book is sure to attract and expand upon the wide and enthusiastic readership that made Graffiti World such a runaway success.

Prim Lachlan Mac Dowall, “In Praise of 70K: Cultural Heritage and Graffiti Style” published in “Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies” (Lachlan & Dowall, 2006) investigated recent framings of Graffiti as forms of cultural heritage in Melbourne, Australia. Consideration of the heritage value of Graffiti began in 1999 with a proposal by the National Trust to classify a piece of 1950s political Graffiti in the inner-city suburb of Richmond. Since then, the local government in the municipality of ‘Yarra’ has formally recognized the cultural
value of local Graffiti. He also given attention the development of a materialist account of Graffiti able to link shifts in the aesthetics of Graffiti to broader changes in the conditions of its production is not well supported by existing research. In this regard he added two key notes, firstly - little attention has been paid to the specific ways in which Graffiti responds to particular spaces in the city and the suburbs. Instead, Graffiti is usually theorized in very general terms as a response to monolithic urban environments. Secondly and perhaps surprisingly given its highly visual character, there has been limited discussion of the aesthetics of Graffiti in recent academic accounts. While many academic studies have included photographs of Graffiti, they provide little visual or aesthetic analysis, except for a deciphering of the content of the Graffiti for the general reader. There are almost no close readings of Graffiti style or any written description of the formal elements.

Whystyle (a nick name), “Dirt Don’t Hurt” (WhyStyle, 2007) was formed in Rome in 1996 when the members of the Graffiti crew The Riot Vandals joined forces with the Italian urban artist society. They shared a common background in the street. Both participants and observers they played a role in the show of urban capitalism. Their work demonstrates a creative understanding of the multi-coloured aspects of our society which drives them to tell their story like reports in a war zone. “Dirt Don’t Hurt” presents their experience in the world of 2007 from a critical distance. The result is Why Style’s brilliant illustrations which were born from their collective relationship with information, religion, and power stemming from alternative points of view and from an unconventional perspective. Since 2001, Why Style has curated and organized many events dealing with art, design, photography, fashion, and urban culture. The art
production by the group has always been meant to make environments and characterize spaces. Their skill, a genetic feature typically Italian, to suit every situation allows them to use different media and painting tools to complete the rawness of their creativity.

Ket, a world renowned Graffiti artist in his book “Graffiti Planet: The Best Graffiti from Around the World” (Ket, 2007) described Graffiti or ‘street art’ as a significant art form for more than twenty years, altering and shaping the urban landscape from Tokyo to Paris, Los Angeles to Sydney, Belfast to Berlin. Ever-changing and evolving, its anonymous, transient nature means it literally can appear one day and disappear next. Yet out of this shifting mass of spray paint, some true stars have emerged—artists such as Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Banksy—as well as countless unsung heroes who have taken the form to new heights. This book is a celebration of the endless creativity of the medium, featuring 100 glossy photos of groundbreaking Graffiti from around the world, and including an introduction by the editor, Ket. It is a perfect introduction to the subject for anyone excited by this most vibrant and democratic of art forms.

Christian Hundertmark, again in “The Art of Rebellion: The World of Street art” (Hundertmark, 2008) book cited Street art to have taken over the world in recent years. Cities have been ‘liberated’ by artists who are as motivated by the drive to invent new forms of media as they are to create new images. Art of Rebellion features the broadest possible variety of street art including flyers, stickers, spray can and stencil art, and a host of interesting hybrids that fall somewhere in between. Provocateurs such as Space Invader, Above, Lefunk, Milk, Fume, Hoernchen and East Eric use an amazing variety of techniques to
create their own individual iconography in projects as crazy as bathrooms painted
gold, battle tanks painted pink and cities plastered with pictures of toasters. The
ultimate collection of worldwide street art this remarkable book leaves absolutely
nothing sacred.

TvBoy, a nick name “Start a Revolution without Weapons” (TvBoy, 2008)
is the artist behind one of the most recognizable signatures on the European street.
Born in Palermo in 1980, after training in Milan, TV Boy settled in Barcelona,
Spain and he began to transform the city. His art is contemporary and embodies a
unique remix of cartoon characters, comics, and pop art icons, all of which are
illustrated in his book.

Scape Martinez in “GRAFF: The Art & Technique of Graffiti,” (Martinez,
2009) once viewed as merely a blemish on the urban landscape, Graffiti today has
evolved into a legitimate art form in its own right, influencing entertainment,
advertising, fashion and other creative industries worldwide. In this unprecedented
book, master Graffiti artist Scape Martinez shows how he does his thing, offering
streetwise advice to help other ‘writers’ create maximum-impact, legally
sanctioned work. Step by step, he lays out the philosophies and realities of the
genre. From picking a ‘tag’ and developing letterforms, to the logistics of
prepping a wall and working a spray can in a painterly fashion.

Ket again in “Graffiti Planet 2: More of the Best Graffiti from around the
World,” (Ket, 2009) consider Graffiti ‘no longer a vandalism’. According to him,
Graffiti has become a recognized urban art form and a unique mode of artistic
expression. This jaw-dropping new collection includes examples of incredible
street art from a bevy of artists, including Rosy, Os Gemeos, Banksy, Atome, Blek
le Rat, and Mode 2. Gorgeously produced with more than 100 images, this is an up-close look at today’s most spectacular artists and their work.

Damien Droney consider ‘Street art’ to be an emerging form of Graffiti art that was popularized in the 1990s (Drooney, 2010). He argues that street artists seek to subvert the perceived power of corporate marketing while simultaneously engaging in brand-name marketing. This is made possible by an original overlapping of the aesthetic domains of street art and marketing, in which contemporary marketing campaigns and street artists alike work with the aesthetics of subversion and personal liberation. He suggests that street art is to be understood as a self-referential comment on its relationship to marketing.


Sten and Lex, “The seventeenth chapter of Drago’s 36 Chambers Series” “Stencil Poster” (Sten & Lex, 2010) represents the most recent developments in their style. Sten and Lex, who by now are renowned worldwide for their work both on the street and in various galleries, began working together in 2001. Since then they have continued to refresh and reinvent the application of their medium by introducing new methods and developing their style from the early days of the ‘Hole School’ to what we see today, which they refer to as the ‘Stencil Poster’ technique. Their innovative approach toward the standard stencil has received much deserved attention from gallerists, curators, and collectors from around the world. In addition to their growing international acclaim.
Carlo McCormick et al in “Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art,” (McCormick, 2010) examines the rise and global reach of Graffiti and urban art, tracing key figures, events and movements of self-expression in the city’s social space, and the history of urban reclamation, protest, and illicit performance. The first book to present the full historical sweep, global reach and technical developments of the street art movement, Trespass features key works by one hundred and fifty artists, and connects four generations of visionary outlaws including Jean Tinguely, Spencer Tunick, Keith Haring, Os Gemeos, Jenny Holzer, Barry McGee, Gordon Matta-Clark, Shepard Fairey, Blu, Billboard Liberation Front, Guerrilla Girls and Banksy, among others. It also includes dozens of previously unpublished photographs of long-lost works and legendary, ephemeral urban artworks.

Magda Danysz and Mary-Noelle Dana in their “From Style Writing to Art” is the first Street Art anthology ever published (Danysz & Dana, 2010) explored the reasons why style writing as some calls it, Graffiti, or street art is turning out to be the major art movement at this turn of the century. Through this book the authors tried to analyse the Graffiti pioneers in the 1960s, on how street art branched into the art world during the 1980s, and various other new issues and practices that have emerged since the 1990s.

Roger Gastman & Caleb Neelon in “The History of American Graffiti” (Gastman & Neelon, 2011) has presented a definitive story behind the most influential art form of the last one hundred years. Tracing the evolution of the medium from its early freight-train days to its big-city boom on the streets of New York City and Philadelphia, and to its modern-day influences, this volume is a
compelling look at the key moments, places, and players in an art form distinctly American in flavour yet global in its reach. Both the writers provide an insider’s perspective on the history of the medium. Not only do they reveal the most popular trends and styles that have dominated the scene for the last fifty years but they also provide a thorough examination of the regional differences among major American hubs—New York, Los Angeles, the Bay Area, Chicago—and under-the-radar scenes in cities like Washington, D.C., Boston, and Miami. All told, more than twenty-five American cities are profiled, making this one of the most comprehensive volumes on the subject. With more than one thousand photographs—the majority of which are seen here for the first time—from more than two hundred photographers, most of whom also created the artwork, The History of American Graffiti captures the look and feel of a genuine American art form with exceptional clarity and detail. An instant classic, this book is the ultimate resource to which aficionados of the art form will turn again and again, and which the uninitiated will regard as the definitive tutorial of all that is Graffiti.

Adam Melyn in his book “Visual Orgasm: The Early Years of Canadian Graffiti” (Melyn, 2011) provides the public with thousands of recent and historic images from across Canada. Melnyk developed his interest as a young man, using Graffiti as a topic for most of his university papers. A graduate in Communications with a minor in Urban Studies, he has been drawn to the gritty existence of alternate art forms and street art. Melnyk interviewed several dozen Graffiti writers who were active in the 1980 - 1993 periods when Canadian Graffiti was developing. He explored the influences, the challenges and the originality that characterized this early period in Canada. The book is an oral history which is illustrated with hundreds of images, many of which have now
disappeared from their original locations. The book is an archive of early triumphs and frustrations. The writers themselves discuss what drew them to Graffiti, how they survived and then left the art behind. Street art is a controversial topic that has its supporters and detractors. This book reveals the inside story of an important moment in Canadian youth culture which continues to influence young people today. Whether one considers Graffiti art or vandalism, one cannot help but admire the courage and talent of the artists in this book.

Cameron Mcauliffe in an article “Graffiti or street art? Negotiating the moral geographies of the creative city” that appeared in the “Journal of urban Affairs” (Mcauliffe, 2012) looked at the contemporary state responses to Graffiti in Sydney and the ways Graffiti writers and street artists work within and beyond the various attempts to capture, enclose, and engage Graffiti and Graffiti writers. He discussed in his article about some cities, like as Sydney, a succession of wars on Graffiti has produced a moral geography of artistic practice. At the same time, the rise to prominence of creative cities discourses and the subsequent revaluation of creativity as a post industrial salve unsettles the dominance of the normative criminalization of Graffiti. The profusion of cultural plans and public art policies, along with metropolitan initiatives promoting the creative city, provide opportunities to re signify Graffiti as productive creative practice. Set in a discursive world of murals, street art, and ‘legal graffiti’, some Graffiti writers are grasping these opportunities, deploying multiple subjectivities in order to negotiate the moral geographies of the creative city.

From the review of literatures concerning Graffiti and its research in the global parlance, it can be construed that the artists, researchers, authors has used
multiplicity of different approaches. For such a highly visible and global cultural phenomenon, Graffiti has received relatively little academic attention. The few published studies have had a narrow focus in terms of the types of Graffiti they have examined, their methodologies and the disciplinary frameworks they have used. In general, they have been either criminological (Ferrell, 1993; Coffield, 1991) or sociological (Castleman, 1982; Miller, 2002) in focus and have used interviews with Graffiti practitioners to explore the genre of Hip-Hop style Graffiti that emerged in New York in the early 1970s. While many of these studies have included photographs of Graffiti, they provide little visual or aesthetic analysis, except for a deciphering of the content of the Graffiti for the general reader.

While 1970s were halcyon days of Graffiti research, researchers from every conceivable discipline started looking at Graffiti. Some of these Graffiti texts are written up in an extremely light-hearted, cavalier manner with pithy titles and captions using only the intuition of the author of the text as analytical resource. There has also been some serious studies but not really substantiated by adequate data. In India, however, there are no available resources on any study carried out on Graffiti. Nevertheless, the limitation of the existing literature on Graffiti as art form in India leaves much less scope to explore the complexities in a variety of settings, more specifically in a vibrant cultural like India. Hence inadequacy in the literatures cannot be ruled out. Therefore, the present study titled ‘Relevance of Graffiti Art as an Art Form in Indian Context’ is of paramount importance.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Keeping all the above problems in mind the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study the origin, growth and development of Graffiti art.
- To study the relevance of Graffiti art in the Indian context.
- To find out the reason behind non-recognition of Graffiti art as an art form in India.
- To explore possibilities of institutionalizing Graffiti art in India.

HYPOTHESIS

This study aims to expand the existing framework by exploring the possibilities of institutionalizing Graffiti as an art form in India and to test and objectify the possibilities of considering Graffiti as a regular form of art.

METHODOLOGY

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the researcher first carried out an in-depth analysis of Graffiti in its historical and cultural context. The researcher also took note of systematic and truly longitudinal observational studies offered by veteran artists’ and critics who carefully track changes in India and abroad over time. Exploration of this subject is significant in India, as no such study has been carried out till date.

As required by its nature, objectives, the research design for attaining the objectives was a survey using the questionnaire method. The researcher adopted simple random sampling method to collect data pertaining to the study. Since the
study focuses on Graffiti art and artists in India, the researcher carried out a listing of the universe of working artists in India from Indian Art Colleges and Universities (List collected from Website). In fact, there was a problem in finding out the actual universe of the respondents. After a primal discussion with the supervisor, some of the colleague and some other senior teachers, the researcher estimated presence of around 400 respondents from India.

Therefore, in order to make certain logical representation of the universe where each and every item has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample, the researcher used Google search, Ngram viewer, Social Networking sites, Personal contact, and some other possible ways of correspondence. With the acceptance of the inclusion criteria, a random list of 350 respondents was prepared for administering the questionnaire. All individual respondents represented and figured as the representative of the universe.

**LOCALE OF THE STUDY**

The research setting of the study tried to cover the whole history of Graffiti in the world but was faced with difficulties. So, the researcher decided to narrow down the locale of the study only within India for greater effectiveness of the subject and economy.

**STUDY SAMPLE**

Of the 350 respondents figured in the sample from various part of India, the researcher approached the respondents with a request to fill the questionnaire. Of these, the researcher finally arrived at a total *sample size of 277 respondents* who responded.
SAMPLING

In view of the objectives of the study, the researcher adopted simple random sampling method to collect data pertaining to the study.

INSTRUMENT

The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire consisting of open and closed ended questions. The closed ended ones have simple yes/no type of response. In the few open ended ones, the respondents had the opportunity to express their own views regarding some queries. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, each comprising of several sections. Part I consisted of questions related to identification and demographic data of the respondents such as age, sex, education, professional experience and so on. Part II, schedule-I comprised of different sections to ascertain the professional role and practice, descriptive outlook of art and work. In schedule – II, a blind study is conducted showing of some legendary art works. The data pertaining to the study were collected between June 2009 and December 2012.

PRE TEST

The closed-ended structured questionnaire thus prepared was pre-tested before the study began. The questionnaire was given to 15 distinguished experts locally and basing on their responses, an album of 20 pictures of art pieces was added with the questionnaire for a blind survey to simplify the study for easy understanding of Graffiti art. Few changes like misprinting, repetition of serial numbers was noticed during the pre-test and has been rectified accordingly.
TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION

From the very beginning the investigator was aware of the fact that there could be certain problems in contacting respondents and convinces him/her for providing information. This became apparent during the pre-test study as each respondent was reluctant to fill the questionnaire at one sitting due to its some of detail structure. When questionnaires were supplied for filling as per their convenience, it took more time than expected. There were instances where some respondents misplaced the questionnaire and the researcher had to provide again a fresh copy.

In the first phase, questionnaires were dispatched to respondents directly on their mailing address by post. But, due to postal delay and some other unavoidable reason, very few received the questionnaire. Altogether, 25 respondents from Barak Valley area responded to the questionnaire supplied to them.

As the study area is quite vast, the researcher in the second phase of data collection, prepared an “offline questionnaire” (as enclosed on Appendix) in order to reach out to the respondents. The ‘offline questionnaire’, is a replica of the ‘printed questionnaire’ where a respondent has to simply download the attachment (questionnaire), fill in the required fields, save and send back the same attachment to the researcher’s email. The entire questionnaire can be filled without any alteration to the format and structure and is unique of its own. The questionnaire was prepared taking help of MS-Word tools which is compatible to ‘MS Word 97-2003 document’. The special characteristic of the online questionnaire lies on the fact that a large universe can be covered with minimum cost and effort. The
researcher on the basis of information and phone number available in the Internet and Personal Contact reached out to the study sample for their email ids. However, some problems were encountered with the non-availability of email ids and non-response. Despite all efforts and sending at least three reminders over phone and mail or possible ways, the online response rate was very much unsatisfactory. The researcher also uploaded the offline questionnaire in social networking sites like facebook, Harmony, Blog, group in getting response from the respondents who fits in the criteria set for the sample. It is also essential to inform that the researcher visited Viswa-Bharati University, Shantiniketan, Tripura University, Agartala and Guahati Art College, Guwahati personally and had interaction with faculty and the students regarding the research topic and questionnaire.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study assumes vital importance not only from academic point of view but also to create an interest to go with a non conventional medium, among all class of people to develop and create curiosity about art in general and Graffiti in particular. The subject matter, its awareness and performance is increasingly found in the discussions at various forums. Contrary to such institutions which represents the case of public to the other institutions for public good it’s malfunctioning due to basic unawareness is noteworthy. Hence the study tried to record the level of influence of social factors on art practices especially, Graffiti for the furtherance of aesthetics in visual representations. Thus, the study would help in the promotion of further research in this dimension and offer a value addition to the field of knowledge and idea about Graffiti as well as provide
a proper framework for evaluating art issues and institutionalization in any given area.

UNIQUENESS OF THE STUDY

The uniqueness of the study lies in its scope and dimension of a subject matter which is popular yet ignorance prevails about the technicalities of it. Art practices in a given society along with the academic practice failed to popularize Graffiti and as such the mainstream of art derecognized it in its various levels. But in reality Graffiti is already employed in advertising in a big way and amateur artists are coming up in metro cities as well. In the process, this study assumes importance for institutions, academics and society on the whole for future recognition.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

An effort has been made to keep to some of the history of each word, its origins and its current application to Graffiti culture. Many of these terms are purely technical and practical in nature for which their use in the body of the thesis is limited.

The definitions of the terms used for the study are as follows:

All city: What a writer is considered to be when he/she is ‘up’, but this term implies more status than being just ‘up’. Many people can be ‘up’, but only a select few could be considered ‘all city’. It can also refer to a crew instead of just one writer.

Art form: Art form is the specific shape, or quality an artistic expression takes. The media used often influence the form. For example, the form of a sculpture
must exist in space in three dimensions, and respond to gravity. The constraints and limitations of a particular medium are thus called its formal qualities. To give another example, the formal qualities of painting are the canvas texture, colour, and brush texture. The formal qualities of video games are non-linearity, interactivity and virtual presence. The form of a particular work of art is determined by the formal qualities of the media, and is not related to the intentions of the artist or the reactions of the audience in any way whatsoever as these properties are related to content rather than form.

Background: Originated on the subways out of necessity. Backgrounds were used to make the piece stand out from all the tags and assorted scribbling on a subway car that make the piece hard to discern; the colour or design painted behind the piece to make it stand out from the wall or train.

Back to back: A wall that is pieced from end to end all the way across. Also can refer to throw-ups that are one after another.

Bite: To copy another writer’s style. This is considered a no-no and is looked down upon, even though writers often borrow imagery from cartoons and comics.

Blockbuster: Big, square letters often tilted back and forth and in usually two colours. Mainly invented to cover over other people and to paint whole trains easily, but they are effective on smaller walls for maximum coverage. Blade and Comet claim to have invented these.

Bomb: Prolific painting or marking with ink. To cover an area with tag, throw-ups, etc.
Cap, fat or skinny: Interchangeable spray-can nozzles fitted to the can to vary the width of spray. These are usually racked off of commercial products, such as K-Mart’s Bug and Tar, various cleaning products or starches. Many stores and graffiti fanzines sell caps nowadays. Also referred to as ‘tips’ (as in ‘flare tips’ and ‘thin tips’.) The really big fat caps are sometimes called ‘softballs’ because of the wide and soft-looking spray they produce. Tips are sometimes referred to by a certain number of fingers, corresponding to the width of the spray for example, a ‘four-finger spray’ would be about as wide as your hand. The number on the front of a tip is the catalogue number for that model.

Crew: A loosely organized group of writers who also tag the crew initials along with their name. Crew names are usually three letters, many times ending with ‘K’, which stands for ‘kings’ or ‘kills’ in most cases. Some crew names are just two letters, some are four, and it all depends.

Fan spray: A newer type of stock tip on spray-paint cans used to be only on cheaper brands but almost every company, including Krylon, now sport these on at least one line of their paint which sprays in a fan pattern that can be adjusted from vertical to horizontal, but is useless for tagging because it looks wack. May be used for fills but the cheezy tips prevent any kind of detailed can control. The tip is not removable for insertion of fat caps.

Hip hop: The culture in the late 70s and early 80s that spawned the graffiti culture as we know it now, break dancing and hip-hop music, which has since turned into modern rap music.
Institutionalisation: Institutionalisation for the purpose of the study refers to the process of embedding Graffiti as a concept of art form in the institutions teaching art, social organisations, social system, or society as a whole.

Krylon: A brand of spray-paint, easily recognized by the distinctive 5-spot logo. Most favoured by writers because of its large colour selection and cheap price.

Mural: A large-scale type of piecing, done top to bottom on a wall; usually a large production involving one or two pieces and usually some form of characters.

Old school: General term used to refer to the early days of writing, more specifically, the mid seventies to eighty-two or eighty-three. Also may refer to hip-hop music of this period. Old-school writers are given respect for being there when it all started, and specific writers are remembered for creating specific styles. For example, Blade and Comet created blockbusters, Phase 2 created bubble letters, clouds, Skeme’s ‘S’, and so on.

Piece: A graffiti painting, short for masterpiece. It’s generally agreed that a painting must have at least three colours to be considered a piece.

To piece: To paint graffiti, creating a piece, not just go out tagging.

Piecebook: A writer’s sketchbook where outlines and ideas to be executed are kept and worked out. Also referred to as a ‘black book’ or a ‘writer’s bible’.

Pilot: A type of fat marker. Prized because it writes wider than a Marks-A-Lot and is made to be refilled.

Rustoleum: A brand of spray-paint, generally more expensive than Krylon.
Scriber: A tagging instrument, usually made out of a diamond drillbit, used to physically engrave one’s name on buses and mass transit vehicles. Considered by some writers to be more destructive than is needed. Sandpaper is sometimes used to tag buses in the same manner—it too is considered mass destruction.

Scrub: A certain type of throw-up usually two colours that is filled very quickly with back-and-forth lines, rather than filled in solid.

Shoe dye: Shoe dye kits are used sometimes for tagging, especially those that consist of a bottle with a brush/sponge device attached. They usually come in black and white.

Sticker: A form of tagging, most commonly saying ‘Hello, my name is’. Can be anything from computer-generated, clear, generic blank stickers that have the writer’s name on them to elaborate stickers with little pieces and characters. Some writers consider stickers to be for people who are ‘afraid’ to use markers/paint, while other writers use a combination of stickers with markers and paint.

TAG: The most basic form of Graffiti, a writer’s signature with marker or spray paint. It is the writer’s logo, his/her stylized personal signature. If a tag is long it is sometimes abbreviated to the first two letters or the first and last letter of the tag. Also may be ended with the suffixes ‘one’, ‘ski’, ‘rock’, ‘em’ and ‘er’.

Tagging up: The act of writing a signature with marker or spray-paint.

Tagger: As opposed to ‘writer’; this term is usually used to refer to those who only do tags and throw-ups and who never piece. Some taggers seem to like more destructive methods such as scribers and sandpaper in addition to markers and
paint. Some taggers do get interested in piecing, some don’t. Taggers who never piece are sometimes called ‘scribblers’ by more experienced, piecing writers.

3D: A three-dimensional style of letters, used for added effect on basic letters, sometimes applied to wild-style for an extra level of complexity. This style was invented by Phase 2.

Throwups: Over time, this term has been applied to many different types of Graffiti. Subway art says it is ‘a name painted quickly with one layer of spray paint and an outline’, although some consider a throw-up to be bubble letters of any sort, not necessarily filled. Throwups can be from one or two letters to a whole word or a whole roll call of names. Often time’s throw-ups incorporate an exclamation mark after the word or letter. Throwups are generally only one or two colours, no more. Throwups are either quickly done bubble letters or very simple pieces using only two colours.

Wild style: A complicated construction of interlocking letters. A hard style that consists of lots of arrows and connections. Wildstyle is considered one of the hardest styles to master and pieces done in Wildstyle are often completely undecipherable to non-writers.

Writer: Practitioner of the art of Graffiti.