

GRAFFITI

Many members of the public have absolutely no idea what graffiti is all about and more importantly, why they do it.

A graffiti vandal starts off his career as a TOY (graffiti term for a new starter.) He will be about 13 years old and go around "tagging" anything that gets in his way, from road signs, street poles, walls, Telkom boxes, etc. His tag (graffiti signature) will be very simple, readable and not graffiti-like e.g. SHARK.

From there, these toys will join together to form Cru's (graffiti gangs). These cru's will meet at night and will tag property, but this time more emphasis is on the placement of their tags. They will concentrate their work on council, Telkom and post office property because they know it doesn't get removed. They will also target schools and churches as they have no money, and will target difficult surfaces like face brick and concrete, as this is the hardest to remove. If people paint over these tags, they will often retag on that area that has just been painted. They will tag where it is very visible to the public, often with their cru name next to their own tag name, e.g. HENCHMAN-SHARK. They do this so they can brag to their peers and try to become the most dominant cru in that area. They get a psychological high from seeing their "work" everywhere.

This is the most destructive stage and it is imperative that all members of the public remove these tags as soon as it touches your property. If you don't, that cru will get the message that you like graffiti and so a graffiti war will start. If your wall has been tagged, that wall has been claimed as their territory. Another rival cru will then tag over their tags with more elaborate and more colourful graffiti, thus claiming that was as theirs, and so it goes on. Many people say "why remove it, they will just come back". You must have a zero tolerance attitude towards graffiti and these taggers will get that message by you removing any form of graffiti.

After a few years of tagging, they will start looking at the artistic side of graffiti. They will start practising "pieces" (short for masterpiece) at home on paper and then transfer their piece onto a wall. This form of graffiti should have some sort of message behind it, although 95% of the public won't understand it. This type of graffiti can be anything from cartoons to a more artistic face spraying.