



THE TRICKS: Cale Waddacor teaches the youngsters attending the graffiti workshop about can control.



DEMONSTRATING: Soweto-born graffiti writer Lucky illustrates a basic tag at the Awethu Art graffiti workshop by writing 'handstyle', which refers to lettering similar to handwriting.



EXPRESSING THEMSELVES: Youngsters absorbed in applying newly learned techniques in the art of graffiti.



ARTISTS AT WORK: A wall undergoes a colourful transformation at an Awethu Art graffiti workshop.

PICTURES: KATE MORRISSEY



A NEW EXPERIENCE: A young girl tries out the colours.

TERMINOLOGY

TAG: the simplest form of graffiti; letters are written in handwriting style
THROW-UP: slightly more complex than tags; the letters are often bubble or block letters and easy to read
PIECE: a more intricate form of graffiti; letters are often intricately embellished and full of colour
PRODUCTION: several artists coming together to do one unified piece that takes up an entire wall
WILD STYLE: a type of lettering with lots of additional elements added to the letters that promote style over legibility
GETTING UP: putting your name or moniker on walls around the city to make your name known
BOMBING: going out and putting one's name up illegally around the city, often with black and chrome colours
HEAVEN SPOT: a difficult-to-access wall so that the piece has a better chance of lasting a while

People's art is taking shape

KATE MORRISSEY
 kathleen.morrissey@inl.co.za

Graffiti livens distressed, abandoned public spaces

PEOPLE benefit from graffiti in public spaces, Cale Waddacor says. The 28-year-old has documented South African graffiti for over 10 years. Earlier this year, Waddacor released the first and only book on South African graffiti, appropriately called *Graffiti South Africa*. Art lovers of all ages got a hands-on graffiti tutorial from Waddacor on Saturday as part of a community art series by Awethu Art. "You can do positive things with graffiti," he told the group of about 20 people. "People nowadays are realising how

art affects emotions." He said reaction to art can brighten public spaces, especially when those spaces are abandoned or distressed. Waddacor taught the workshop attendees about the different types of graffiti and letter styles. He showed the different types of spray-can nozzles that affect line widths. He also talked about "can control", how hard your finger pushes down on the nozzle paired with the distance between the spray can and the wall to affect the look of the line. "It's something you have

to keep doing to get your lines down and your technique with the spray can. It's a very difficult medium and people get despondent at first when they realise how difficult it is," Waddacor explained later. He talked about the ephemeral nature of graffiti. Once you put a piece up on a wall, anything can happen to it. That, he said, is the beauty of graffiti. "If you don't document it, it's not going to last forever," he pointed out. After the morning lecture, he, along with fellow graffiti writer Lucky, took the graffiti

enthusiasts on a short tour of Newtown's graffiti. He introduced them to the work of Tapz, known as the king of Joburg for how much he has "gotten up" around the city. "The basic premise for graffiti is getting up, which is getting your name around the city for people to see," Waddacor explained to the group. South Africa's graffiti scene, according to Waddacor, began in the late 1980s and early 1990s when youth in the Cape Flats adopted the elements of hip-hop that they saw coming over from the US. He said that when it first

started here, South African graffiti mimicked the styles that originated in the US, but more recently the art has come into its own with a South African flavour. "Now it's starting to take its own shape," Waddacor said. After a lunch break, Waddacor's newly trained artists took to the wall. Some wrote their names or words that they chose, like "gratitude". Others painted Batman silhouettes or ice-cream cones. They learnt about the numb fingers that come with holding down a spray-can nozzle. "We're trying to encourage the public, especially young people, to get involved in art,"

one organiser for Awethu Art said. "South Africa has so much diversity. I want to make sure people have spaces where they can interact meaningfully and find commonality." He asked not to be named because he didn't want credit separate from the organisation, he said. The grins on the diverse faces of the workshop as attendees covered the wall with paint were exactly what he was looking for. He and Waddacor said they will hold more workshops in the future. Waddacor said people can watch his graffiti blog, also called Graffiti South Africa, for updates. @bgirledukate

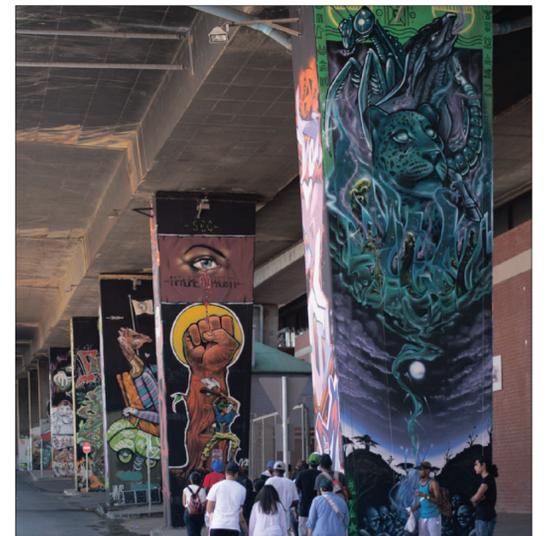
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LEARNING NEW SKILLS: Youngsters attend a workshop in Newtown to receive first-hand tuition and experience in the creating of graffiti.



GETTING STARTED: Positioning the nozzle helps to create different styles.