

SGRAFFITI

5-14

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1) Introduction

Background and history of graffiti

Graffiti

writing or drawings scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly on a wall or other surface in a public place.

Graffiti ranges from simple written words to elaborate wall paintings. It has its roots all the way back to the ancient times, with graffiti found on walls and monuments from ancient Greece, ancient Egypt, and the Roman Empire.

What is stencil graffiti?

This is the form of graffiti that we will be focusing on. A form of graffiti that employs stencils made out of paper, cardboard, or other media to create an image or text that is easily reproducible.

Vandalism?

Graffiti is an art form involving writings or drawings scribbled, scratched, or sprayed on a surface in a public space.

Vandalism is an act involving deliberate destruction of or damage to public or private property, it serves no purpose apart from causing damage

Rationale

To discover the potential of the suppressed artform of graffiti in Singapore, often looked down upon as the work of delinquents or criminals, but can be

used to represent ideas, heritage and cultures.

Objectives

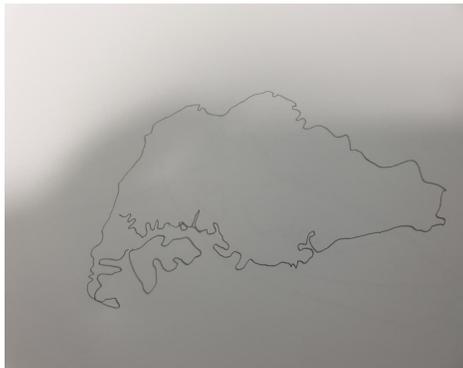
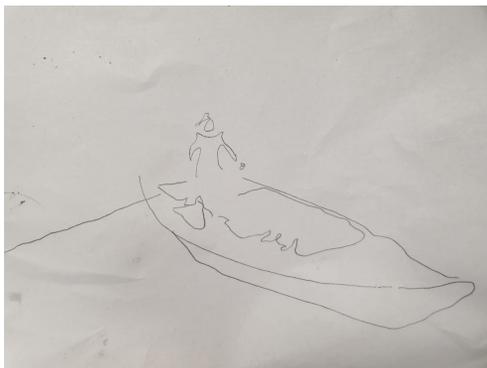
- To photograph and document the unique graffiti pieces found around Singapore
- To create our own Graffiti pieces that are representative of Singapore's culture

2) Ideation

We initially intended to meet up and try out various method of stencilling, but were unable to do so due to the virus.

They were done online through Canva as it was easier for us to collaborate and edit it since we could not meet in real life due to the COVID-19 situation.

We used digital models to make the basic stencil designs that we would use for our final product, then we sketched them out on paper and outlined the parts that would be cut out for the stencil.





3) Artists References

Popular graffitists

We researched artists like Banksy and Blek le Rat to attempt to learn their styles and the way they sent messages through art.

Banksy

An anonymous street artist based in England. He often employs props such as street signs and other objects to convey messages by crafting beautiful street art installations. His artwork is often satirical and combines dark humor with graffiti and also spread messages across art, philosophy, and politics.



Flower Thrower

The stance of the man, his facial expression and posture in this piece displays a violent intent, however by exchanging a bomb, or rock or “molotov cocktail” with flowers, Banksy has created a strong message: wage peace.

A message that has been captioned on the image of the Flower Thrower by millions of people on the internet, which originates from a Poem “Wage Peace” by Judyth Hill, written after the events of 9/11 in 2001.



Seasons Greetings

The piece when viewed from one angle depicts a child enjoying snow and trying to catch flakes with his tongue. However, when looked at from another angle, it shows that the “snow” is actually ashes.

The piece acts as a protest against pollution caused by local steelworks, and features a child to symbolize our future and the severity of the issue.



Stabproof vest designed by Banksy

He designed a stab-proof vest that rapper “Stormzy” used in the 2019 Glastonbury Festival.

The Union Jack on the front of the stab proof vest alluded to high levels of gang violence across the cities in the UK.

This serves as a critique on Britain’s growing knife-crime crisis, and racial inequality in the UK criminal system, issues Stormzy also focuses on in his music.

Blek le Rat

Xavier Prou “Blek le Rat” is a French graffiti artist often credited as the “Father of stencil graffiti”. He is famous for his signature oversized Rat. His visit to the US in 1971 left a lasting impression on him, inspired by it, he began painting the streets of paris using stencil graffiti, which he viewed as

more appropriate for French architecture.

He is dedicated to the idea of bringing art to the people and often quotes old masters, saying that “I want the characters of the paintings to walk out of the museums to give them back to the people of the city”

He believes that youth who see the art in the streets will be inspired to express themselves through art, instead of repressing their voices and turning to vandalism.

Political statements

After the abduction of French journalist Florence Aubenas in Iraq, Blek painted hundreds of prints of her images around Paris in an attempt to raise awareness for her.



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He also challenged authorities by painting beggars on the street in places like Europe, America, and Australia to raise awareness on the issue of homelessness.





The Warrior



Rope Pulling

Graffiti found locally









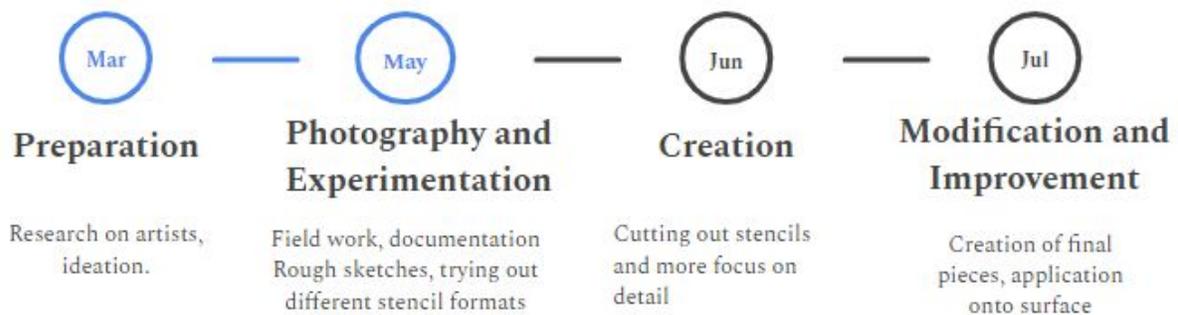
Lessons Learnt

Modern street art is not something reserved for rich and privileged people, it is out in the open for everyone to see. Hence, it can be used as a medium to spread political messages and awareness easily amongst the people. It also serves as an inspiration to many other aspiring artists, with Blek le Rat himself being inspired by it. Urban art is very different from other different “classic” forms of art, it has the ability to reach out to the masses, and touch everyone.

In Singapore, many artists use graffiti as a way to promote racial harmony,

with multiple Indian and Malay themed artworks. Artists also use it to encourage and thank people, as seen in the second collage with the words “working class hero”. Must like works of more famous artists, local art is also used to convey various messages to the people.

4) Timeline



5) End Product

- A showcase of various Singaporean street art graffiti pieces
- Stencil graffiti designs
- A portrayal of Singapore’s identity and culture through graffiti
- Featuring iconic Singapore images and important moments in our history

We used the stencils to spray paint the final product onto a sheet of paper/cardboard.



Stencil 1: Map of Singapore

Our 721.5km² island city-state.



Stencil 2: Yusof bin Ishak

The First president of Singapore

Yusof bin Ishak served as president of Singapore from 1965 to 1970, he served for 3 terms before he died on 23rd November 1970 due to heart failure.

He was appointed as president after Singapore was expelled from Malaysia and was forced into independence. Then, Singapore was divided by racial tension and conflicts. As president, Yusof actively promoted multiculturalism and reached out to people of all races to help reinstate confidence and trust after the racial riots of 1964.

We chose to stencil him not only because he was an iconic figure, recognised throughout Singapore. Even the people who do not know who he was will recognise his face on our dollar notes. We also wanted to promote racial harmony and multiculturalism through our art, much like what he did to the people of Singapore.



Stencil 3: Boatmen

Orang laut, which literally means “sea people” in Malay, refers to the indigenous sea nomads and sea gypsies of Singapore. The community typically lived off a long dwelling boat, known colloquially as *sampan panjang*, or “long boat”.

They are an important part of our history as Orang laut played a big role in

pre-colonial Singapore. Before the British came, the people of Singapore were mostly fishermen, and the Orang laut were part of them. They are believed to be Singapore's earliest inhabitants, but are all but forgotten nowadays, with Singapore having become such a modern city.

Through this stencil, we want to highlight a part of our past in Singapore, to remind people of our forgotten roots as fishermen.

6) Challenges

What we faced

This year had an outbreak of Covid-19, which led to numerous challenges. There was the circuit breaker during the holidays, which prevented us from going out and meeting up to discuss our project work. This was extremely disruptive as we intended to make use of the holidays to do most of our work and collect all our photographs. We were unable to meet up in real life to make our actual stencils and discuss, a few of us also did not have the necessary materials to be able to make the stencils ourselves.

Even after the holidays, after the circuit breaker, and when school reopened, the measures in place for phase 1 and phase 2 caused us numerous difficulties. We were unable to meet with our project work mentor after school, and were also unable to go out as a group to gather photographs.

How we overcame them

Due to being unable to meet up in real life to discuss our project, we had to settle for meeting up online, initially using WhatsApp call, but transitioning over to google meet. Although it was still quite limiting in terms of what we could accomplish, at least we could still share our ideas and communicate

with each other.

To meet with our mentor, we also had to use google meet. This caused a few problems, main one being some group member's internet connection going down during the meeting. In the event that this happened we would take notes for our friend and relay to him what happened while he was gone.

As we were unable to meet in groups during Phase 1, we split into groups of 2 to go out and gather photographs. This meant that while gathering photos, only the inputs of 2 members would be taken into consideration, leading to some disagreements. But we settled this by just deciding to take photo of whatever graffiti we could find and discussing which ones to use and which to discard later.

7) Reflections

Hao Ran

This is my first time being a group leader and the experience was difficult but fun. The spread of Covid-19 heavily hindered our and a lot of other people's progress especially when most of our work was initially supposed to be done during the june holidays. However with the help of our mentor we managed to pull through and finish the project.

Matthew

This project has been a very unique and challenging experience for me. This is the first art project my group mates and I have done, so at the beginning we were a bit lost and unsure what to do. But working together, and with a lot of help from our mentor, we managed to pull through and complete the project.

The Covid-19 situation also presented numerous difficulties, such as making it difficult to go out and gather photos of local graffiti, and preventing us from meeting up in real life to work on the final product together. However, we worked together as a group and managed to overcome these various challenges, succeeding in the end.

Tristan

This was quite a challenging project for me because of the Covid-19 situation we have now. We were unable to meet up and work on our project in real life and had to settle with doing it online over Google Meet and calls. It made expressing ideas more difficult and caused some disagreements, but we managed to figure out how to work with each other and our mentor, and ultimately completed our project in the end.

Vidal

It was definitely interesting to create something new, especially a form of art. However, it was really difficult to start as we were not experienced enough to have any ideas. Then, with Covid-19 as an inspiration, we managed to start the project. I have learnt how to source for inspiration in the least expected places, work with my teammates, especially with the ideation of a new product, and be patient with the process as well as to have the dedication to continue working on the product.

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