

TEACHERS GUIDE to the Forbidden Medium



LITTLE RED & VANDAL WOLF

Introduction:

Since the end of the 1960s, aerosol paint has been an outlet and powerful tool for social change. If you wanted to see the new graffiti, you had to live in the inner city or wait for a graffiti artist to emblaze their name across the subway car. However, new murals are popping up daily in the concrete jungle and the outer boroughs. Graffiti writers and street artists alike have canvased art across the City, using tags, stencils, and murals to communicate individual expression, social commentary, environmental concerns, and cultural frustration to the masses. Though the City may no longer be in an economic crisis, it's more of a playground for the rich; the art canvased across the City still personifies urban living and the vibe of the people.

Author statement: I hope you will find these materials a valuable tool for teaching students the power of cultivating a unique voice through individual expression. I encourage all readers to explore the notes below. They are meant to help the reader make sense of the intricate work, graffiti terms, and culture explored inside the book. Many artists contributed their tags, symbols, paste-ups, etc., to this book to make it a genuine account of the street art and graffiti scene in NYC. Artist bios are all in the back of the book. However, the information below may be helpful to review along with the bios before reading the book aloud to the kids.

TAKE A WALK: We have taken out school groups of all ages to see the art in NYC & Brooklyn. To schedule an art walk or school presentation, please contact:

- **Sources:** Graffiti terms are listed at the bottom of the guide and in the back of the book.

Depending on the age group, the videos listed below may be helpful in teaching.

- **Suggested Videos:** Exit Through the Gift Shop, Wild Style, Bomb It, Piece by Piece, Infamy, Graffiti Wars, Jean Michel Basquiat Documentary- The Radiant Child,
- Beautiful Losers: <https://youtu.be/ldAly81I1Cw>
- Style Wars (1983) - <https://youtu.be/Z11IAnddIlgY>
- No Free Walls | Street Art & Gentrification Collide in Bushwick
- <https://youtu.be/RsaFeiWFA3w>

- **Suggested Reading:** Street Art (pocket guide), London Street Art 2, Berlin Street Art 2, Buff Monster – Stay Melty, Banksy, Andy Warhol – Modern Masters, Keith Haring Journals, The International Graffiti Writers Publication

- **Suggested Materials:** Free printable stencils, HELLO: My Name is stickers, downloadable graffiti alphabet letters (See links below)

- **Avenues of expression:** Art, writing, multi-media projects, Art to encourage Hope or Change

- **Suggested writing lesson:** Have students write a fractured fairytale incorporating fiction and non-fiction writing.

- **Suggested Art lesson:** Download bubble letters, Wildstyle letters, Stencils, Hello My Name Stickers,

- **Artists to Research**

- Shepard Fairey
- Kenny Scharf
- AIKO
- Os Gemeos

- Keith Haring
 - Blek le Rat
 - Banksy
 - Roy Lichtenstein
 - Jean-Michel Basquiat
- **Significance of the Rat Symbol:** In 1981, Blek le Rat, the godfather of stencils, began stenciling rats on the walls of Paris. According to Wikipedia, Blek used the “rat” as an anagram for “art.” Banksy is the predecessor of Blek le Rat and is also famously known for spray painting rats in England. Both artists reference the free and wild nature of the rat, which can be compared to the graffiti writer.
 - **Dual Nature of rats:** creepy, unwanted versus cunning, clever, independent thinkers. They are the animals of choice for research ranging from psychology to medicine. https://people.southwestern.edu/~bednarb/su_netWorks/projects/jle/rat.html

Breakdown of the book

Little Red and Vandal Wolf is packed with vibrant imagery and cultural references that may not be immediately apparent to all readers. This guide is designed to uncover and explain the deeper layers within the story’s visuals and themes. Not all pages are reviewed, as some require no additional input. Please refer to the artist's bio at the back of the book for further information about the tags, murals, and symbolism.

Page 1- Artists: Uta Brauser, known for **Frida Van**

Sergio Furnari: Significantly, the **Heroes Monument** was brought to Times Square during COVID-19 to honor the many hospital workers working tirelessly to save lives.

Yes1: The **apple** part of the street to tower show co-curated by Izzy at the WTC- in remembrance of all those who lost their lives on September 11 and the rebuilding of the City.

Savior Elmundo: **Make Art** tag

Page 3- Ryan Smith: Tag on the billboard (This would also be considered a **Heaven Spot**—a hard-to-reach spot. Artists like to tag up high because the work may last longer on the street and be less likely to get buffed off the wall or tagged over by another writer.

Page 5- Paste-ups, sticker tags, and graffiti are often displayed in Freeman's Alley, a famous alley on LES of Manhattan where graffiti writers and street artists frequent.

Tag/Artist

Skewville: Yo tag

PYH: Protect Yo Heart

FKDL: Frank Duval (silhouette of a woman with women's faces inside)

Make Art: Savior Elmundo

Star in Clouds: Gary Oaks

Gorilla sticker: The Primate, NYC:

Tag on the billboard: Yes 1

Tag on the billboard: Ryan Smith

Frida: UTA Brauser

Page 6 - All Artists on page 5 plus the artist below

Butts Up: Cartoon Monkey

Slae: Sticker tag (Soy La Alta Estrella) I am the highest star

Iconic & 2 Cents: Gold Coin

Page 7: All Artists on pages 5 & 6 plus

Mural: Aram Raze X-Men

Page 9- Sheep is painted pink by Little Red and has a red hood (**Little Red's tag**)

Tag: message, marking, or symbol that represents the artist

Page 12- The Guerilla Art is on the Gate is yarn bombing created by Vandal Wolf

Yarn bombing: artist uses colorful yarn to create public art

Guerilla Art: when an artist puts up art in public spaces without asking permission

Bombing: "Bombing" is a term that refers to rapidly applying graffiti to public spaces, usually with spray paint, but in this case, it is yarn. To hit many places in the same area.

The aerosol can was also initially used to bug bomb houses or apartments. When it became filled with aerosol paint, the writers took the word to the streets.

History of spray paint: <https://beyondthestreets.com/blogs/articles/the-history-of-spray-paint>

Page 14- Artists: FKD (paste-up of the silhouette of a woman with women inside), Skewville, Savior Elmundo, Gary Oaks, Butts Up, PYH, Gazoo

Page 15 -Brandon Sines: FrankApe (paste-up dress for the job you want)

Savior Elmundo: Make Art sticker tag

In response to Brandon Sines's work, Little Red imagines herself dressed as a street artist, wearing a wolf hat and a black dress.

Tag: Grrrl Pow err - encompasses a flower symbol (incorporating a symbol is a unique way to grab the viewer's attention)

Page 16- Forced Collaboration: A wall with multiple artists' tags, paste-usp, sticker tags, graffiti, stencils

Love Bomb: Little Girl flies in on a love bomb - to discuss the artist's love of art & the culture

Tag/Artist:

Echo: Tag, wildstyle letterism Piece, Lighter B-Boy

Skewville: Yo tag

PYH: Protect Yo Heart stencil, heart

Make Art: Savior Elmundo

Star in Clouds: Gary Oaks

Gorrilla sticker: The Primate, NYC:

Tag on the wall: Yes 1

Gazoo: Tag on the can of paint

Tag on the wall: Ryan Smith

Slae: Sticker tag (Soy La Alta Estrella) I am the highest star

Brandon Sines: Frank the Ape (Dealing with things is tricky)

Butts-Up: Cartoon Monkey

Page 17- Keith Haring Wall (could explore the art of Keith Haring)

Rude Crew: made-up crew

Artist: PYH, Gazoo

Crew: Artist you paint with on the streets

The Houston Bowery Wall, also known simply as the **Bowery Wall**, is a famous mural wall currently owned and curated by Goldman Properties.^[1] in the Lower East Side area of Manhattan, New York City. The concrete wall, on Houston St and the intersection of the Bowery, had been a popular graffiti spot in the early 1980s, when street artist Keith Haring created a large mural on it in 1982.^[1] The wall was acquired by Goldman Properties in 1984. Tony Goldman began using the wall for advertisements,^[2] though they were regularly vandalized. The wall once again become an art spot in 2008, when Goldman gave curator Jeffrey Deitch the right to commission large murals for the wall, with new pieces added every 6-12 months.

Since 2008, several street artists have had their works showcased on this famous wall.^[3], including: Shephard Fairey, FAILE, Os Gêmeos, Logan Hicks, Kenny Scharf, Aiko Nakagawa, Ron English, TATS CRU, and many others.^[1] The site is often reviewed as a significant part of the New York City art world.^[4]

Many artists and institutions have used this famous spot to draw attention to global issues, such as a 2018 installation by JR in collaboration with Time Magazine about guns in America,^{[5][6]} a 2018 piece by Banksy highlighting the imprisonment of an artist by the Turkish government,^{[7][8]} and a celebration of global culture in 2019 by Tomokazu Matsuyama.^[9]

Page 18: Discuss well-known street artist Jean Michel Basquiat

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SAMO>

-SAMO is a graffiti tag originally used on the streets of New York City from 1978 to 1980. The tag, written with a copyright symbol as "SAMO©", and pronounced Same-Oh, is primarily associated with the artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, but was originally developed as a collaboration between Basquiat and Al Diaz.

The SAMO tag accompanied short phrases, which were poetic and satirical advertising slogans, mainly spray painted on the streets of downtown Manhattan. Basquiat eventually used the tag himself, creating some non-graffiti work on paper and canvas

using that tag, after killing off the SAMO graffiti by painting "SAMO© IS DEAD" around the streets of downtown. Decades later, Diaz resurrected the SAMO tag.^[1]

Page 19- Murals at the World Trade Center: The artists featured on the WTC walls have painted at the WTC (the image displayed in the book is not the actual work that was painted at the WTC)

Brolga: colorful pop style mural

Brandon Sines: Frank Ape (We'll Never be as Young as we are right Now)

Page 20-

Illdivijual: Artist who painted the throwie or piece on the truck

Throwie: a quick piece painted on a truck (though this is more sophisticated than many throwies)

PYH: Tag on truck

Page 20

The artist that painted the Mural, BD White (BD (along with all the artists) has an exciting history. I suggest visiting his site. <https://www.bdwhite.net/>

Can of paint: Gazoon tag (name taken from the green cartoon Gazoo) Great way to explore cartoons in street art and graffiti - how his cartoon influenced Gazoo and his tag - I love you to the Moon and back

<https://www.gazootothemoon.com/>



Page 21-

Artivism paste-up: The eye Chart says, "The World United in Peace, Love And Harmony."

Page 22- According to Banksy explained.

<https://banksyexplained.com/issue/banksy-rat-business-and-pest-modernism/#:~:text=Rats%20are%20one%20of%20Banksy's,treated%20as%20%E2%80%9Clesser%20than.%E2%80%9D>

Banksy Reference: Rats are one of Banksy's most significant sources of inspiration and one of the most prolific subjects in his work. An anagram of "ART," the rat is an allegorical tool used by Banksy to reveal the vices and flaws of the human race and to make a stand for those suffering toiling in the dark and treated as "lesser than."

Puh-lease Rat - please, but spoken like it's written, with an artistic style inspired by Lichtenstein.

Artistic Style: Lichtenstein, often called the "father of Pop Art," incorporated the dots into his paintings to replicate the mechanical process of printing and evoke the aesthetics of comic books and popular culture.

Page 23-

Heaven Spot: Challenge & Risk in reaching a hard to reach spot

Artists:

Sale, Butts-Up, Echo, Ryan Smith, Gary Oaks

Page 26-

Artist on the train: Echo (color piece, multiple tags)

Hood: slang for neighborhood

Don't forget to read the fun facts in the back of the book.



Notes from Author: The Keith Haring Bee was created by the author/illustrator to demonstrate how you can be like a busy bee if you focus and allow the work to move through you. The Keith Haring bee is also a reference to the Keith Haring—Andy Mouse, which appeared in many artworks by Keith Haring. The Andy Mouse was a response to the friendship that Haring developed with Andy Warhol.

Graffiti Terms

Guerilla Art: Guerilla art, also called "street art," is a method of art making in which the artist leaves anonymous pieces that express their views and opinions or are just for fun. The art is not a sponsored initiative, and it can be viewed in an unauthorized public location and interacts with the community. The term can include traditional graffiti artwork, stencil graffiti, sticker art, wheat-pasting and street poster art, video projection, art intervention, and street installations.

Bombs Away: To bomb or hit is to paint many surfaces. Bombers often paint throw-ups or tags instead of complex pieces, as they can be executed more quickly. Bombing isn't meant to be senseless vandalism.

Buffing means removing painted graffiti with chemicals and other instruments or painting it over a flat color.

To **burn** is to beat a competitor with a unique style. Don't go over a piece unless you are going to burn bigger, badder, and brighter.

Yarn Bomb (Guerrilla Knitting): A yarn bomb is a form of street art in which colorful yarn in any form (knit, crochet, latch hook, cross stitch, or simple wrapping) adorns an object in the public environment. Think of it as graffiti that isn't permanent or destructive. Other examples are paint or chalk.

Throwie: A "throwie" (or "throw-up") is a style of graffiti that typically uses rounded, "bubbly" letters that are squeezed together, heavily outlined, and shaded.

Paste-Ups: Illustration, painting, or poster created in a studio or digitally and then pasted up on the streets. Light flat objects usually work best, but any paper will work.

Wheatpaste: This is a paste, gel, or sticky adhesive made by the artist from flour, water, and sugar.

Make your wheat paste: I suggest a 1:4 ratio of flour to water. Make enough flour slurry to fill the boiling pot 3/4 of the way to the top (1/4 slurry, 2/4 boiling water). Mix and stir thoroughly for 2 minutes. After two minutes, turn off the stove, add 2 or 3 cups of sugar, and mix. I like to add a lot of sugar, so the concoction is super sticky.

Sticker Tags: These are hand-drawn or digitally drawn tags printed on stickers. They are an easy, fun, and fast way to get your tag out on the streets.

Stencils: Hand-drawn or digitally produced letters, patterns, or individual design work are fastened to a thin sheet of cardboard or plastic, which is cut out to produce a design through which ink or paint can be applied through the holes.

Artivism: Strong social or political messages are delivered through the art to create change.



