

# graffiti tour



## Introduction

In 1989, the Don Valley Brick Works factory was abandoned, allowing its vacant buildings to become a blank canvas for graffiti artists. This graffiti tour features the vibrant colours and diverse styles that still stand out against the industrial kilns.

## A. Production Wall

A production wall is created when multiple graffiti artists work on one section of a wall at the same time using the same background. The works often flow into each other, establishing dominance over the space.

## B. Toys Stay Out

Graffiti artists, or “writers” as they often describe themselves, progress from being “toys” (inexperienced artists) to being all-city, all-country or all-world kings (masters). An artist must be confident that his or her work will be seen as better or more skilled, in order to cover another’s work. This motivates graffiti artists to constantly improve their skills so that their work can remain visible.

## C. No Mixed Media

Many works here were done using brushes, but this violates one major rule in graffiti: no mixed media. For a work to be considered “graffiti,” it must be done freehand using spray paint from a can. Stencils, wheat-paste posters, stickers or brush-works are typically deemed “street art.” Using a spray can with accuracy and technical skill takes extreme control and practice, and thus earns respect.

## D. Characters

Characters and portraiture are commonly found alongside graffiti, especially in Toronto. “Traditionally, characters were meant to bedazzle graffiti,” explains Zion, a public arts advocate. “In the core world of graffiti, they are not seen as graffiti themselves. We in Toronto really adopted that character thing. ... It’s a way to be identifiable and recognizable but it came in to accentuate letters that were really a means of communication amongst ourselves.”

## E. Bacon

A Toronto graffiti artist since the early 90s, Bacon described his work in an interview with *Molotow Magazine*: “I write simply because I love it. I like style and that everyone can have their own. ... I want to explore style and play with paint and maybe one day I will paint something worth looking at when I’m long gone.”

## F. Road-Visible Works

In 2011, the City of Toronto received a complaint about the graffiti at Evergreen Brick Works. The work you see here is likely what initiated the complaint.

## G. Layers

The abandoned Brick Works was a perfect place for graffiti artists to develop their skills and style over time. There are several places where multiple layers of paint can be seen peeking out from beneath others.

*Written by: Shannon Todd and Bruce Beaton*

Evergreen Brick Works is a community environmental centre that inspires and equips visitors to live, work and play more sustainably. Get involved or donate today.

[ebw.evergreen.ca](http://ebw.evergreen.ca)

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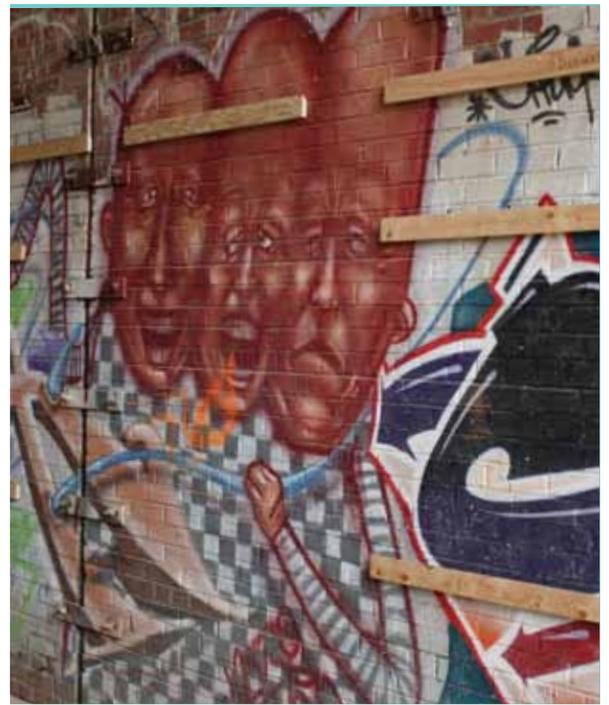
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