Graffiti art in Israel- Israel is real

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1. What is graffiti?

We will start with the definition of what is graffiti. In Oxford dictionary, Graffiti is defined as "writing or drawings that have been scribbled, scratched, or painted illicitly on a wall or other surface, often within public view" (reading from the presentation). The word Graffiti is from the Italian word graffiato ("scratched"). "Graffiti" is applied in [art history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_history) to works of art produced by scratching a design into a surface. The word originates from Greek γράφειν — graphein — meaning "to write."

1. Brief history

Graffiti range from simple written words to elaborate wall paintings, and they have existed since ancient times, with examples dating back to Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, and the Roman Empire. You can see here graffiti from Kom Ombo Temple in ancient Egypt, which dated to 180-47 BC.

In 1960', urban gangs in the United States used to paint graffiti by spraying paint on walls on public sites to mark its territory. It started with Tagging, which is a unique [handwriting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Handwriting) or [signature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signature) of an artist, that the urban gang members spray everywhere they wanted to mark their territory. Here you can see Graffiti in Chicago from 1973. Because graffiti is a painting on the property of another, contrary to his consent, this is an illegal act. So besides of spraying on walls, the "writer" which is the term for the graffiti artist, they also painted on the Subway in New York City, as you can see here in the picture from 1973. That was as part of competition between writers to mark as many of the subway lines as possible. One interesting story to tell about the graffiti on Subways is how the authorities treated it. In 1994, New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani created a Graffiti Clearance Task Force to reduce the amount of graffiti in the city as part of the overall effort to reduce and improve crime in the city. It was part of the implementation of the broken-glass theory. The phenomenon in New York ceased in Giuliani's time as mayor, when all the cars were cleaned and no car with graffiti was allowed to enter until the graffiti was not cleared.

1. Graffiti in Israel- History

The oldest Graffiti in Israel can be found at the entrance of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (כנסיית הקבר) in Jerusalem. We can see historical graffiti of one Piero Vendermini from Venice who visited here in 1384.

The most recognizable graffiti in Israel is the inscription of "Palmach Baruch Jamili Petah Tikva 1948!". (Palmach was the elite fighting force of the [Haganah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haganah%22%20%5Co%20%22Haganah), the underground army of the [Yishuv](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yishuv%22%20%5Co%20%22Yishuv) (Jewish community) during the period of the [British Mandate for Palestine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandatory_Palestine).) Baruch Jamili (1923 - December 29, 2004) was a soldier in the Givati Brigade and a fighter in the Harel Brigade of the Palmach during the War of Independence. During the war, Jamili wrote this Graffiti with tar on the wall of a water pumping station at Sha'ar Hagai. Jamili tells that he did it because he said he wanted to make his mark on days when it was not known who would survive the battles. Jamili's address was deleted and renewed only in 2011, six years after his death. And I can tell that this is our first reason for why people do graffiti- the desire to be remembered. Shlomo Artzi, one of the most famous Israeli singers even wrote a song about it, and a few lines from the songs are a wonder of who he was:

"Who was Baruch Jamili?

What did Baruch Jamili do?

Where is Baruch Jamili? "

In Israel you could see graffiti back in the 1970s, but then the focus was not artistic, and the sprayers painted political slogans. The turnaround came in the following decade. One of the best-known artists in the field does not define himself as a street artist: the paintings of the artist Rami Meiri began to appear on walls in Tel Aviv in the late 1980s, and later he left a mark in many other cities around the world.

"I started as an art student at the Avni Institute at a time when there were no murals, and I looked for a way to introduce myself, in what stage," he says. In contrast to the subversive image of street artists, Meiri preferred to paint in cooperation with the authorities: "It started with sketches that I made at Gordon Beach, and I contacted the municipality, the municipality was smaller, and the prices were lower, not anti-establishment, but balancing life. My goal is to bring humor to the walls that surround us". Here you can see one of his famous works called the "the man in the wall". Meiri tells that he created that image after he saw an intersesint man in the carnaval in Brazil, and a baby running around with a bottle filled with alcohol, so he decided to create that image that was with tension between the man and the bottle. Meiri adds that he wants people to smile whrn they see his graffiti.

In the 1990s, while Meiri succeeded, in New York and other places in the world the street art actually dwindled. It was revived in the early 2000s largely thanks to British Banksy, which visited Israel, the Palestinian Authority and recently also in the Gaza Strip. These were also the years in which the local scene was created. All these things came to the Israel in the early 2000s, with immigrants from the former Soviet Union and the United States, who came up with an artistic genre that was not very developed here. But in Israel, as in Israel, everything happens very quickly, and within a few years Tel Aviv became one of the world's cities leading urban art.

One of the well-known places in the south of Tel Aviv is the neighborhood Florentin. Now we will go for a little tour in the streets of Florentin, and discover some of the graffiti and the artists in Israel.

1. A graffiti tour in Florentin- using Google maps

<https://www.touristisrael.com/street-art-tel-aviv/18541/>

Graffiti and street art can be found in almost every street in Tel Aviv, However it is most common in southern Tel Aviv, and the Florentin neighborhood in particular. Elifelet St, HaMehoga St, Abarbanel, 3361 Street & Hanagarim St, are hotspots for Tel Aviv street art.

While graffiti is illegal in Israel, the municipality of Tel Aviv turns a blind eye to works of graffiti work in certain areas, with the Florentin neighborhood being notable among them. A big part of the graffiti in this area is painted on the doors and gates of various businesses .

1. DEDE

[https://www.google.co.il/maps/@32.0590848,34.7653287,3a,75y,43.81h,85.39t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1szfPB5FNT9qSpxiszHCyiew!2e0!7i13312!8i6656](https://www.google.co.il/maps/%4032.0590848%2C34.7653287%2C3a%2C75y%2C43.81h%2C85.39t/data%3D%213m6%211e1%213m4%211szfPB5FNT9qSpxiszHCyiew%212e0%217i13312%218i6656)

Another work of street art you can spot at this stop are The Squirrels. the first of many pieces you will find by DEDE, a Telavivian artist whose work is easily recognized by the signature of his name on the bottom of the artwork. His early work was mostly made with stencils. Over the years, his work changed his style and has more free work, done on paper pasted on the walls of buildings. a prominent theme in his work are band-Aids, A symbol of wounds, hurt and healing, you can find pieces with Band-Aids all around Tel Aviv.

Dede Studied at Bezalel. He began to paint on the wall of his school for the first time when he returned from the night, paint spray was lying there, and he decided to paint on the wall of his school. He was not sure what, but in the end he looked up, saw the stars, and decided to paint the solar system he defined as circles and expressions. Is mainly associated with the painting of the teeth in the Dolphinarium.

1. Know hope

[https://www.google.co.il/maps/@32.0592275,34.7656011,3a,75y,350.49h,82.92t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sVDGHIcyYH6FZpJduQLRjuw!2e0!7i13312!8i6656!6m1!1e1](https://www.google.co.il/maps/%4032.0592275%2C34.7656011%2C3a%2C75y%2C350.49h%2C82.92t/data%3D%213m6%211e1%213m4%211sVDGHIcyYH6FZpJduQLRjuw%212e0%217i13312%218i6656%216m1%211e1)

You can recognize his work by the delicate little pigeon signature. Know Hope’s most famous work is that of a character wearing his hart in different positions. It is said that the location of his hart indicates the degrees of his life experience. A figure with a heart in place indicates no life experience, whereas a figure with his hart on his sleeve is vulnerable and more exposed.

Addam Yekutieli a.k.a Know Hope (1986) is an artist primarily known for his iconography made under the pseudonym Know Hope. Yekutieli is a prominent figure in Israeli street-art culture, more recently exhibiting in galleries and museums internationally using ready-made materials, mixed media pieces, photographs, videos and text. [[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Addam_Yekutieli#cite_note-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Addam_Yekutieli#cite_note-2)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Addam_Yekutieli#cite_note-3) Yekutieli has undertaken community and long-term projects that deal with ideas of re-contextualization and dialogue through public space

1. Untay

[https://www.google.co.il/maps/@32.0575591,34.7670786,3a,36.6y,212.82h,96.26t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sqrSX5V9JpCeiaOp2f-jsiw!2e0!7i13312!8i6656](https://www.google.co.il/maps/%4032.0575591%2C34.7670786%2C3a%2C36.6y%2C212.82h%2C96.26t/data%3D%213m6%211e1%213m4%211sqrSX5V9JpCeiaOp2f-jsiw%212e0%217i13312%218i6656)

**Fifth stop (stop “E” on the map)** Returning to Abarbanel St, (we would advice to trace your steps and walk back the same way you came since there are pieces you don’t wan to miss in the upper part of Abarbanel St) You can find lots of graffiti art on the garage doors. Some of the main graffiti artist in Tel Aviv such as Untay, participated in a Street festival organized with the Hoodna bar just down the street , where live music was played and artists had painted all the garage doors of the businesses on the street. The business owners enabled them to light up the street with graffiti art and the result is amazing.

1. Nitzan Mintz

A unique combination of Hebrew poetry and street art might reach out from a small alley and deliver a message. Nitzan Mintz says she has a million things to say. Her succinct poetry and images are publicly published and address a wide range of issues: personal, political, and philosophical — sometimes all at the same time. The medium affects the message and therefore the poems are short, in broken verses, without punctuation or title. They declare an idea on a wall or a tree and lets bypassers glance at it or take a second look and ponder on its deeper meaning.

1. Rabbin assaination

[https://www.google.co.il/maps/@32.0562337,34.7695336,3a,75y,138.98h,86.69t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sw997WKPW6agLTlGgsavxqQ!2e0!7i13312!8i6656](https://www.google.co.il/maps/%4032.0562337%2C34.7695336%2C3a%2C75y%2C138.98h%2C86.69t/data%3D%213m6%211e1%213m4%211sw997WKPW6agLTlGgsavxqQ%212e0%217i13312%218i6656)

**Tenth Stop “L” on the map** Turning back to Florentin street and heading to the next stop where you can find an important painting on the corner of Florentin St and Washington Ave. The painting is an illustration from the video capturing the murder of prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin. Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in November 1995 during a peace rally, by a right-wing radical who opposed the peace process Rabin was embracing. The assassination of Rabin shock the Israeli public. Following the murder, rallies and memorials took place near King of Israel square, where the peace rally was held. Later the square was named Rabin square in his honor, and today it is known as a center for social and cultural events, symbolizing the essence of democratic values in the state of Israel.

**After the murder, the municipality wanted to erase the painting, but the people of the neighborhood protest.** And the painting stayed there until today.

1. After the assassination

Immediately after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the night of November 4, 1995, the walls of the Kings of Israel Square in Tel Aviv were filled with graffiti. "The candle youth," as it was called at the time, expressed his pain on the walls of the square for the loss of the leader as you can see on the picture on the top. And since then, the inscriptions have been erased, the walls have been painted, and the Kings of Israel Square has become Rabin Square. In 2015, in marking the 20th anniversary of the murder the youth movement "thw working and learning teens" and other youth movements who are members of the "Remember the Murder, Fighting for Democracy" coalition built together with Yedioth Ahronoth and Ynet , Graffiti Wall at Habima Square in Tel Aviv.

1. Banksy and the West Bank Wall

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umas99F_z6U>

The Barrier Fence (or the Separation Wall or the Security Fence) is a system of fortifications and obstacles built by Israel since 2002 in order to prevent the infiltration of Palestinian terrorists into Israeli population centers. Therebye it separates the Palestinian residents of Judea and Samaria from Israeli population center. A small section of its route - inside the Palestinian neighborhoods of Jerusalem and west of Qalqiliya and Tulkarm - is a high concrete wall. Graffiti was painted by Palestinian artists and activists. Graffiti is often used as a political protest or a protest against the regime, as a means of expressing an opinion and disrupting culture. A striking example of such a graffiti artist is Banksy, a London artist who specializes in artistic graffiti with a political message, using irony to convey the desired message.

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Unwelcome Intervention: This picture gives hope to what could be. Two boys are playing in what appears to be a beach area, complete with sand pail, all in the classic monochrome black and white, while on the other side a paradise awaits in colorful blues and palm trees. One can only hope that something better awaits on the other side.

Balloon Debate: Painted totally in black, as if a silhouette or shadow, Balloon Debate shows a young girl, hoping for the other side but only able to do so by letting balloons take her away. Again, Banksy uses a child to depict innocence against the true hostility of the area and what the wall came from.

This is the simplest of all of Banksy's wall creations. A dotted line, as would appear on the back of a box, with scissors inserted for directions, begs those walking by to merely cut a piece out of the wall. If solving centuries-old issues was as simple as "cutting it out.

1. Conclusion

We saw in that program different reasons for why people in Israel use graffiti. Some of the reasons are as a tool for protest, anti-establishment or underground for some it was as an expression of themselves, and for other artist it is a way of a direct communication with the people on the street. The all motives are ways to express of what happens in the Israeli society and reveals the real streets of Israel.