

Typograffiti – Analyzing the potential of stylewriting for commercial graphic design

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Abstract

Stylewriting, which refers to writing-based and aesthetics-oriented graffiti, and typography are two disciplines with significant thematic overlap, yet they have mainly been considered separately from a scholarly perspective. This study addresses this gap and examines parallels and differences between the two domains. The aim of this study is to identify potential for the implementation of stylewriting in typography and graphic design. A key part of the discussion is semantic typography, the perceived personality of a font. Through literature review, analysis of a graffiti database, and expert interviews, 8 typographic style categories of graffiti writing are defined. Based on those, a survey on the perception of the respective typography is conducted with **n=105** participants. The results suggest that the perception of stylewriting is more positive than previously assumed. Significant differences can be observed among different style categories. Furthermore, the study provides an overview of current developments in graphic design and typography that show influences from stylewriting.

This is the shortened version of a B.A. thesis. **Full text** (German): hsbi.netlify.app/typograffiti.pdf

Keywords

graffiti, stylewriting, graphic design, semantic typography

1. Research Subject

Typography is an integral part of our cities, appearing in advertisements, signage, and digital displays. At the same time, urban spaces feature another form of letter-based design: graffiti writing. While typography follows established conventions aiming for legibility, and mostly exists within a commercial context, graffiti writing operates within subcultural norms that prioritize visibility and impact. Despite their coexistence, the two fields are rarely considered in relation to each other. This study questions this separation and explores the intersection of graffiti writing and typography. It adds to prior research on graffiti, that has largely focused on sociocultural aspects, by shifting the perspective toward its formal characteristics. Examining stylistic parallels, and differences to conventional typography also allows gauging the potential of utilizing graffiti aesthetics within graphic design.

Methodologically, the study combines literature review, database analysis, and expert interviews to, among other things, define eight typographic graffiti style categories that are subsequently assessed regarding their perception, in a survey with 105 participants, to answer the research question: *How can stylewriting, with respect to its characteristics and people's perceptions, be utilized within graphic design and typography?* The paper is structured accordingly, starting with the literature review, followed by methodology and results of the interviews, database research and survey, including the eight categories defined. Finally some relevant exemplary applications are presented and an attempt is made to answer the research question.

1.1. Stylewriting

The term "graffiti" originates from Latin, meaning "to scratch" or "to engrave," and initially described carved characters or drawings on public walls [1]. Over time, the technical aspect faded, and by the

mid-19th century, it referred primarily to unauthorized public scribbles. While graffiti often implies spray paint, this is not always the case, [2]. Evidently the term does not originate from today's subculture and fails to capture the phenomenon's complexity, making it an imprecise scientific basis. Temeschinko advocates for the term "writing" instead, emphasizing the act of writing—usually one's pseudonym with letters. This term also excludes elements like characters, despite their presence in modern graffiti culture, and distinguishes graffiti writing from street art [1]. However, "writing" might be misinterpreted to include political slogans or political scribbles in public.

The term "stylewriting" provides greater clarity by focusing on the stylization of the written word. Rodriguez notes that it emphasizes artistic self-expression rather than illegality [3]. While she notes that some members of the scene chose to use "graffiti" precisely because they view illegality as integral, Rodriguez prefers "stylewriting" for academic discussion. Stylewriting is, in principle, independent of location—it can be a tag on a wall or a sketch on paper, in this regard making the term broader than graffiti [4]. Historically, stylewriting began in 1960s Philadelphia, gained traction in New York [5], and reached Germany in the mid-1980s [1]. While graffiti's history has been extensively studied, this work focuses on contemporary stylewriting.

1.1.1. General classification

In almost every academic work that deals with the subject of graffiti, a distinction is made at some point between three genres of stylewriting - tags, throw ups and pieces. This rather general classification is often sufficient to answer more general research questions. In this case, it will serve as a starting point for a more nuanced understanding of style.

Tags: Peter Kreuzer describes tags as the simplest form of writing, closely resembling its original form [6]. While "tag" can refer to a writer's name or pseudonym, here it denotes a specific stylewriting form. Tags are linear, not surface-based, and resemble classic writing or calligraphy [7]. Created with a single marker or spray can, tags are usually monochrome, mostly small, and due to quick execution often feature intertwining letters, which can reduce legibility. One-liners, where the pen or spray can is not lifted once, are a notable variation. Writers often refine their tags, or handstyles, over time to ensure consistent and rapid reproduction. Similar to signatures, tags are

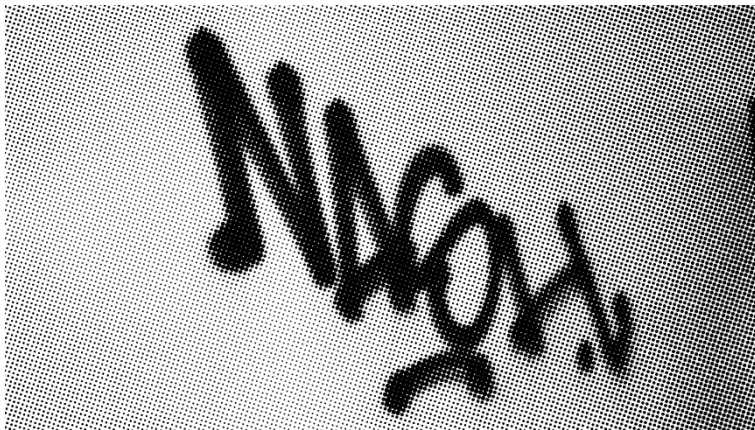


Figure 1: "NASH" Tag [31]

frequently placed near or within larger pieces [6]. Despite being seen as the simplest form of stylewriting, often considered the lowest rank [6], tags are also described as its core. Their simplicity reveals a writer's skill and experience, earning them respect within the scene [4]. However, "taggers", who exclusively create tags, are sometimes criticized for lacking the ability to produce more elaborate pieces [8].

Throw Ups: While requiring more effort than tags, their name reflects their quick execution [8]. As opposed to tags, they are generally bigger and surface-based, meaning they typically include an outline and a fill-in with a second color, though the latter is not mandatory [7]. There is debate over whether adding a third color or decorative elements, such as a second outline, qualifies a throw up as a piece [5]. Throw ups are closely tied to the bubble style, characterized by rounded letters and minimal counters [4].

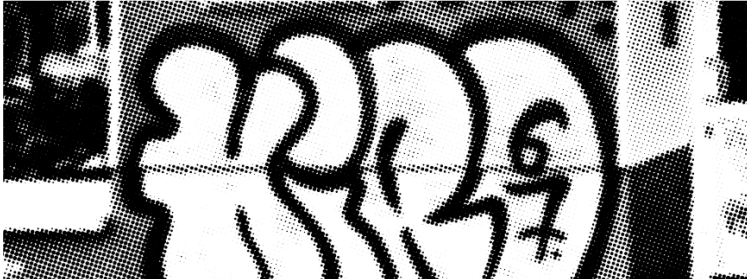


Figure 2: “HIRO” Throw up [31]



Figure 3: “FLEUR” Piece [31]

Pieces: The term is derived from the word “masterpiece” [1]. Woodward defines a piece as graffiti that exceeds a simple tag or throw-up, incorporating elements like highlights, a colored background or other design features [9]. Unlike throw-ups, pieces emphasize style and technical execution [8]. Gretzki states that a well-proportioned piece consists of highly aesthetic letters forming an abstract typeface [10]. Pieces represent the pinnacle of stylewriting and are vital for a writer’s reputation [11]. This creative freedom has led to numerous stylistic subcategories, grouped under the umbrella term “piece” which will be explored further in the next chapter.

1.1.2. Further distinctions

While not an exhaustive list, the following categories are frequently mentioned in literature.

Legality: While stylewriting originated in illegality, opportunities now exist to paint on legally designated walls, though these remain limited [12]. Some writers also undertake commissioned work, which parts of the scene reject entirely [13]. A clear distinction exists between legal and illegal pieces. Illegal work poses challenges such as poor lighting and time constraints, while legal or commissioned pieces allow unlimited time, colors, and tools. As a result, legal productions are held to higher quality standards [4].

Location: In general, Pieces are often defined by the surface or the place where they are installed. The central distinction here is between (passenger) trains on the one hand and walls on the other. So-called trainwriters expose themselves to a particularly high risk [8, 14]. As the time pressure and planning effort are also particularly high, and trains as a “moving canvas” are potentially seen by many people, trainwriting is considered the supreme discipline in large parts of the scene [4].

Color: Depending on the number of colors used, the effort can be derived and thus a statement about the quality of a piece can be made. So-called full color pieces, possibly incorporating gradients or other textured fill-ins, are contrasted with one- or two-color, often silver-black pieces. Such “chrome pieces” are common, as silver spray paint covers particularly well [4].

Style: In stylewriting, a key distinction exists between form and style [8]. While the context in which a piece is created influences its appearance, the “style” of the letterforms itself is the primary

distinguishing feature. Kreuzer identified early styles from New York, developed by individual writers and adopted locally [6]. Gottlieb emphasized the distinction between personal styles and style conventions, creating a system for classifying styles and defining categories and niches from the 80s and 90s [8]. She outlined criteria for style classification, including letter uniformity, white space, line character, and legibility. In Germany, regional styles like the Dortmund and Heidelberg styles emerged, while independent styles also formed in countries like France [4]. A detailed analysis of style requires a narrow regional and temporal focus. This study primarily examines general contemporary style categories observed across Germany.

1.1.3. Typographic studies

Stylewriting can be analyzed on a micro-, meso-, macro- and paratypographical level [15]. Depending on whether one considers the individual wall or the entire city as a writer's medium, the constant repetition of the same tags or throw ups in street bombing, for example, can be interpreted on a macrotypographical level. On a mesotypographical level, stylewriting has some unique features. For example, the size and placement of typography is primarily limited by one's own height. Lay ups and yards where parked trains are often attacked by writers, usually don't offer platforms for the writers to stand on. As a result, pieces on trains often appear to be cut off at the lower edge when regular viewers see them at the station. Other types of "canvas" have their individual format properties. Mesotypography could also be used to describe the relationship between different pieces, e.g. along railroad lines, where pieces are placed side by side or painted over, respecting certain conventions. Tags or slogans that are placed next to or within a piece, subordinating to the typographic hierarchy, also fall into this category. The microtypographic level receives the most attention from the writers themselves. It includes the individual letters and their relationship to each other, such as the spacing, which in the case of stylewriting often becomes an overlap [8].

A special feature of stylewriting is the focus on one's own pseudonym. As this is usually chosen by the writer, they can decide which letters they want to combine based on their characteristics [14]. The development of their own style then focuses mainly on these few letters, in contrast to conventional font development. With this in mind, the importance of the distinction between the development of personal styles and stylized alphabets, as emphasized by Gottlieb, becomes clear.

Although the significance of style within the subculture is undisputed in academic discourse, very few works address this aspect fundamentally. Kuhnert objects that there is no academically institutionalized branch of research that deals historically, systematically and concretely with the aesthetics of letter and word images that cannot be assigned to typography or chirography [16]. Consequently, he argues, there is also a lack of terminological and methodological instruments as well as scientific consensus and progress in knowledge. Kuhnert attempts to lay the foundation for just such a branch of research - he coins the term 'eleutherography', which means 'free writing' - by developing an initial terminology and methodology and putting it up for discussion. Kuhnert regards only the "stylewriting avant-garde", which deals with the "liberation of letters" without completely detaching itself from the letter as a medium, as the object of research. While he adopts some technical terms from typography, Kuhnert also proposes new terminology. In doing so, he draws heavily on human anatomy [16]. This anthropomorphization of letters is not uncommon in stylewriting. In their description of stylewriting, the writers SCUM, CHEECH H & TECHNO 169 use this metaphoric continuously when they write, for example: "You can make letters support each other, dance, fight through certain poses in the word." [17]. They continue a combative, warlike metaphoric, describing the K as a letter that can "fend off massive attacks" and "penetrate to the right with two slanted spears". Perhaps this understanding of typography can be derived from the idea of competition inherent in stylewriting. The extent to which breaking with conventions, in the form of replacing established concepts of typography, is necessary for the study of stylewriting and to what extent it is beneficial, especially with the aim of a more scientific approach to the topic, can certainly be discussed. Whether establishing a separate branch of research is necessary, and whether it would be

constructive to limit the object of research to the “avant-garde”, thus categorically excluding the majority of graffiti that can be observed in everyday life, is certainly debatable as well.

Kuhnert deconstructs letters into individual elements, which he in turn separates into main, partial and additional elements, whereby the former are composed of three partial elements and the latter are not functionally necessary. A majuscule composed in this way is a primary structure, which represents the starting point of the distortion in the sense of a deviation from typographical norms [16]. Analogous to Kuhnert, Ganter describes letters as a composition of a few building blocks that can be alienated to the extent that the recognizability of the letter is preserved. Ganter also points to a certain basic structure that must be retained. This can be determined at certain key points, such as counters or the intersections of several “bars” [18]. Kuhnert refers to such a point as a “signifier” [16]. According to Ganter, if this point is depicted correctly, the outer shape is not decisive for the recognizability of the letter and can be varied freely and joined or interlocked with other letters (see Fig. 4) [18]. Similar deconstruction of letterforms has been done by other graffiti writers such as Christian P. Acker or Claudia Walde (“MADC”) that have published books or articles on style, usually aimed more at their own scene.



Figure 4: Letter variations [18]

ends at the smallest possible unit, the stroke, defined by the tool used in drawing the letter. In general, spray cans and markers are the most popular tools for applying graffiti in public spaces. Markers in this context refer to both commercially available felt-tip pens and so-called flow pens or squeezers, which are marketed specifically to writers [4]. Their wider pen tip allows a large amount of paint to be applied, which can result in drips of paint. Those tools only allow modulating line width to a certain extent by varying the pressure, leading to a moderate line width contrast in most tags. Markers that have a wedge tip instead are an exception. Here, as with calligraphy, the angle of the marker can be used to create a significant line width contrast. The line quality of a spray can results from the pressure within as well as the pressure applied on the can, as well as the attached spray head (e.g. Skinny Caps or Fat Caps). Line width can also be varied by holding the can at varying distance to the wall. As the distance increases, the line becomes wider but also blurrier. If the can is placed close to the wall, the arm must be moved more quickly in order to avoid drips, which are usually considered a technical error [19]. In general, the choice of cap for outlines and fill-ins is less important for the actual letter shapes of pieces, due to their nature of being “constructed” rather than “written”. What is more worth mentioning here is the size of such pieces, which requires moving the entire body in order to achieve clean lines.

1.1.4. Social acceptance

While the aforementioned aspects were mainly described from an insider / expert perspective, the perception of those outside of the community should not be ignored. Affandi argues that the popularity of some street artists such as Banksy or former graffiti artists such as Keith Haring, and the general increase in the number of legal surfaces and commissioned murals, has improved the social opinion of graffiti in recent decades [20]. According to Affandi, this removal of the stigma of illegality goes hand in hand with the fact that brands are also increasingly using graffiti in their advertising campaigns. Goecke and Heise attempt to answer the question about the acceptance of graffiti in the German city of Halle in a rather differentiated way. Participants rate the quality of

various pieces similarly to experts. Furthermore, although the influence of higher-quality styles on their surroundings is rated as significantly more positive and their acceptance increases, especially on legal surfaces, the acceptance of such styles on illegal surfaces only reaches a maximum of 23.4%; significantly lower for inhabited houses or lower-quality graffiti. Contrary to the hypothesis of Goecke & Heise, the assessment of a need for prosecution is not clearly related to perceived aesthetics [21]. Krüger & Preller add the variable of demographics to these findings. While only around half of people between the ages of 18 and 29 reject graffiti, this figure rises to 78% among 30–44-year-olds and is even higher above this age. A higher social status also correlates clearly with the rejection of graffiti [22]. Ten years later, a larger-scale study from the Netherlands came to the conclusion that although opinions on graffiti vary greatly from person to person, on average they are neither positive nor negative. In this survey, too, a different assessment was found depending on the type of graffiti (tag, throw-up or piece) and its content. According to Vanderveen & van Eijk, the reason for this could be, that tags, which were rated most negatively, are mainly associated with illegality, while pieces are more likely to be perceived as art, as they are also more frequently found on legal walls. The study also differentiates between various evaluation aspects. The most positively emphasized aspect of stylewriting is aesthetics [23]. These results suggest that the social opinion of stylewriting is significantly shaped by its context and that a significantly more positive perception can be achieved by transferring it to a legal framework.

1.2. Semantic typography

Besides stylewriting, the other field of research relevant to the study is typography, more precisely semantic typography, which refers to what has been described by others as font personality [24], atmospheric value or quality of impression, and has been sufficiently documented by research and practice [25]. It describes the different subjective effect created in the reader, achieved by microtypographical variables like the choice of font, regardless of the content. According to Sommer & Gaspar even basic design features such as serifs or stroke contrast create an effect on the viewer [26]. According to Brumberger, typographers fundamentally agree that typeface personality, in the form of visual attributes, has a subtle and complex influence on the tone of a text. In contrast to Stamm however, she criticizes a lack of empirical studies of this thesis at this time, as well as a lack of scientific consensus, for example between the research results of Bartram (1982) and Rowe (1982), who had each proposed categorization models of semantic qualities for typography [27]. To counteract this problem, she conducted a study in which she successfully reproduced the results of earlier studies. In the two decades since publication, many others have addressed the issue. In one study for example, it was shown that the use of fonts, which are attributed higher valence and arousal values due to their formal characteristics, in advertisements positively influence both the viewer's attitude towards the corresponding advertisement and the advertised product [28]. In a recent study, Odushegun investigated the affective influence of font choice on user experience and found significant differences in valence and arousal between different fonts [29]. Salgado-Montejo, Velasco, Olier, Alvarado & Spence argue that a higher formal congruence of a word mark with the corresponding figurative mark correlates with a generally more positive evaluation of the brand [30]. Most studies use descriptive words or pairs of opposites for evaluating semantic qualities. Stamm considers such a so-called semantic differential or polarity profile to be a suitable analytical tool in this context [25].

2. Methodology

Chapter 1 established some foundations for understanding stylewriting as well as semantic typography. The aim of the methodology described hereafter is to compare and verify those theoretical findings with reality and to create a more precise idea of the typographical characteristics of stylewriting. To achieve this, qualitative and quantitative methods were combined, and experts as well as laymen were consulted to allow for comprehensive results.

2.1. Database research

In a first step, a large catalog of photographically documented writings was viewed and analyzed in order to identify patterns and make statements about the distribution of certain typographic attributes. INGRID (Informationssystem Graffiti in Deutschland) was used as the data basis for this [31]. It was created for scientific use by the German linguistics research department by Paderborn University and KIT. It contains almost 100,000 graffiti photographs, originating mainly from police inventories and private archives [32]. Large parts of the data set have been annotated following a clear, publicly accessible system [7]. While some aspects, such as letter style were already categorized, more specific analyses were done manually by inspecting each picture for a set of predefined typographic attributes (e.g. serifs, slant, stroke width, ...) and counting the instances.

As the complete data set would be too extensive, the database was narrowed down for the majority of the analysis. To achieve insight into contemporary styles, The entire database was initially sorted by recency. Since 96% of the data from Nov. 2018 to Nov. 2019 happened to originate from the Cologne police database, the basic data set was limited to this subset. Despite the local focus, the chosen time period allows to assume some certain Germany-wide transferability, as Sven Niemann, research project employee states in the expert interview conducted with him, among others, as no clear regional differences in style can be identified nowadays. The restriction to police data means that firstly, in contrast to private collections, it can be assumed that the photographer did not make a pre-selection based on aesthetic or other personal criteria. Secondly, mostly illegal writing is taken into account in the study, which accounts for the majority of the stylewriting that can be observed in public space. When subsets were used for specific analyses, that is marked within the text.

2.2. Expert interviews

The expert interviews conducted allow direct insight, in particular regarding current developments. Topics discussed were the categories of stylewriting as well as the underlying ethos, and how graffiti could be used by designers without exploiting the subculture. In general, this qualitative data should serve to classify the state of research and be compared with the quantitative findings from the database analysis and the survey.

Four experts from different theoretical and practical fields related to stylewriting participated. Sven Niemann is a graffiti researcher and helped develop the INGRID-database. Christoph Ganter (JEROO) is a writer, mural artist and author of a bestselling book on graffiti writing. Carlos Lorente (KID CROW) is also a writer, as well as graffiti workshop- and podcast host. Jan Ducks is part of Studio Vierkant, a Stuttgart based design agency working on the intersection of graffiti and graphic design.

2.3. Survey

The third component of the data collection was an online survey. The aim of this was to have representative examples of the eight previously defined stylewriting categories (see 3.3) assessed by outsiders with regard to their typographic personality. This additional quantitative perspective is necessary in order to make a statement about the potential of the corresponding typographic style influences in the commercial context of a broad public. The survey was structured as follows:

1. Demographic Data such as age, gender and professional activity in the creative field were requested in order to analyze target groups for stylewriting. Graffiti was not mentioned yet to avoid bias.
2. Participants rated five randomly selected and ordered typographic images in ten categories based on a 5-step semantic differential. A pretest reduced the original nine illustrations as they were perceived as too repetitive.

3. The subject of the study got revealed. Participants indicated their attitude to graffiti and any previous experience. Detailed questions followed in the case of previous experience; otherwise, the survey ended.

The semantic dimensions chosen for the study were derived from an analysis of the most commonly used dimensions in comparable studies [24, 26, 27, 28] and supplemented by dimensions of specific relevance within the context of stylewriting.

For the illustrations designed to represent each of the eight style categories, the word “WORD” was chosen as it doesn’t induce strong inherent emotional reactions [33, 34] as well as being close to the average length of a graffiti piece. Any color or decoration was omitted to direct the focus to the letterforms. A reference category (set in Arial Bold) was included.

A large proportion of the participants were students at Stuttgart Media University. In total, **n=105** of 195 participants completed the study, corresponding to a dropout rate of 46%. As each participant was shown 5 out of 9 categories, there is an average of 58 ratings for each category. The average age of the participants was 24.9 years (SD=9.5). The gender distribution was 71.4% female, 25.7% male and 2.9% diverse.

Besides explorative data analysis, the following hypotheses, derived from literature as well as the interviews, have been tested:

- **Hypothesis 1a:** With increasing age, the general attitude towards graffiti in public spaces tends to become more negative.
Hypothesis 1b: The more positive the general attitude towards graffiti in public spaces, the more positive the attractiveness of typographic styles is generally described.
Hypothesis 1c: With increasing age, the attractiveness of typographic styles is generally described more negatively.
- **Hypothesis 2:** Style categories with less focus on stylization and abstraction are described as more readable.
- **Hypothesis 3:** Style categories that are more complex and involve greater effort are described as higher quality.

3. Results

3.1. Summary of the interviews

3.1.1. What does stylewriting mean to you?

The experts tend to go into great detail to answer the question, underlining the complexity of the topic. The answers also highlight the major role of individuality in stylewriting. One aspect that Niemann in particular, but also Ganter, emphasizes is the origin of stylewriting. After its emergence in Philadelphia in the 1960s, style traditions were adopted when stylewriting was adapted in Germany in the 1980s, according to Niemann. For Ganter, stylewriting is the “quintessence of graffiti”. It is about “making your own name tangible, bigger” through letters. Tagging was the beginning. The emergence of all other forms and styles since then can be attributed to the writer’s striving for even greater attention, Ganter continues. To achieve this goal, each writer goes their own way - some place more value on quantity, others more on quality. However, as the two other artists also describe in the interview, the development of an individual, unmistakable style always comes first. Ducks writes: “Stylewriting is about shaping letters in the most individual way possible. The aim is to develop your own style that can be attributed to a person on the basis of formal criteria.” Lorente uses very similar words. For him, stylewriting describes “the intensive preoccupation with the abstraction of letters in the form of an artist’s name. The aim is to make one’s own name known both locally and scene-wide through one’s own style”. He makes it clear that his understanding of stylewriting is similar to that of Pfeiffenberger, among others, by adding: “For me, the implementation - whether stylewriting is legal, illegal, sprayed on a train or wall or just drawn on a

piece of paper - makes no significant difference as long as the unmistakable “style” and its development is the focus.” Niemann also presents the component of aestheticizing the letters as a central characteristic of stylewriting, which distinguishes this form of graffiti from simple slogans or political slogans: “It’s about throwing the letters on the wall as beautifully as possible, somehow giving them a flow, a pictorial quality.” Furthermore, he emphasizes the aspects of color and placement, which, according to Niemann, is particularly important within the scene (see. 1.1.2). Here, a first kind of categorization emerges, which is often made automatically by the experts in the interview. In addition to the differentiation according to the underground (train, hall of fame, line piece), the special forms described in 1.1.2 such as bombings, but also regional styles such as the Dortmund style and the Heidelberg “Funkmaster style” are mentioned [Ganter], whereby all experts agree that such regional influences have given way to the influence of the Internet nowadays. What is referred to in 1.1.1 as a “general classification” is also mentioned in most of the interviews, although it is clear that there is no 100% consensus even on this very simple categorization. For example, Lorente considers throw ups to be a type of piece, while Niemann and Ducks see them as a separate category. Furthermore, a number of different style categories that have become established over the past decades are more or less unanimously mentioned.

Both Ducks and Lorente state that typographic terminology plays at most a subordinate role and that the agglomerate of scene-specific terms that has developed over the years is correspondingly larger. “Sprayers who are also graphic designers know and use the vocabulary, of course, but that is only a small part of the scene.” [Ducks]. In this context, Lorente mentions the now deceased Berlin writer ODEM, who had worked as a sign painter and integrated this influence into his philosophy and intensive preoccupation with style. Ganter, on the other hand, often uses terms from typography in conversation, especially to describe his own style. In his opinion, if you are serious about stylewriting, this comes automatically at some point. “Nobody teaches you at first, but sooner or later you will pick up on such terms in conversation with other writers and adapt them”. For elements that are specific to stylewriting, such as the use of arrows as extensions of letters, you inevitably have to create your own terms, Ganter continues.

Another question focused on the importance of pure letter form and composition versus additional elements, colors, effects and other stylistic devices typical of stylewriting. None of the experts could give a general answer to this question. Rather, they pointed out that every writer has their own philosophy: “People who paint very simply often attach great importance to colors and effects. Whereas some people who paint very ornate letters prefer very simple color combinations to improve legibility. These people also often value decorative elements. Since there are no real rules about what is right or wrong, all sprayers decide for themselves what they think is right.” [Ducks]. For Lorente, the composition and structure of the letters are of great importance. According to him, the ability to simultaneously give a lettering dynamic and balance while creating a presence must be mastered before it can be refined through effects and decoration. Ganter sees the expression of individuality as the core idea of stylewriting and as the biggest conceptual difference to classic typography. Consequently, when the writers were asked what constitutes stylewriting, their own philosophy and their own idea of a good style often shined through.

3.1.2. The view from the inside out

Although the term “piece” is derived from masterpiece, for Ganter the quality of a piece of writing is not decisive for it to be classified as such. “As soon as someone tries to produce a self-contained image with a serious claim, it is a piece” [Ganter]. When asked about his personal preferences, however, Ganter does set high quality standards. For Lorente, the structure of the letters is paramount, which is why he prefers simpler forms of stylewriting such as tags and simple to semi-wild styles. Ducks argues that simpler forms of writing are often more difficult, as nothing can be hidden there (see 1.1.1); he can be enthusiastic about all forms and styles, as long as they are of high quality. According to Lorente, outsiders, on the other hand, tend to dislike such simpler forms of stylewriting due to their often lower technical quality and are more likely to be attracted by flashy

wild styles or three-dimensional pieces. Ducks shares the assessment that silver bombings, for example, are often perceived negatively by outsiders, and posits the thesis that color plays a particularly important role here. Ganter also believes that the quality of a piece makes a difference and that different styles have different external effects. For example, an outsider would certainly recognize the qualitative difference between a Hall of Fame piece and a tag or a trainwriting created under time pressure. The problem, according to Ganter, is that the two are often conflated under the term graffiti (see. 1.1). Niemann strongly doubts whether outsiders even recognize a difference between different styles. From his experience he argues, that most outsiders lack a basic grasp of stylewriting which is a prerequisite for a deeper understanding. According to Niemann, graffiti is a product of the scene for the scene and many outsiders don't even understand that stylewriting is about names and identities. Ganter agrees with this assessment. In his opinion, this subcultural aspect is not recognized by outsiders. With that in mind, it is not surprising that there is a consensus among all the experts interviewed, that figurative motifs, which may be completely removed from actual stylewriting, are always best received by outsiders. According to Niemann, the context and background only play a role for outsiders in assessing whether a piece was created legally or illegally, which in turn is decisive for the evaluation of the piece. For people familiar with the scene, other criteria are of greater importance when evaluating a style, argues Lorente: "Is the piece unique in style? What development has the artist undergone? What is the structure of the letters? When was the picture created and did the artist have to take risks to create it? This is certainly neither assessable nor relevant for outsiders." Ducks also agrees with this assessment: "The lack of basic understanding often makes it impossible for an outsider to appreciate a piece for its technical quality".

3.1.3. How can a transfer succeed

Ganter believes stylewriting has already indirectly had a major impact on the graphic design industry today, as many writers, especially from the early years of graffiti, were introduced to typography through the study of style, and later pursued creative career paths as typographers or art directors. He believes that stylewriting can have mass appeal and that it is worthwhile to make greater use of this influence in graphic design. Lorente has a similar view. He sees great overlap between legal and commercial forms of stylewriting to design and lettering, which work well in logo design and illustration, as well as interior design. Ducks, whose agency Studio Vierkant is mentioned by Ganter as a positive example of the combination of stylewriting and graphic design, is somewhat more reserved in his comments. In his opinion, a creative and playful approach to typography and the liberation from rules, as is common in stylewriting, is generally positive for graphic design practice. But you don't have to be a writer for that, or specifically seek a connection to stylewriting. Ganter specifically mentions two aspects of stylewriting in typography. The first is playing with the proportions of the individual letters and the letters in relation to each other, for example by enlarging the first and last letters of a wordmark, as is sometimes used in logo design. This can be used even more freely in typography and graphic design, although one has to be careful how much they can go to extremes without challenging the viewer's reading habits too much [Ganter]. The second is the connection of the individual letters to form a unit, in which Ganter sees a very important element of stylewriting. "I would almost go so far as to say that if the letters are not connected, it's not stylewriting". As this is difficult to standardize and every word and letter combination offers different possibilities for such connections, Ganter brings AI tools into play here, which could be used in the future to develop typography from a letter-based to a more word-based discipline. According to Ganter, all of these developments are less relevant for designing continuous text but rather for shorter content. It is precisely here, for example in the design of display fonts or posters, that Lorente also sees the most direct potential for using stylewriting influences. However, writers such as BEET74 or Boris "DELTA" Tellegen have already demonstrated how stylewriting can be combined with animation or 3D design [Lorente]. Ducks sees the greatest added value of using stylewriting for products or target groups that tend to be young. Lorente considers a suitable target

group to be “industries and media that want to transport the atmosphere of the street and the subcultural heritage into their own communication”.

The artists name a few things to bear in mind when implementing campaigns. Ganter explains that he often finds it difficult to use stylewriting outside of its regular context, not because of “credibility” but rather because of the implementation, which in a commercial context is often either not professional or too simplified and adapted to the masses. Lorente takes a similar view: “Personally, I think it is good and beneficial for the development of stylewriting if our art can also be shown to advantage in other contexts - as long as it is not softened and the artists have to adapt. In the classic scene, the dogma is that legal graffiti has no right to exist anyway. In this respect, it makes no sense to discuss with this part of the movement.” Ducks, on the other hand, takes a more critical view. On behalf of his colleagues, he writes: “We don’t like advertising with graffiti features. Basically, in our opinion, each case of commercialization of graffiti must be considered individually. There is a difference between a campaign for a free theater and the new campaign for H&M. I think the scene looks at it the same way”. Both Ganter and Lorente emphasize that one should ideally work with experienced writers and never copy or adopt the styles of others without permission. In general, the number of successful campaigns that actually use stylewriting instead of more easily accessible street art motifs is low [Lorente] and other examples of the fusion of stylewriting and graphic design are difficult to find, as these often take place in niches [Ducks].

3.1.4. Key Insights

While all Experts mentioned the basic categories of stylewriting – tags, throw ups and pieces – they didn’t agree on exact definitions, making it hard to define clear boundaries. This also reflects the lacking consensus in literature. Other categories, like bombings or regional styles, were also mentioned with some consistency among the experts, which informed the specific selection that was made for this study (see 3.3). The individuality of any artists style however was deemed more important than adherence to strict categories. It was highlighted, that the criteria people within the scene use to value a piece differ greatly from those outside of the community, yet there was little consensus regarding the extent to which outsiders are able to recognize technical quality of a piece. Bridging the gap to graphic design, the experts named a variety of properties that could serve as an inspiration for designers, and commented on different approaches to implement such inspiration. A general emphasis was placed on respecting the craft by not simply copying or appropriating artists work, but cooperating with them or trying to understand the typographic fundamentals. Section 3.2 and 3.3. seek to provide such understanding. The characteristics identified by the experts also helped guide the database analysis by indicating what to search for.

3.2. Findings from database analysis

Prevalence of general categories: The classification of stylewriting mentioned at the beginning of the paper is also a variable that can be filtered by in the database. Looking at the distribution between the three classes, it becomes clear that tagging, the “lowest level” of stylewriting, accounts for by far the largest share in quantitative terms at 63%, followed by pieces, which are summarized in the database as Piece/Writing/Style (P/W/S) with about 10% and Throw Ups with 8%, the rest being graffiti that does qualify as stylewriting.

Word length: The average word length of all writings is 3.85 characters.^[A] Writer names usually comprise 4-5 characters. Crew names, on the other hand, usually consist of 3 letters which is how the observed distribution can be explained. If we look exclusively at the Piece/Writing/Style category, a similar picture emerges. The average length of a German word for comparison is about 10 letters, in English this value is about half.

^[A] 300 most recent entries

^[B] 200 most recent entries

^[C] 100 most recent entries

Capitalization: Around two thirds of all the writings analyzed^[B] were written in capitals. Only around 9% were written with only the initial letter capitalized and just over 3% were written entirely in minuscules. Interestingly, the free mixture of minuscules and majuscules is relatively common (20%). When looking at P/W/S separately, the distribution is similar.

Slant: The rightward slant typical for handwriting is by far the least frequently observed^[C], at around 6%. At 24%, a left tilt is much more common. In 56% of cases, no significant inclination is observed at all. In 13% of cases, no uniform tilt axis can be determined. Looking at Pieces separately, the proportion of mixed inclinations of the individual letters is significantly higher (38%). This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that in handwritten tags, which make up the majority of the general data set, some uniformity emerges naturally, similar to calligraphy. Pieces are often constructed more elaborately, sometimes in advance with sketches, giving the writer the opportunity to balance the letters in a more complex way by individually coordinating the slant axes (see Fig. 3).

Serifs: Just under 10% of all writings examined^[C] show consistent use of serifs. In 39%, however, individual serifs can be detected, while they are missing in other. Roughly half of the writings are sans serif. Interestingly, the distribution is again extremely similar in the P/W/S category (11% serif; 53% sans serif; 36% mixed), although the addition of serifs does not make it significantly more difficult to draw a piece. One explanation could be that typical letter forms, styles and variations that have been established through tags are also adopted in Pieces.

Spacing and ligatures: The data reflects the special role of spacing in stylewriting, emphasized in literature. As mentioned by Ganter, among others, the connection of individual letters (ligature) is also common. These two aspects were combined for the following analysis^[C]. Six categories were defined:

Category	General	Piece/Writing/Style
Very wide	3%	2%
Normal	33%	7%
Mostly touching	65%	83%
Overlapping	17%	68%
True ligature	6%	6%
Oneliner	3%	2%

Table 1: Distribution of spacing and ligatures

While the tight spacing leads to letters frequently touching and overlapping, true ligatures in the form of connecting elements or the merging of individual letters are rather rare in the broad mass of stylewriting.

Stylewriting-specific traits: Other characteristic typographic features of stylewriting were mentioned in the expert interviews. In particular, exaggerated proportions [Ganter], acute angles and extended run-outs [Niemann]. The data^[C] confirms that these characteristics are typical of stylewriting, particularly in pieces. Although swashes are common in tags, they are rarely applied to pieces. One explanation for this could be that, for example, a sweeping tail at the end of a word is more likely to occur automatically in a dynamic handwritten tag than in a planned piece, where usually a compact, stable and balanced appearance is aimed for.

3.3. Definition of Style Categories

The partially lacking consensus on the most important style categories and their respective definitions and delimitation in literature as well as the expert interviews, necessitates some level of initiative contribution from the author at this point. The categories chosen and their definitions align as closely as possible to literature and interview insights, as well as the categories used by the INGRID database [7], while any specific typographic traits described are based on the data analysis performed in 3.2.

Tag: As the only purely line-based form of stylewriting, tags are similar to calligraphy, but generally differ in their style, which features dynamic lines, acute angles, narrow spacing, low to moderate contrast in line width and a free approach to proportions. The slant of tags rarely resembles a classic italic, but tends to be straight or slanted to the left. As tags are often applied in relatively small formats, the width of the pen tip or the cap of the can used has a significant effect on the line width. Most of the tags correspond roughly to a grotesque font in regular or bold weights. Very thin or thick tags are much rarer.

Throw up / bubblestyle: The Letters appear “inflated” through concave outer forms (Fig. 31).



Figure 5: Tag (exemplified)

Figure 6: Throw up (exemplified)

They are extremely bold; counters are usually only implied. The space between individual letters often disappears completely, so that letters sometimes overlap considerably. The preceding letter usually overlaps the following one. These characteristics make filling in a bubble style very quick and easy, which makes this style particularly suitable for throw ups (see Fig. 2). The terms are therefore often used interchangeably.

Simple style: A simple type of piece whose letters are not particularly distorted or intertwined and therefore often easy to read. The simplicity here refers exclusively to the shape of the letters - they often include elaborate color schemes, backgrounds and decorative elements. Simplicity in the letter form does not mean that only block letters or a font style strongly oriented towards grotesque fonts may be used. The variety of font characteristics in the simple styles alone offers a great deal of scope for the individual style of a writer. Straight lines are often bent while curves are sharpened to create dramatic angles. Proportions are adjusted to create dynamic compositions. The typeface isn't always firmly anchored to a baseline, but an attempt is often made to convey a certain stability, for example by tilting the first and last letters inwards, framing the piece. The font weight is often bold, but counters usually remain intact and despite narrow spacing and partial overlapping or merging, some whitespace remains.

Semi-wildstyle: Letters are more strongly distorted and linked together. Swashes, arrows and other decorative elements are added to the letters. Proportions are more extreme; letters are can often only be recognized by looking for key identifying parts (see 1.1.3). In general, legibility is traded for freedom in the design of the shape. This sophisticated and elaborate type of stylewriting is often



Figure 7: Simple style (exemplified)

also very detailed in its color and decorative design, and is often, but not exclusively, found in the legal sector.

Wildstyle: The logical further development of the semi-wild style. The letters recede completely into the background. Instead, the focus shifts to countless small bridges and connecting elements that form ligatures on different levels and, traditionally, arrows that shoot out of the word structure in different directions. Wildstyles are found almost exclusively in the legal sector due to the immense time required for execution.



Figure 9: Wildstyle (exemplified)

3D-style: Realistic simulation of three-dimensionality through the use of perspective and rendering of realistic light and shadow effects within the letters. Typography is often no longer thought of graphically, but as an installation in space. Letters do not point flat in the direction of the viewer, but are placed freely in space and wedged into one another. Due to the considerable effort involved, this style is also limited almost without exception to legal or commissioned productions.

Roller graffiti: Defined by the tool used for drawing. The letters are applied at a great height



Figure 10: 3D-style (exemplified)

using a paint roller, often with a telescopic rod. The resulting design language is often linear or block-like, the execution is usually in one or two colors and sometimes a bit messy. As liquid wall paint is cheaper than spray paint, this technique is often used for large-scale writings where the effect is created by the dimensions rather than by a sophisticated style.



Figure 11: Roller graffiti (exemplified)

Blockbuster: Term for a very large piece that often takes up the entire available surface. While style is not the main focus here, there is often still an element of stylization. The letters are usually extremely bold and wide. The spacing is narrow for the fill-in to be easy to apply, similar to a throw-up. The letters are mainly stylized on their right and left edges, as they are cut at the top and bottom or try to use the entire cap height.



Figure 12: Blockbuster (exemplified)

3.4. Survey results

3.4.1. Attitude by age

As some previous studies have found a correlation between age and graffiti acceptance (see 1.1.4), the present data should be used to check whether this observation can be reproduced using the sample. For this purpose, the data set was divided into three age groups (≤ 20 [mean: 19.2]; 21-30 [mean: 23.3]; >30 [mean: 49.9]). It should be noted that the groups ≤ 20 and >30 have quite small group sizes of 24 and 10 due to the age structure of the sample. The data shows that although attitudes towards public graffiti are more positive among younger people, the effect is only very small. **Hypothesis 1a** can therefore only be confirmed to a limited extent.

3.4.2. Attractiveness by attitude

Plotting perceived attractiveness [ATTR] of each style category against the general attitude towards graffiti in public spaces [VAL] a generally positive correlation can be observed (see Fig. 13). Participants with a VAL of +2 (“I like it a lot”) rated the attractiveness of the styles at +0.19 on average, i.e. neutral with a positive tendency. Participants who gave a VAL of -2 (“bothers me a lot”) have an average negative ATTR of -0.96, which is 1.15 points lower. The biggest difference here is between people with a strong rejection of graffiti (-2) and those with more moderate attitudes. The correlation is also particularly clear in certain style categories, such as tag and semi-wildstyle, where ATTR differs by around 1.9 between VAL -2 and VAL +2. Here we can speak of significance. As expected, the reference value [REF] is relatively constant in the neutral range across all settings. **Hypothesis 1b** can therefore be largely confirmed.

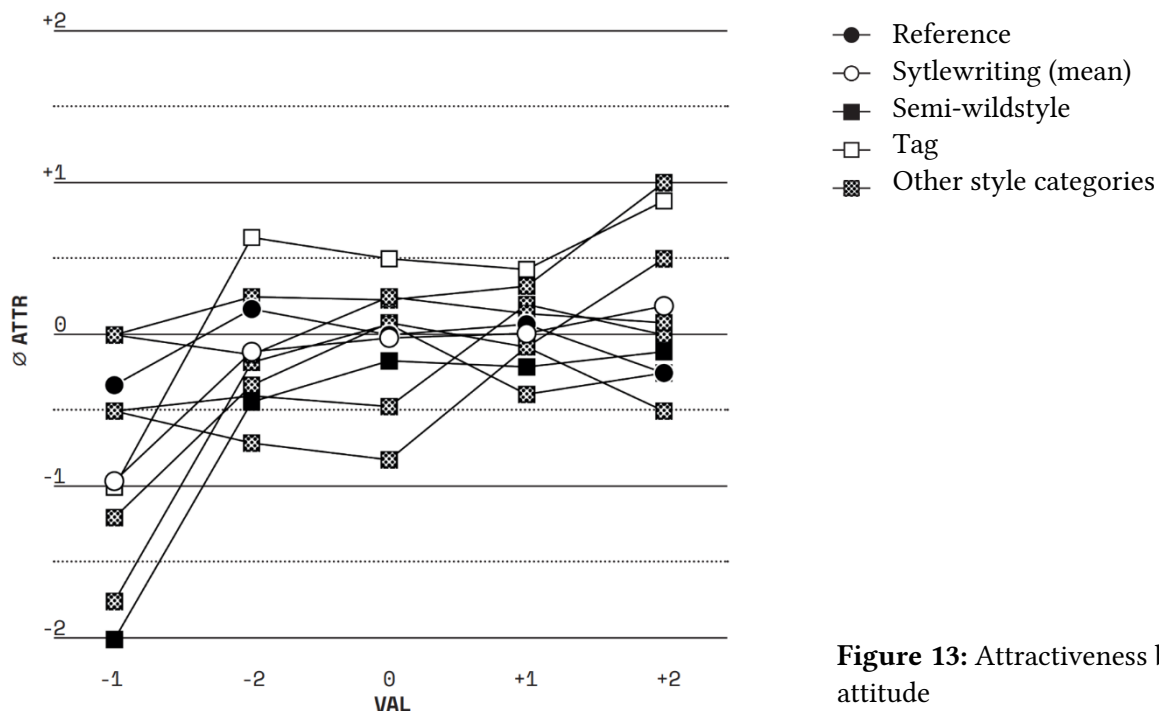


Figure 13: Attractiveness by attitude

3.4.3. Attractiveness by other metrics

Neither age, nor gender correlate significantly with perceived attractiveness. **Hypothesis 1c** can therefore not be confirmed. Perceived masculinity or femininity doesn't correlate with attractiveness as perceived by men or women either, nor does working or studying in the field of design.

3.4.4. Legibility by style category

The average legibility [LESB] (not legible - easily legible) varies greatly between the individual style categories, from -1.9 (wildstyle) to +1.0 (roller graffiti) (see Fig. 14).the closely related and most stylized categories 3D Style, Semi-Wild- and Wildstyle, are at the lower end of legibility, while Roller Graffiti is described as the most legible. The less stylized forms of stylewriting are in the middle of the field. The bubble style is located exactly between the cluster of readable and unreadable styles. **Hypothesis 2** can generally be confirmed.

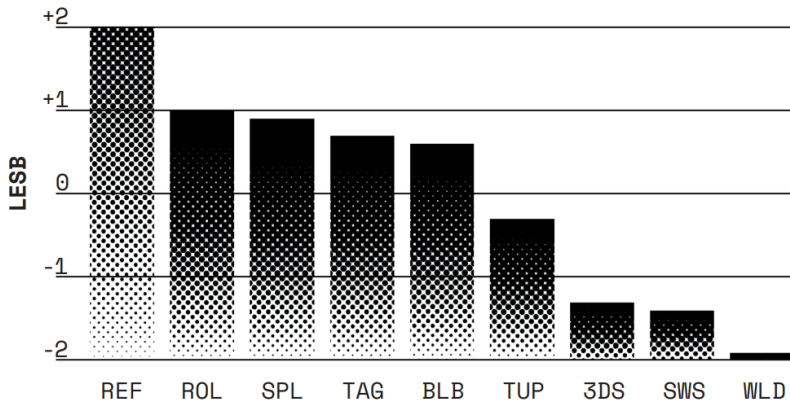


Figure 14: Legibility by style category

3.4.5. Quality by style category

Among other things, the qualitative perception [WERT] of the styles (low-quality - high-quality) was also surveyed. It varies significantly less within different styles. All categories were rated as neutral or slightly negative. The reference value is also only slightly in the positive range (+0.7), from which it can be concluded that there was a certain evaluation tendency towards the middle in this category. **Hypothesis 3** cannot be confirmed.

3.4.6. Averages by semantic dimension

While the style categories differ greatly from one another in some descriptive dimensions, there are others for which a very clear tendency can be seen across styles. The mean value of all style categories per evaluation dimension is shown here in comparison to the reference values. The standard deviation between the individual style categories is shown in square brackets. The smaller this value, the more general a statement can be made about stylewriting in general in this dimension. Dedicated polarity profiles for each style are included in the full text of this thesis.

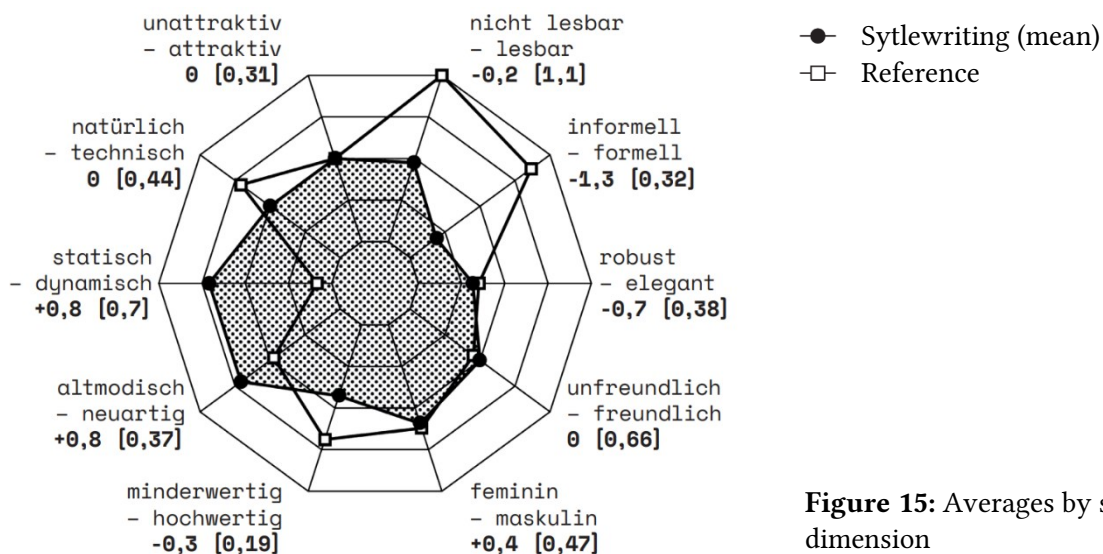


Figure 15: Averages by semantic dimension

3.4.7. Data Scattering

The spread of the data between the individual participants data points was generally relatively high. Across all assessment dimensions and style categories, the standard deviation averaged 0.98, which is substantial in the context of a five-point scale. This indicates that the variance is extremely large, i.e. the individual respondents disagree strongly. This must be taken into account when interpreting all average values, especially attractiveness.

4. Applications

4.1. Influences on graphic design

The examples that Lorente cites as successful examples of the transfer of elements of stylewriting into graphic design [35] can be divided into two categories: The unaltered transfer of styles into a commercialized context, and the complete abstraction of stylewriting towards an elusive abstract graphic design idea. On the one hand there are collaborations between fashion labels such as Hermès and the writer KONGO, in which the brand name, drawn in the individual style of the artist, is printed on a scarf, or Nike with the artist Faust, whose own name is embroidered as a tag with graffiti-typical drips on a limited-edition shoe. This type of cooperation is a great opportunity for writers to commercialize their art while remaining true to their style. However, it is also reserved for those few writers who have made a name for themselves that justifies such cooperation on the part of the fashion labels. While the act of taking the writing out of its usual context and placing it in a new one may have a certain artistic charm, from a purely graphic perspective, the complete lack of abstraction and engagement with the style makes this practice less interesting.

On the other hand, there are artists such as the Dutch Boris “DELTA” Tellegen, who developed a unique graphic style, which can now be applied, for example in a collaboration with the fashion label Supreme (see Fig. 16), where the roots of his style in typography shine through.

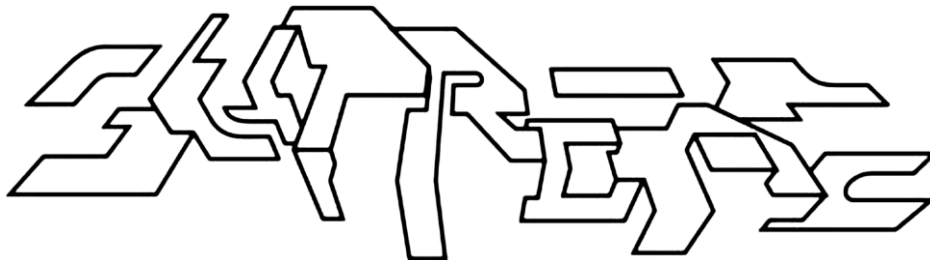


Figure 16: Sketches for Supreme [36]

A popular approach to compromise between those extremes is a collage-like combination of regular print typography with elements clearly inspired by classic stylewriting. Many great examples are provided by “Appear Offline”, a designer that found his niche in precisely this juxtaposition of classic typography and the expressive, free forms of stylewriting [37]. His work has received awards from the Type Directors Club, among others.

4.2. Developments in typography

4.2.1. Alternate glyphs

For their urban art initiative PFFFestival, Studio Vierkant designed a typeface in which individual letters were inspired by stylewriting. Alternative glyphs are also used here. For example, there is not just one variant of the R & S majuscules, but several, which can be switched between manually in common word processing programs (see Fig. 17). This elegant solution allows for unusual letter

forms such as the E, as more conventional alternatives can be used in longer continuous texts. Other designers have implemented this technique in their work as well.

RISK & SHER

Figure 17: „RISK & SHER set in PFFFont [38]

4.2.2. Ligatures

Especially wildstyle and semi-wildstyle, thrive on connections, as Ganter calls them. Ligatures are nothing new in typography, but it is worth looking at some examples of creative use of ligatures to realize the potential of using stylewriting influences. Interbrand created a corporate design for the Connectivity Standards Alliance in 2021, which aims to promote cooperation between technology companies to drive norms in the field of IoT. “Connections” was therefore used as a central aspect of the visual identity. In this context, an in-house font called Assemble was developed, which picks up on the motif. What set it apart from other tech-industry fonts are the 127 unconventional ligatures (see Fig. 18). The bridges between the letters function analogous to those in wildstyle, even though the formal language of the letters is completely different.

While the connections in wildstyle are mainly created by bridges, in simpler styles it is usually rather narrow spacing and overlapping of the letters. Undercutting letters until they touch when spacing regular print fonts, restricting legibility, is usually considered a typographic mistake. This problem does not arise with stylewriting, as the letters have outlines. Typographer Nils Dam Nordlund from Copenhagen has found a solution to this problem, which he says was loosely inspired by his time as a graffiti writer. The letters are not continuously outlined, but only have an implied outline at the point of overlap with adjacent letters, which is cut out of the adjacent letter (see Fig. 19). The font thus remains monochrome. The letters do not always overlap in the reading direction as is usual in stylewriting. In some places the letters merge. Analogous to stylewriting, some ligatures distort one of the two letters to reduce the whitespace in the space between them and thus maintaining a uniform gray value. Examples of this are the ligatures M-A or T-E. According to Nordlund, who also won a TDC Award with this font, these complex ligatures are technically implemented by dividing each letter into a right and a left glyph, which are reassembled using code.

sa	es	te	ct	ay
in	ct	ow	ty	ge
br	de	re	st	ft
on	ap	ae	by	be

Figure 18: Assemble [39]

**ACRONYM
BUNDLE
INTEGRATE
CLUSTER
AMALGAM
FUSION**

Figure 19: Uvas Display [40]

4.2.3. Variable fonts

Since the implementation of the necessary technology in the OpenType standard, more and more variable fonts are reaching the mass market. Most graphic designers are probably familiar with the concept of variable font weights and widths by now. The technology behind variable fonts is not limited to those metrics though. The dimensions of variability can be freely selected, thus creating significantly more interesting possibilities, as graphics student Katharina Gresch from Wiesbaden demonstrates. Her experimental typeface Marbla (see Fig. 20), which won an award from the TDC, offers three variable axes: Balloon, Curve and Inktrap. Balloon “inflates” the letters, conceptually similar to the bubble style in graffiti. Curve bends the straight strokes outwards. Here, too, parallels can be drawn with stylewriting, where straight lines are often given a slight curve or bend to create dynamism. The third variable creates inktraps, i.e. emphasized indentations on the overflow between the letters shoulder and stem, creating more acute angles, which is common in stylewriting as well.

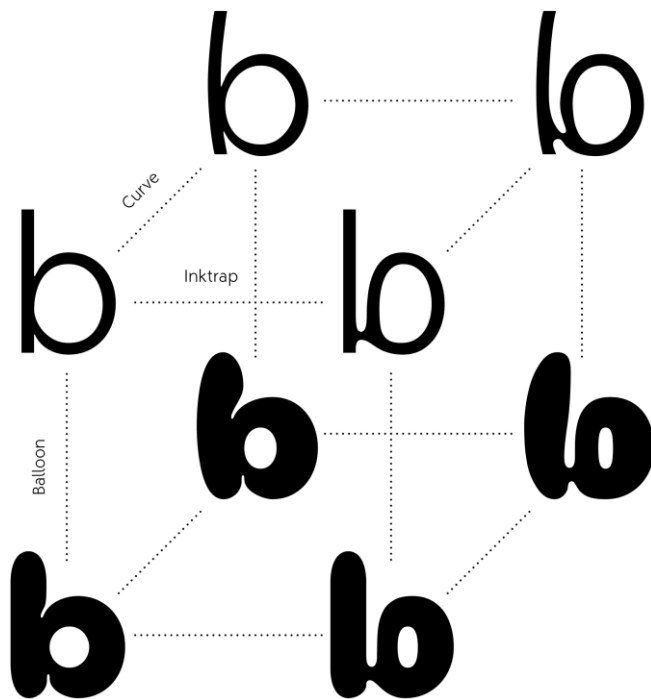


Figure 20: Marbla [41]

4.2.4. Experimental font design

Ganter sees the typographic expression of individuality as the central goal of stylewriting and argues that this is the biggest difference to typography. “This is perhaps once again what sets graffiti stylewriting apart from typography. That graffiti stylewriting is about individuality, about your own style. That’s the ultimate goal (...)” [Ganter]. This is based on an understanding of typography that can be explained historically by the first printing processes. Originally, type forms were set in lead, which meant that typographic change was very slow and there was hardly any room for or need for experimental typefaces outside of individual, hand-drawn typography. In the age of digital typography, however, this has changed fundamentally. Although standard fonts are still needed today and probably produced to an unprecedented extent, the accessibility of font design programs also enables a more liberal approach. While fonts are traditionally constructed and meticulously fine-tuned, generative font design is a more iterative approach to type. “Generative” can mean of manual typographic rapid prototyping, however, the process can also be partially or fully automated in the future using AI. This approach to typography is very similar to that of stylewriting. Letters are distorted, deconstructed and abstracted with the sole aim of creating something unique.

4.2.5. Graffiti fonts

Dedicated graffiti fonts exist alongside typefaces loosely inspired by graffiti. While Adobe Fonts and Google Fonts offer few options, free libraries like DaFont host hundreds, with popular fonts reaching millions of downloads indicating a significant demand. Quality varies, with some fonts successfully replicating stylewriting characteristics while others lack authenticity or fail at technical execution. Especially complex categories like wildstyle remain challenging, with few fonts achieving cohesive results

5. Conclusion

To date, there has been very little basic research into the intersection of stylewriting and typography. Of course, a single study and analysis in a limited framework such as this cannot produce definitive answers or watertight recommendations for action. Nevertheless, the breadth of knowledge gained provides a picture that allows an initial assessment to be made. The results presented suggest that there is a certain potential for using direct stylewriting influences in graphic design. Even outside the scene, there is no general rejection of graffiti per se or its typographic appearance. Addressing the research question however, it is important to take a close look, to know the context of different styles and how they are perceived in order to make informed design decisions. The style profiles featured in the full version of this thesis [42] can serve as a guide for designers here. The target group should of course be taken into account, but it is worth questioning the premise that stylewriting is fundamentally only appealing to young people. There is certainly great potential in looking into the underlying concept of typography that stylewriting is based on, as well as the typographic characteristics in which this manifests itself, both of which have been described within this study. Especially the interpretation of the word as a whole that wants to be connected in its letters, as a conceptual guiding principle, opens up a broad spectrum of options in type design. The modification of letters in search of a more holistic formal language is an idea that, made possible and accelerated by modern technology, has the potential to significantly shape typography, as demonstrated in chapter four. Stylewriting should not be seen as the end point, but as the starting point and inspiration for a creative exploration of the untapped possibilities within typography.

The limited nature of this study as well as its results leaves room for and suggest further research. Three specific research approaches are worth highlighting here: While color has been deliberately left out of the equation for the survey, it has been frequently mentioned as a key factor for public perception in literature and by the experts, therefore including it in a follow up study could be worthwhile. While the font chosen as a reference, Arial, is drastically different to any of the tested graffiti style categories – as is common practice in studies on semantic typography – comparing graffiti inspired fonts to other playful or eccentric display fonts could provide more nuanced results, relevant to designer's choice of typography in real scenarios. Lastly, while this study approached the topic from a rather theoretical and analytic perspective, the results could serve as a basis for more creative and practical research, e.g. developing fonts, experimenting with proportions, ligatures, slant and other methods of abstraction graffiti artists utilize in developing their style, described in this study.

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