



>> TRAVEL

# Bogota's graffiti beguiles tourists

Street artists have a wealth of inspiration to draw from in a unique environment

**VAWN HIMMELSBACH**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

BOGOTA—Christian Petersen first visited Colombia in 2001, “when it was a completely different country to what it is today.”

The Aussie returned in 2009, married a Colombian woman he met on a bus back in 2001 and co-founded Bogota Graffiti Tour.

Petersen, an artist himself, was impressed by Bogota's bustling street art scene.

“Colombia has very potent and relevant socio-political issues and topics to draw inspiration from, like the longest-running civil war in the world, injustices, poverty, internal displacement, genocide, corruption, war on drugs and much more.”

But it's not all political: The country's biodiversity is also a rich source of inspiration on the streets.

Bogota is a unique environment for graffiti artists.

Technically, graffiti is “prohibited,” though it's not illegal. That means artists can work during the day without fear of prosecution or detention (at most, they would be fined, and only if they painted on a government or private building without permission).

And that increases the quality of work, according to Petersen. There's also recognition that street art is becoming a tourist attraction.

“When I moved to Bogota, I met local artists that encouraged me to move my art form on the street,” said Petersen.

“I wanted to share this with a wider audience, and who best to do it than someone that knows the artists and paints on Bogota's streets?”

His company now runs tours twice a day, throughout the year.

Vawn Himmelsbach's trip was sponsored by G Adventures, which didn't review or approve this story.



CHRISTIAN PETERSEN PHOTOS

Christian Petersen is co-founder of the Bogota Graffiti Tour. Colombia's biodiversity is a rich source of inspiration on the streets.



One of the most vividly coloured spots you'll see on the Bogota Graffiti Tour, which runs twice a day throughout the year.

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