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HAMILTON ENTERTAINMENT



Hamilton pink tunnel beloved by 'Heated Rivalry' fans painted over by city

Repainting comes after reports of graffiti and sparks outcry from fans.

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The City of Hamilton is repainting the Pink Tunnel after vulgar graffiti was reported to staff. The tunnel has become a tourist attraction for fans of "Heated Rivalry" after a pivotal scene in the first season was filmed there.

Fallon Hewitt/The Hamilton Spectator

By Fallon Hewitt Reporter

A piece of small-screen — and Canadian literature — history in Hamilton has been painted over, much to the chagrin of a loving and loyal fan base of the hit show [“Heated Rivalry.”](#)

News of [the Pink Tunnel](#) being repainted hit social media on Tuesday, after a TikTok account for the New Zealand-based streaming platform Neon [posted a video](#) of what appeared to be city workers using large rollers to add fresh pink paint to the tunnel.



“Heated Rivalry” graffiti inside The Pink Tunnel near Shamrock Park in downtown Hamilton. The passageway was a filming location for the hit Crave original series. The tunnel is being repainted after vulgar graffiti was reported to the city.

Fallon Hewitt/The Hamilton Spectator

The tunnel has become [a hot spot for visitors](#) over the last year, thanks to the global success of the Crave original series [“Heated Rivalry,”](#) which [filmed much of its first season in](#) Hamilton and has drawn in droves of fans [looking to visit filming locations](#).

One of the locations fans flock to is the painted pink pedestrian tunnel under the CPKC Rail line, beside the Corktown Pub.

It was the setting for a pivotal first-season scene in which Ilya Rozanov (Connor Storrie), who plays for the Boston Raiders, pours his heart out on a phone call from Moscow to his lover, Shane Hollander (Hudson Williams), who plays for the Montreal Metros.

The Spectator visited the tunnel Wednesday morning and found that crews had put a fresh coat of pink over the south end of the tunnel — covering many messages, drawings, quotes and signatures left behind by visiting fans.



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The City of Hamilton told The Spectator the repainting of the Pink Tunnel was prompted by a report of “inappropriate graffiti” received through the city’s call centre.

Following the complaint, parks staff visited the tunnel and found “highly visible and large, vulgar graffiti” covering portions of the walkway, the city said.

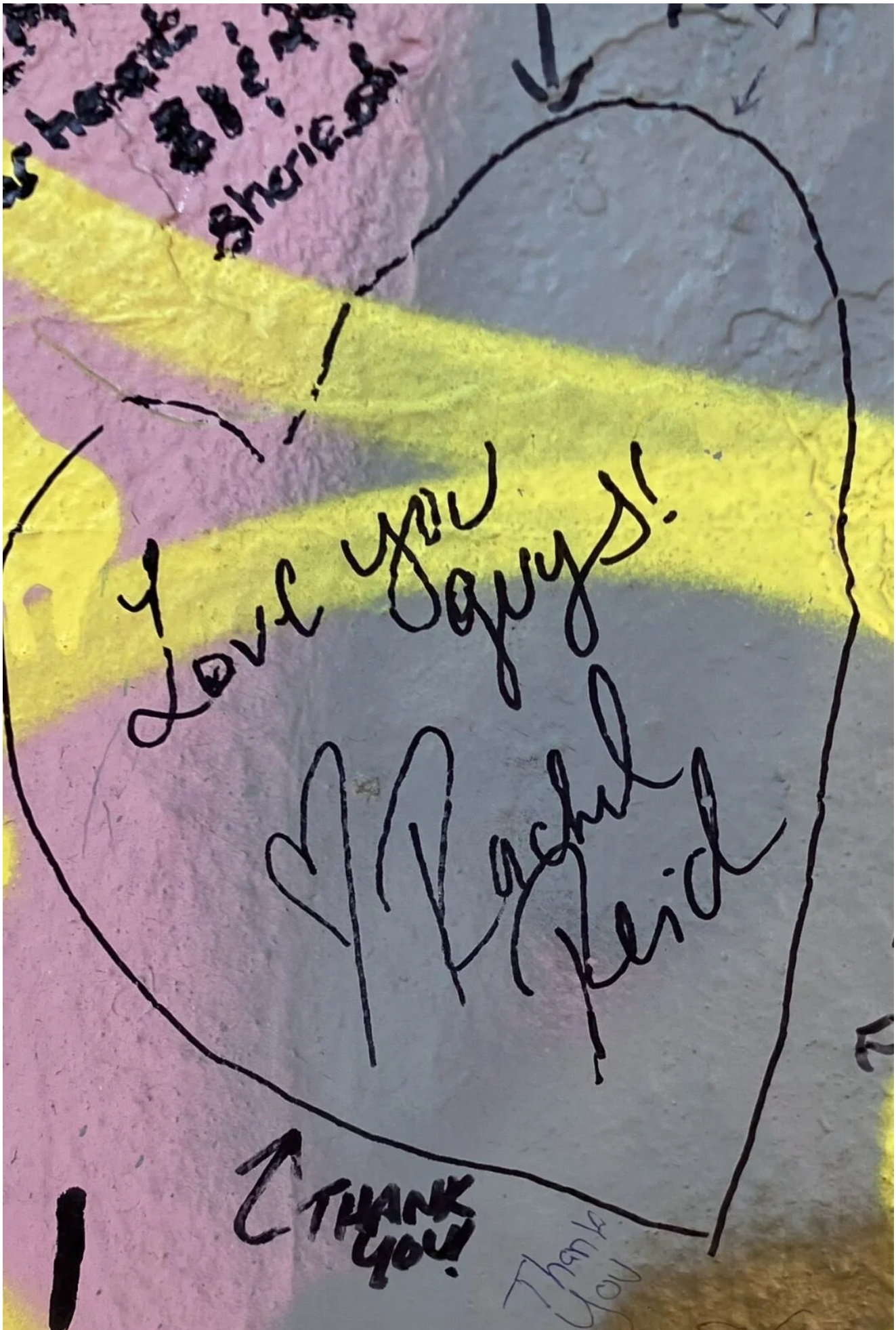
“Given the extent of the markings, a full repaint was determined to be the most appropriate way to restore the space and ensure it remains welcoming for all park users,” said the city, which did not provide any details on the nature of the graffiti.

The city said it recognizes that the Pink Tunnel has become a “meaningful landmark for many residents and visitors,” pointing to its history as a space for “positive community expression and messages of kindness.”

The Pink Tunnel was once painted grey, but through an antibullying initiative in partnership with CP Police, Queen Victoria School and community volunteers, it became a rosy-coloured spot sometime over the last decade or so.

The city said that over the years, parks staff have completed spot paint jobs and, when needed, a full pink repainting to address any vandalism or offensive graffiti. It's unclear when the tunnel was last fully repainted.

While some messages could still be seen poking through the paint on Wednesday, the [recently added signature](#) of “Heated Rivalry” author Rachel Reid was no longer visible.





“Heated Rivalry” author Rachel Reid’s message on The Pink Tunnel underneath the CPKC Rail line, beside the Corktown Pub.

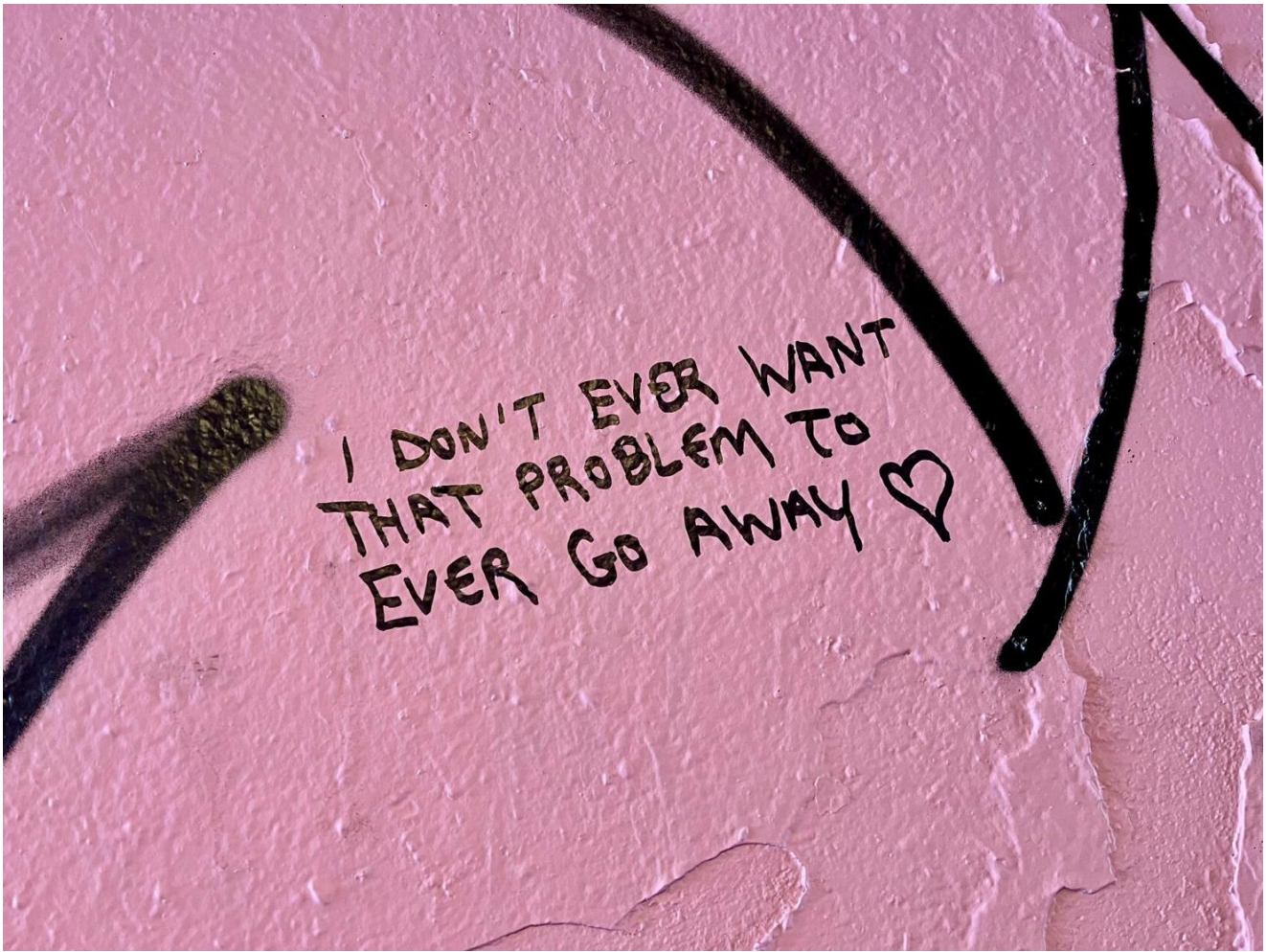
Daniel Nolan

Reid signed the wall while the show shot scenes at the end of August in Hamilton and Dundas. She revealed in a social media post dated Aug. 29 that her message was “Love You Guys. Rachel Reid,” with the words contained in a heart.

Her note was among those from fans from such places as Australia, Prague, Lancaster, Pa., Washington, D.C., and San Antonio, Texas.

Reaction on social media

Many fans took to social media on Tuesday to decry the repainting of the tunnel, with one fan even posting a screenshot of an email they sent to city officials asking to have the spot given heritage designation.



“Heated Rivalry“ graffiti inside The Pink Tunnel near Shamrock Park in downtown Hamilton.

Fallon Hewitt/The Hamilton Spectator

The original video sharing news of the repainting had more than 151,000 views, with many fans lamenting the loss of the messages, fan art and Reid’s signature in the comments.

Some fans shared photos of themselves signing the tunnel, calling the graffiti-covered walkway a “sacred place.”



"Heated Rivalry" graffiti inside The Pink Tunnel near Shamrock Park in downtown Hamilton. The passageway was used as a filming location in the hit Crave original series.

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Staff were set to complete the repainting of the tunnel by the end of the day Wednesday, the city said.



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