



Street Art & Urban Creativity Scientific Journal

Knowledge Transfer
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Urban Creativity
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Knowledge Transfer	4
Editorial, Pedro Soares Neves	
Articles	
Lisa Bogerts, M.A., Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany	6
Mind the trap: Street art, visual literacy, and visual resistance	
Esther Fernández Castelo - Ph.D. researcher, History of Art, Complutense University of Madrid. Madrid, Spain	11
Whisper finders: Learning from Shoreditch. March 2017	
Jonna Tolonen (D.A. & M.Ed.), independent researcher, University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland	20
Power of paint: Political street art confronts the authorities	
Kata Murányi, PhD Candidate Faculty of Earth Sciences, University of Pécs, Hungary	30
Creative city practices in the Lusophone space: The case of São Paulo and Lisbon	
Mona Helmy, Chair, Architecture Department, Dar Al-Hekma University, Jeddah, KSA	42
Artscaping in public places: Jeddah, the city of urban art	
Paris Xyntarianos-Tsiropinas, University of the Aegean, Syros, Greece	53
Design workshop: The case of creating a stencil mural	
Rodrigo Pena Carvalho dos Anjos Craveiro, Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal	65
The influence of graffiti writing in contemporary typography	
Maria da Luz Nolasco Cardoso, Independent researcher, Aveiro, Portugal	84
Graffiti or also “getting-up”: From site-specific to Web 2.0	
Essays / Working papers	
Eynat Mendelson-Shwartz, Dr. Nir Mualam	90
Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning, Technion - Israel Institute of Technology	
Comparing mural art policies and regulations (MAPRs): Devising a new conceptual framework	
Book Review	
Pedro Soares Neves, FBAUL/ CIEBA, PhD Scholarship: HERITAS/PD-FCT/BI/2015, Lisbon, Portugal	94
Graffiti and street art: Reading, writing and representing the city	
Invited Authors	
Malcolm Jacobson, Stockholm University, Department of Sociology, Sweden	102
Marketing with graffiti: Crime as symbolic capital	
Javier Abarca, Madrid, Spain	112
Curating street art	

Pedro Soares Neves

Executive committee

SAUC Scientific Journal Editor

The SAUC 2017 conference bridged scholarly and practice-based approaches to urban creativity. This year we included a range of diversified activities that included practical interventions, roundtable discussions (guest-hosted by Nuart), exhibitions, a book launch, and guided visits to sites of urban creativity around the city of Lisbon. The impact of the practice-oriented activities was particularly positive, and generated a strong connection between theory and practice – effects that also had an impact on the conference and the development of the Scientific Journal. The rhythm of the debates during the conference was inspiring and constructive. The intangible dimensions of the conservation of graffiti and street art were regarded by most to have a broader capacity for dealing with graffiti and street art as heritage, albeit mainly through documentation. Although physical conservation was regarded by some as a ‘non-issue’ this is, in fact, conceptually where we may find the greatest contemporary challenges – in response to which a range of possible solutions were suggested, such as self-preservation by the creator’s communities.

Practice-based approaches from the professional fields of public art and urbanism augmented the academic debate. The Lisbon council’s experience was a particularly relevant contribution for the clarification of the difficulties and opportunities associated with institutional practice. Several participants emphasized the incompatibilities that may arise when graffiti and street art are developed in an institutionalized manner. It was argued that these forms of urban creativity have a valuable capacity for resilience in adapting both to attempts to institutionalize, and attempts to oppose, these forms of practice.

Texts from both scholarly and professional/practice-based approaches may be found in the SAUC Scientific Journal Volume 3. The volume also includes contributions from the parties responsible for graffiti and street art cultural policies from the Lisbon and Portuguese national government culture area. Their presence at the conference and the quality of the interventions described made clear the increasing relevance of urban creativity in the city of Lisbon and in the national and international panorama. Further, the participation of international authors representing curatorial, museological and commercial approaches contributed to a 360° perception of sustainability practices and conservation problematics. Of particular relevance was the delicate line of tension between illegal and commercial – which delineates the necessarily dual behavior of the field, with one original side informal and the other formal – challenging the durability of these processes.

The opinions shared in the conference about the production of spontaneity raised some provocative questions, in response to which a variety of distinct strategies were presented – giving emphasis to the where, how, and why, but less relevance to the what and who. This volume of the SAUC Scientific Journal takes these debates conversations forward in presenting a series of papers tightly focused on the issues of intangible heritage and knowledge transfer, and the range of strategic responses to these challenges that could be adopted. We hope that this volume is both a timely resource and a reminder of the positive and productive debates and conversations held at the SAUC 2017 conference.

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Mind the trap: Street art, visual literacy, and visual resistance

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Abstract

Street art is used in political contexts by both powerful players and resistance movements. To understand how images make meaning and are constantly being negotiated between rule and resistance, a visual literacy must be fostered. I have therefore introduced an interdisciplinary methodology for critical visual analysis that allows for the differentiated examination of images in the interplay of rule and resistance and considers the specific features of street art. This analytical framework aims to foster a cross-fertilization between visual culture and political science and more specifically, International Relations.

Keywords: Resistance, Critical Visual Analysis, Visual Culture, Visual Literacy, Street Art, Political Science

1. Introduction

Street art images often come with an aura of resistance. In the media coverage of recent international protests, street art photographs illustrated the *Occupy* movement, the “Arabellion”, or the European financial crisis. The street art produced during the Egyptian revolution is said to have played an important role in the protests (Abaza 2012). It is even thought that the civil war in Syria was triggered by a piece of graffiti in Dara’a (Asher-Shapiro 2016). For it conveys knowledge and narratives – whether historical or contemporary – from the local level across linguistic borders, street art seems to serve as a tool for transnational communication and protest in times of political conflict.

Street art has been recognized as a research subject in numerous academic disciplines (e.g., media and communication studies, cultural and urban studies, anthropology, sociology, and art history). Ironically, one of the few disciplines that does not seem to be interested in investigating the *political* potential of street art is political science. Even though street art is ubiquitous in urban spaces and is frequently used to convey political messages transnationally, often referring to international politics, political science and its sub-discipline International Relations (IR) – tend to marginalize it as a social phenomenon of youth and hip-hop culture. Although in IR the political impact of visual practices is gradually being considered (e.g., Bleiker

2011; 2015; Hansen 2014), there is almost no research on street art as a means of transnational protest communication (one of the few exceptions is Ryan 2016).

In the light of the above, I am asking: What can we learn from street art about visual resistance in the interplay with political power structures? In doing so, I assume that resistance is rarely “pure” but rather stands in a dialectically entangled relationship with power and rule. “Looking is a practice [which] involves learning to interpret and [...] involves relationships of power” (Sturken & Cartwright 2001: 10). Thus, in the face of the political presence of street art, political science must investigate both how street art acts within power structures and how knowledge for critical interpretation can be produced. Because of its seemingly subversive aura, street art is not only being employed by civil society and resistance movements but also by powerful (commercial and state) players who make use of its hipness, street credibility, and resistance chic for propaganda and marketing reasons. It is thus constantly being negotiated between appropriation and re-appropriation. Both viewers and producers might find it hard to interpret the fine nuances of rule and resistance involved. They are at risk of falling into the trap of either (often subtle) political ideology and propaganda or neo-liberal appropriation and depoliticization. Either way, awareness must be increased.

In my research, I contribute to this aim in four ways. First, I introduce street art as a research subject of IR. Second, I intend to refine the theory of visual resistance (and power), which has been developed by scholars in visual culture (e.g., Mirzoeff 2011) to mutually enrich both research fields (IR and visual culture). Third, I have developed an interdisciplinary heuristic of critical visual analysis that allows for a differentiated examination of how images work in the interplay of rule and resistance and considers the specific features of street art. Finally, I aim to shift the focus from a rather disempowering critical perspective towards one that stresses the agency of the social subject and, through visual literacy, empowers it for both an informed critical image consumption and (counter)production.

2. Visual power, visual resistance

In academia, the increasing commercialization and incorporation of street art into the art market has attracted much attention. However, social science concepts of the dialectically entangled relationship between political rule and resistance – in particular from critical and postcolonial theory (e.g., Bhabha 1994; Foucault 1978: 95) – have rarely been applied. Nevertheless, I argue that the use of street art perfectly illustrates the constant negotiation between power and resistance.

Building upon critical theory and cultural studies, scholars in the field of visual culture assume that: “[to] explore the meaning of images is to recognize that they are produced within dynamics of social power and ideology” (Sturken & Cartwright 2001: 21). For visual culture abandons the former



Fig. 1: Avenida de Mayo, Buenos Aires; March 2016; artists: Red Sudakas, Fileteadores del Conurbano, Lucas Quinto, Sergio Condori, Pericles, Eric Chareun, Ruben Minutoli (photo: Lisa Bogerts).

discrimination between “high” and popular culture and blurs the lines between academic disciplines, I argue for further cross-fertilization between IR and visual culture.

However, critical theory can have a rather disempowering effect because it assumes the inescapable involvement of the social subject within power structures and dominant ideology – a perspective that leaves little hope for social change. Visual literacy must stress the agency of the social subject in the constant power struggle and assume that there is always room for counter-hegemonic action by political movements or subversive cultural tactics, especially with the help of images and popular culture (Hall 1993; Gramsci 1971; Sturken & Cartwright 2001: 54, 69).

3. Visual literacy: A methodology

To foster visual literacy one must first be aware of the different levels on which an image makes meaning and subsequently assemble relevant context information. While one level indicates a resistant character, another level might reveal the simultaneous entanglement of the image within power structures. One must thus apply an interdisciplinary multi-level framework for critical visual analysis. Building on Gillian Rose’s (2016) four-level approach (production, the image itself, circulation, and audiencing) as well as other visual methodologies, I suggest the differentiation of seven levels of analysis.

First, on the legal level (*L level*), it is important whether the image is authorized or unlawful and thus self-authorized. Second, regarding the spatial dimension (*S level*), one examines the location and the architectural surface of the image, which might indicate a political purpose and/or symbolic occupation of space. Third, on the level of time (*T level*), one regards the historical moment in which the image was produced and displayed to identify possible political occasions. Fourth, on the material level (*M level*), it is considered whether the technique and the material of the image indicate a political meaning. Fifth, we consider the social position of the producer(s) (*P level*) which entails both the author(s) and, if there are any, the principals/financiers. An anonymous artist might indicate an unauthorized and potentially subversive act in which the producer wishes to remain unknown. Sixth, the iconological content of the image (*I level*) is interpreted in view of the symbolic meaning of both *what* is depicted and *how* it is depicted. On the seventh level, one examines whether the image entails any social, political, or economic reactions by its audience, an

aspect which Rose (2016) calls the audiencing of the image (*A level*).

4. Critical visual analysis: A brief example

To illustrate how this systematic way of approaching street art would work in a real world situation, I provide the example of a street art image¹ from Buenos Aires (Fig. 1). I will analyze the most important features of this image with respect to the seven levels mentioned above.²

Starting with the *L level*, the artwork depicted does not break the law because the owner of the building has been tolerating it since the wall was first painted in 2013.³ Whereas the building is vacant and does not indicate a political meaning in itself (*S level*), it is located in downtown Buenos Aires on Avenida de Mayo (connecting Plaza del Congreso and Plaza de Mayo), which is the hub of political life in Argentina and one of the capital’s main routes for political marches. The image is dated March 24th, 2016 (*T level*), only a few months after the current center-right government led by president Mauricio Macri had ended 12 years of leftist Kirchnerism in Argentina. According to the artists, they repaint the wall every year on the anniversary of the coup d’état that started the last military dictatorship in Argentina (1976–1983).⁴ Looking at the material level (*M-level*), we see a large (approx. 12×7m) mural. In Latin America, political muralism is traditionally associated with the populist politics of socialist regimes (e.g., in the Mexican muralism of the 1930s). The mural was painted by several artists and art collectives (see caption Fig. 1) in a participatory community event (*P level*), and was supported by the state workers’ trade union, ATE. Whereas the artists claim to be institutionally independent and do not receive financial support from any party, they mainly identify with (Kirchnerist) Peronism and Latin American leftist regionalism, and are occasionally commissioned by

1. In this article, for the sake of simplicity, I employ the term street art in a broad sense for very different visual media, including murals. However, both artistic features and political self-conceptions vary widely.

2. This example is taken from my PhD thesis (forthcoming) in which I am investigating the case of anti-imperialist visual resistance in Latin American metropolises, namely Buenos Aires, Bogotá, Caracas, and Mexico City.

3. Interview with members of *Red Sudakas* on Nov. 30, 2016, in Buenos Aires.

4. Interview with members of *Red Sudakas* and Lucas Quinto on Nov. 30, 2016, in Buenos Aires.

Kirchnerist-led institutions such as national ministries or municipalities.⁵ Some of the participating artists are involved in international cooperations to promote both their art and political convictions and have thus gained visibility beyond the borders of Argentina.⁶

Regarding the iconology (*I level*), I offer the following interpretation: the image depicts the struggle by “the people” of Latin America symbolized, inter alia, by a *Madre de Plaza de Mayo* and several symbols of native populations such as the sun and the Wiphala rainbow flag in socialist realist style (on the left side). Their resistance is directed against the international finance capital, symbolized by the logotypes of transnational corporations⁷, as well as an eagle (i.e., the USA) and vultures (i.e., vulture funds) operating President Macri like a marionette (on the right side). In the center of the image, the slogan “40 años – ni olvido ni perdón” reminds us of the anniversary of the coup d’état in 1976 as part of the anti-Communist and pro-neoliberal *Operation Condor* in Latin America, which was supported by the CIA and the US government. The slogan “América Latina – ahora o nunca” is the title of a 1967 text by ex-President Juan Perón, the founding father of Peronism, promoting Latin American regional integration for both the preservation and the defense of the continent’s natural resources.⁸ As the artists’

5. Interviews with members of *Red Sudakas* and Lucas Quinto on Nov. 30, 2016, as well as with Sergio Condori and Valeria Orfino on Nov 29, 2016, in Buenos Aires. A notable example of a government-commissioned mural by *Red Sudakas* (and other artists) is the 50 m long “ALCArajo” mural at the *Constitución* train station in Buenos Aires, which depicts heroes of anti-colonialism/(neo)imperialism remembering the 2005 defeat of the *Free Trade Area of the Americas* (ALCA) in Mar de Plata led by Néstor Kirchner and other left-wing presidents such as Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales; <http://cuestionentrriana.com.ar/urribarri-y-tomada-inauguraron-mural-en-constitucion/> (6/19/2017)

6. See for example <http://periodicosic.com.ar/2013/11/13/murales-que-rescatan-la-identidad-latinoamericana/> (6/19/2017)

7. Namely *Monsanto* (agrochemical/-cultural biotechnology), *Shell* (oil and gas), *JP Morgan* (investment banking) and *Barrick* (gold mining) in addition to *Clarín* media group (for the battle over the Argentine media law, see <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/southamerica/argentina/10413163/Argentine-court-approves-media-law-forcing-breakup-of-key-critic.html>; 6/20/2017))

8. <http://www.elciudadano.cl/politica/america-latina-ahora-o-nunca-la-doctrina-ecologica-de-juan-domingo-peron/11/18/>

own description suggests, the image is intended to express resistance against Argentina’s international debt (which was questioned by the Kirchner government but is acknowledged by ultra-neoliberal businessman Macri) and the “surrender” of the country – and the whole of Latin America – to the international capitalist market.⁹ With regard to audiencing (*A level*), photographs of the mural have been shared and commented online, not only by the artists themselves but also on social media platforms (with either touristic, artistic, or political backgrounds). According to the artists, the 2015 version of the mural was vandalized by unknowns.¹⁰ In 2016, the repainting of the image was accompanied by the annual March 24 demonstration against the oblivion of the junta’s victims, which was also directed against US interventionism and international debt policy.¹¹ Photographs of the mural appeared in both domestic and international media.¹² Furthermore, the association of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* used a cutout of the angry *madre* (see *I level*) for several mobilization posters e.g., for a resistance march against Macri in August 2016.¹³

Without a doubt, there are – as always in both academia and art – various possible interpretations of the material. To provide reliable findings, a more detailed analysis of the complex content and context is required. Nevertheless, this summary provides an initial insight of how international politics (in particular, Latin American regional identity and integration as well as neo-imperialist political and economic interventionism), frequently interlinked with domestic politics, are negotiated in street art and how resistance is expressed by means of cultural identity. The example also illustrates that the resistant character of an image is often debatable and intertwined with power relations. Although the

(6/19/2017)

9. <http://redsudakas.blogspot.com/2016/03/a-40-anos-del-golpe-civico-militar.html> (6/19/2017)

10. Interview with members of *Red Sudakas* on Nov. 30, 2016, in Buenos Aires.

11. Ibid.

12. See for example <http://www.cnbc.com/2017/05/04/argentinas-economic-recovery-following-macris-visit-to-trump.html> (6/20/2017)

13. <http://madres.org/index.php/vuelve-la-marcha-la-resistencia-viernes-26-agosto-las-17-horas-plaza-mayo/> (6/20/2017); In turn, the conservative newspaper *Clarín* published an online article on memes mocking the image, see https://www.clarin.com/sociedad/memes-Marcha-Resistencia_0_ry4WpWCq.html (6/20/2017).

Kirchnerist party supported by some of the artists employed a discourse of resistance against external interventionism and is now in the opposition, it was in power of the highest government posts until only recently (and was, moreover, often accused of populism and even authoritarianism¹⁴).

5. Mind the trap

With the help of this differentiated methodological framework, images can be analyzed with a special attention to the fine nuances and ambiguities that may be caused by the dialectically entangled relation between rule and resistance. It helps us to understand how street art images are employed for different political purposes and how the trap of misreading or, more precisely, “mislooking”, can be avoided. That is not to say that there are “right” and “wrong” interpretations. Image perception varies according to the individual experiences and knowledge of the observer. The meaning is thus literally in the eye of the beholder. However, it is sometimes difficult to understand the context, intended message, and purpose of an image and to decide upon possible interpretations and reactions. It can thus be helpful to understand *how* images create meaning(s) of the world. On that basis, one can explore tactics that “might offer resistant practices to dominant hegemonic readings of cultural products” (Sturken & Cartwright 2001: 69) i.e., ways of oppositional looking or even counter-action (Hall 1993).

Of course, like every research finding, this methodology can also turn against resistance practices. It can be applied by those powerful players who employ knowledge of street art for their own purposes or even aim to oppress resistance. The German Armed Forces recently asked me to advise their Department of Strategic Communication on street art and graffiti in Afghanistan that “might contain hidden messages for the troops”. Researchers must always be aware of unintended consequences that can put emancipatory activism at risk and thus strengthen forces of control and domination.

Shifting the focus towards the agency of social subjects, this critical approach will help to explore possibilities of how people can challenge or resist dominant ideology with the help of the visual and, in turn, foster awareness for the risk

of both subtle depoliticization and propaganda. Please mind the trap.

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Whisper finders: Learning from Shoreditch. March 2017

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Abstract

Whisper Finders: Learning from Shoreditch is a personal reflection after ten years of research about the Art History of Street Art in Shoreditch, paying special attention to the iconological level of analysis and the several social and historical circumstances that made Shoreditch one of the most iconic places for Street Art as an art movement. The tone of the paper, pushing boundaries beyond academic borders and inspired by the ethos of Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, strives to reach wider audiences and engage fellow art historians and academics in an active social discussion.

Keywords: Art History, Art Theory, Shoreditch, Street Art, Tours, Paolozzi

1. Introduction

This paper, 'Whisper finders: Learning from Shoreditch', borrows its title from the book 'Learning from Las Vegas' (Venturi, et al., 1972). It is the result of ten years of research and personal reflection about the Art History of Street Art in London, mainly focusing on its development and evolution within the area of the East End, taking Brick Lane and Shoreditch as the centre of the investigation. For this research, the equivalent of the Summa Artis would be Hookedblog (www.hookedblog.co.uk) and Vandalog (www.vandalog.com); the main libraries would be The Black Rat Press, Pure Evil Gallery, and the Stolen Space; and the school, Shoreditch Street Art Tours with NoLionsInEngland¹ as the tutor. For that reason please allow me to depart from my academic tone of Art Historian for the prestigious University Complutense of Madrid, and be a little bit more casual in this paper.

After five years in the study of the History of Art, and three of a traditional doctorate in Contemporary Art, all in the University Complutense of Madrid, this research fixed London as the centre of the matter of study. The fieldwork was established there because there was something special happening particularly in the East part of town. Over time, Hip-Hop Graffiti gave birth to Post Graffiti movements (i.e.

Abstract Graffiti, Calligraphiti, or Hyper-realistic Graffiti) and other bastard sons, more disrespectful to the non-written rules of traditional graffiti, that together started to create a visual landscape closer to the paintings that could be studied at a university degree in history of art. Also, there was this artist called Banksy doing very unusual artistic interventions. Several interesting circumstances were showing that, following the humanistic spirit, it was necessary to know more about this entire social and artistic panorama. Moreover, to reach an understanding of the Iconological level (Panofsky, 1939)² it is necessary to understand the culture, in a holistic sense, of that art movement. And why Shoreditch? Because it was considered as one of the international capitals of street art (Schacter, 2013)³, and thanks to its level of pieces, and pictorial quality of the artists who painted there, it is easy to believe that.

2. A tour around Shoreditch

When talking about Shoreditch and street art, the next word that usually comes to mind is tours. So, please allow yourself to be taken for a tour in Shoreditch so we can talk about the things happening there and why this is relevant to us today. To understand why this art movement finds a place in the East End we need to understand a little bit of the history of Shoreditch. At the Old City of London extra

muros, legend (and Wikipedia) says it owes its name to Jane Shore, mistress of a king, who was buried in a ditch in this part of town⁴. Shoreditch was also known as Suburbs of Sin during Shakespeare's times, who as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men would have walked the streets of Shoreditch. Next to both The Theatre and The Curtain is now a wall with street art.

It is important to talk also about the different waves of immigration that made this area special. If we talk about Street Art, the map is not just the Shoreditch that is actually part of Hackney Council, but also the Brick Lane area, that belongs to Tower Hamlets Council. The fact of their separation by council does not take the feeling of being part of the same place. The Old Nichol, the slum that hosted Boundary Estate, which is one (or the) oldest council estates in the world, was perhaps also part of this same neighborhood. Obviously, it is not the same Old Street as Heneage Street but the whole area feels connected somehow. That area around Brick Lane historically has received several waves of immigration (Cox, 2013). First were the Huguenots, then the Jewish community, after them

the Bangladeshi one, and nowadays, among many other young people, are the Europeans (many of them Spaniards) who populate those streets, at least until Brexit. The fact of being one of the most historically deprived neighborhoods in the United Kingdom doesn't help the traditional popular perception of the neighborhood as a dangerous place. As an excuse for that opinion, the sole mention of Jack the Ripper makes sense but it is not only the legendary killer who used this area for his crimes. Prostitution and drug dealing were historically present around Brick Lane. In fact, the infamous gangsters, the Kray twins had their local pub, The Blind Beggar, just around the corner. Near there is Bethnal Green Station, "the worst civilian disaster of World War II" that was actually not a bombing - some still consider it a case of public negligence⁵. This was an area full of industry. The silk weaving of the Huguenots and the small leather factories of the Bangladeshi community, plus the big complex of the Truman Brewery made the traditionally working class spirit of Bethnal Green extend around this area. Many of these small and big factories will become artist's studios over time (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Artists studios, Old Truman Brewery, London 2013. Will Edgecombe.

When a neighborhood is perceived as dangerous, the rent is cheaper and therefore more affordable than in other parts of town, and this is an area that was a clear example of that. Also, the limited public investment in an area with traditional criminal activity left room to maneuver for the graffiti writers and street artists who prefer to practice without having to ask for permission, (with the philosophical, logistical and practical effects which it implies). All these circumstances make this Old Nichol a perfect breeding ground for this artistic movement. However, something else is needed.

Sometimes it is the individual and collaborative effort of several individuals or groups that makes all of this possible. It would be worth mentioning here Jonathan and The Foundry, now Ew Leal and The Red. This is necessary because to understand Street Art in London, to understand the exhibitions is important. And the first ones used to be at The Foundry. Then the phenomenon of the artist-run galleries started in the area with the Stolen Space of D*Face, Pure Evil and the Pure Evil Gallery, Dale H Grimshaw and the Signal Gallery... And Pictures on Walls, maybe also with artists involved (as Steve Lazarides says in the program: "Rear Window: Art for Everyone? Elite Art in Age of Populism

by Professor Julian Stallabrass)⁶. Artist-run galleries are essential to understanding why Shoreditch has such an important place in this art movement. And it's because, while in Barcelona or Berlin there are always walls, there were not so many places to do art exhibitions, or at least not in the same conditions as in London. International artists came to London to do amazing shows, and from there the sky was the limit.

3. A different way of art

Artist-run galleries are very special places. When you go to see art you usually go to museums and it is almost like going to the temple, to the church. These are spaces where people behave politely and sometimes kids don't feel very comfortable, unless the gallery, like the wonderful Whitechapel Gallery, actively welcomes children. You also have the chance to go to commercial art galleries. Commercial art galleries tend not to be very welcoming places either. If you look like someone who might not have the budget to buy art there, sometimes the personnel are not very nice. An anonymous visitor might complain that they are looked at judgmentally and asked if they are a friend



Fig. 2. Martha Cooper at Stolen Space, London, 2016. Will Edgecombe.

of the artist. But artist-run galleries, especially around this mentioned area usually tend to enjoy a much more relaxed and welcoming approach. This is especially present during the openings of new exhibitions when fans could have the chance to meet the artist while asking their questions and taking photos with them (Fig. 2).

Graffiti and Street Art are also very special in this sense. And it is because when things are in the streets they are special. Why do some people come to Shoreditch and freak out? Why do they love it so much? Probably because in this small world, art is not just for the few. Art is something you go to see in museums and art galleries and the general neighbors of deprived areas like Tower Hamlets don't usually pay a visit to these kinds of places because they don't feel very welcomed there. If you go to see contemporary art without having any previous knowledge of what are you going to see, it could happen that you get stuck in front of a painting until you get a meaning, but it usually doesn't really work that way. When art historians developed high modernism, conceptual art, and the way to talk about it, they also created a big gap between Art History and society.

And suddenly art is there, in the street, visiting you without prior notice, or even permission, and you are a participant in an artistic experience. Suddenly art is part of your day. There is a special magic in that feeling. Comparing art to sound, sometimes the art piece is as big as a shout, other times it is what some like to call whispers, small hidden pieces that to be experienced you have to keep your eyes peeled - like Javier Abarca's mention in *Urbanario* of Lachlan McDowall's *Pokemon Go* article (MacDowell, 2016). That is a nice thing to try to teach when doing street art tours: to show the guests how to keep their eyes opened. To do that the metaphor of the *Matrix* film is a great example: imagine seeing with the tour guide's eyes. It usually works, the guests then come to a new world, where they talk about many things related to Street Art as an art movement. One of the most fulfilling parts of doing street art tours is to have the chance to talk with guests from all backgrounds, for example, a conversation with grandmas about the difference between a tag, a throw-up, and a piece; apart from the fact that usually, the guests clap at the end. Also at the end, talking about Banksy, it is good to talk about poking bubbles. Artists use a sense of humor to help us process the social critique, like the sugar coating of the pill. They poke the bubbles of our comfort

zones, to make us awake. That awakening is not only social and political, it is also physical. It refers to our relationship with the street.

In the modern urbanism where places of play and meeting like the square and the park are replaced gradually by shopping centres and commercial interests, it is harder to find "the urban flâneur" that Javier Abarca mentioned in his conference about Graffiti and psychogeography on May 2016 at the Facultad de Bellas Artes of Universidad Politécnica of Valencia. Cities are usually perceived as dangerous and their non-commercial streets as hostile. Fear is a major part of the relationship of general society with the streets. That perception of the space changes when you have art on it. And if you can relate to that piece of artwork the experience can be even more powerful and pleasant. Don Francisco Calvo Serraller used to explain in his classes of Impressionist Painting at the Complutense University of Madrid, how to look at art showing the alumni the beauty of a single asparagus. If you can see the paint over the matter, the beauty over everything else, you are in that *Matrix* mentioned before. It seems different worlds to talk about Manet and Graffiti, but they belong in the same world. It is a world where we can see deeper and where the human experience is more human, and so are we.

There is something special in transmitting that experience, in transmitting your passion. Art historians tend to be very passionate, maybe because when you are an art historian there is not much of another option. You have to be passionate about art. Why the passion? Because it is a very difficult profession, you have to study a lot and it is not one of the most demanded ones, usually there are not so many (even minimally paid) relevant job vacancies for art historians. So you really need to love art. If you are just a traditional art historian you will be someone that does not create art yourself. So you have to be "really, really, really passionate, crazy about art" to become an art historian. If so, you have to be madly passionate to be into Street Art. We - critics and art historians - tend to be perceived as very snobby people. We like our big words; we like to use them at all possible times. We feel an almost "internal pleasure" in showing how intelligent we are, and how cultured we are, and how much we dominate language and knowledge. But I understand art and I understand knowledge as a language, a language that the more you know the better you talk. And at the end talking is transmitting a message (thoughts or feelings)⁷.

Traditional History of Art has created a big difference between high culture and low culture, and we are now moving in a very close line between them both. For that reason sometimes we need to revisit our relationship with what was considered low culture and touch it to embrace it. To make us remember that we are here not only for the ones that would read our papers and the other art historians, if not for the interest of the general public, for the society in general, and society as a whole. Post-modernist discussion created a kind of high snobbism in contemporary art that changed the way art historians speak to people. Creating a contemporary art full of codes which if you don't understand you are lost. Maybe art historians can take some of those codes away. It seems a cry of attention: we need to be able to transmit our knowledge. But for that we need people to understand us.

4. Paolozzi and the separation between high and low art

It is not necessary to go too far from Brick Lane to better understand the tension between high and low culture. In this theoretical tour, a visit to the Whitechapel Art Gallery can fit properly. Created next to the Whitechapel Library, a "lantern for learning" in the East End⁸, and always dedicated to the showing of Contemporary Art, the Whitechapel Gallery has in its list of exhibitions some of the greatest artists of the last hundred years. The first exhibition on Rothko in Britain was there. Frida Kahlo had a show with Tina Modotti there too, and even the most famous painting of Picasso, The Guernica, was shown there in 1938 (and visitors paid with boots)⁹. Following a more recent exhibition list that includes Gillian Wearing and Sarah Lucas, and just after William Kentridge's 'Thick Time' exhibition, the Whitechapel Gallery presented a retrospective with over 300 pieces of artwork by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi.

That closeness between high art and low art has a strong presence in the art of Sir Eduardo Paolozzi. As seen in this retrospective exhibition during 2017, Paolozzi had a deep taste for primitive art. He used to complain about the lack of understanding for that kind of art in Britain in his introduction to the exhibition 'Lost Magic Kingdoms and Six Paper Moons from Nahuatl. An exhibition at the Museum of Mankind' in 1985 in London titled 'Primitive Art, Paris and London.' There, Paolozzi commented:

"In those days most people in England were just not interested in carvings from Africa and the Pacific and art students were rarely (..) encouraged to go and look at such things. (...) This neglect of the primitive was, I feel, part of a wider English insularity. It is that insularity, for example, which still feels that such things are- with the exception of Henry Moore not part of the history of modern art. There was and is a dislike for both the primitive and the modern."

(Paolozzi, 1985)

Paolozzi, as commented in the essay *Pop Art Redefined* by Daniel F. Herrmann, curator of the Whitechapel show, was an "avid reader of Amédée Ozenfant's 'Foundations of Modern Art', an introduction to art that did away with stylistic genealogy. Instead, it posted structural resemblances between all cultural forms of the centers of artistic production (..). Here art (..) was to be found in the vast repository of "everyday life experience" from aerial photography to mechanical drawing" (Herrmann, 2017)

Paolozzi himself commented in the catalog of *Lost Magic Kingdoms* about finding a copy of the original book in the public library while stationed at Buxton "that was a revelation". (...) "There was that special French sensibility which was able to embrace all those different sorts of things at once, at the same time, each with each." (Paolozzi, 1985) That is the contemporary spirit in Paolozzi, that holistic understanding. That is what gives him a seat in the glorious list of talents that advance History of Art:

I still find that French approach, the need, the passion, to consider and handle things at the same time quite endearing, and very necessary for me. And it also justifies the reason I had to leave London in the 1940's and go to France - just to show I was not such an oddball. And I have lived by that ever since, the concern with different materials, disparate ideas and to me that is the excitement: it became almost a description of the creative art to juggle with these things. (ibid)

It is probably this sensibility for all things at once that gave to Paolozzi the "primogeniture" (Herrmann, 2017) of Pop Art as an art movement. When talking about Street Art it is normal to mention Pop Art and compare both art movements. The same happens with the artistic figures of Banksy and Andy



Fig. 3. Paolozzi murals at Tottenham Court Road Station, London 2017. Dave Stuart.

Warhol that have been compared in several exhibitions and that share the understanding of how society works and how to talk back to it. But in Paolozzi the level is deeper. Pop for Paolozzi references popular culture, but in the bigger sense of the term, popular culture as general culture. And general culture as all forms of culture, from the primitive to the futurist, from science to fantasy, from bronze to screen print, from fishermen to pin-up girls. Paolozzi knows how to find beauty in the asparagus and is trying to show us.

With his taste for 'non-art' shared with Independent Group friends and his "drive" in the Bunk! lecture, with "his method of collaging sculpture that blatantly disregarded the sculptural dogma of older generations" (ibid), with 'Patio and Pavilion' at the This is Tomorrow exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1956, and the Hammer Prints Ltd (1954), Paolozzi acted as a hidden Picasso, an artist who opened many doors for following artistic generations. He would be a great street artist. His taste for the wall can be appreciated in his large murals (like the ones in Kingfisher

Shopping Centre, Redditch done in 1981)¹⁰, and his love for the tube in the designs for Tottenham Court Road (Image 3). He also left us a nice collection of public sculptures, so he shared our taste for art in the streets.

5. Conclusion: Art for everybody

Maybe it is from Paolozzi that we can understand how to find a new tone. Maybe, sometimes, as academics we go to our very high chairs in our very high academic places and we forget that this kind of art, graffiti and street art, is meant to be for people in the streets. For everybody. To make us realize that it is important to know that we are living in very special times. When I'm in the tour I usually tell people that when I was a student I used to imagine how cool it would be to live in Velazquez's time and seeing *The Meninas* for the first time and think "oh, how risky!", or living in Picasso's time and seeing the *Guernica* for the first time and find yourself thinking "what is this?" and seeing the first trains crossing New York in the Subway and saying "why does it say Dondi there?, why is there a Mickey Mouse on a train

saying Merry Christmas?”, and all this crazy, magical stuff. Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to confess, I really think we are living in Banksy’s time. I really think we are very, very, very lucky arty people. Because we are living through one of the most amazing art movements of all times. When Ben Eine is interviewed for the video of OUTSIDE IN Art in the Streets MOCA exhibition, he said that Graffiti “is bigger than Pop. (...) it is the biggest art movement ever” (OUTSIDE IN The Story of Art in the Streets, Ben Eine- min 2.40)¹¹.

And I always think that this is the quotation that I’m going to put on the cover of my doctoral thesis. Because I truly believe it. I truly believe that we are very lucky arty people who are living a very special time. A time when art doesn’t need to be in the temple, doesn’t need to be in the market, suddenly it is on the streets, and suddenly we can relate to it in a very different way, suddenly it can catch us off guard like the bronze sculptures of British artist Jonesy (Image 4), those whispers as we called them before. All these new artistic experiences make a really new generation with a very different visual landscape. And hopefully, let’s try to be positive, I want to believe, that all that we have passed from the history of Graffiti with Taki183, and Dondi and Futura, and to the 90s generation, and the 2000s, and Banksy, and Faile, and El Mac, and Swoon... to all of these wonderful artists making their art on the streets for the enjoyment of the general public, have created a new way of art. That is a massive call from society to get down from our chairs, to change our tone, and be able to transmit our knowledge because this world needs art historians, this world needs us, this world needs academics... this world needs art. We also need to poke their bubbles. To wake them up. We are creating zombie societies that are only driven by commercial status, or forces. During one of the most exciting moments of the universal history of art a large percentage of society is unaware. *Panem et circenses* have created an over stimulated, over saturated society that has lost surprise, imagination, and empathy.

As art historians it is also our job to educate the public. To make them realize what is happening and how they can participate in all of this. And we, art historians, academics and public in general, need to be people of our time, and we need to participate in our culture. It is important to go to your local art gallery, to join their mailing list, to support your local or international artist, to buy some artwork. If I can do it, you can do it too.

Finally, I would like to take Mr. Jeffrey Deitch as an example. Deitch is the mastermind behind the prestigious art organization Deitch Projects (www.deitch.com), one of those projects was the ‘Street Market’ of Barry McGee, Steve Powers, and Todd James. He is also the curator along with Aaron Rose and Roger Gastman as associate curators, of the 2011 Art in The Streets exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Francisco, while he was also the director of the museum. That exhibition helped to raise the level not only of display and the transmission of knowledge that an art exhibition presents, but also the deep understanding of an art movement and all those aspects of intangible culture that comes with it. Those aspects that are essential to its being. These two being the main topics of this Urban Creativity III congress call for papers, I feel the obligation to acknowledge Jeffrey Deitch publicly in a forum like this, someone who might not be a Ph.D. laureate but is a master for all of us who have the chance to learn from his work, to learn how to take this art movement to the place that it deserves in Art History, to the place where it belongs in society.

Because again, as Eine said in that video for Art in The Streets at MOCA (OUTSIDE IN The Story of Art in the Streets, Ben Eine- min 2.40):

When I first got into graffiti and it was like thousands of kids all over the world doing it. I was like - This is such a massive art movement, it is unbelievable. And it has taken, like, 25 years for it to get here. And reading one of the posters in the art gallery and it said “possibly the largest art movement since pop”, and it is bigger than pop art. And it is gonna, yeah, it is the biggest art movement ever.



Fig. 4. Jonesy sculpture, London 2017. Dave Stuart.

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Notes

¹ Dave Stuart. See acknowledgment. www.shoreditchstreetarttours.co.uk

² Panofsky (1939 - 30), from *Studies in Iconology: Intrinsic meaning or content*. It is apprehended by ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion qualified by one personality and condensed into one work.

³ Schacter (2013:153) Northern Europe, Cept: the Shoreditch and Hackney areas of east London—now a world center of graffiti and street art.

⁴ This legend is commemorated today by a large painting, at Haggerston Branch Library, of Jane Shore being retrieved from the ditch, and by a design on glazed tiles in a shop in Shoreditch High Street showing her meeting Edward IV.[2] Clunn, H.P. (1970) *The Face of London*. Spring Books: London: 312, 493. Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoreditch>

⁵ 300 people were crushed into the stairwell within a few seconds, 173 of them died and over 90 were injured. Available at: <http://www.stairwaytoheavenmemorial.org>

⁶ Stallabrass, Julian (2017) *Rear Window: Art for Everyone? Elite Art in Age of Populism*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Sm4UxQkQQg&app=desktop>

⁷ The expression of or the ability to express thoughts and feelings by articulate sounds (Speech definition Oxford Dictionaries). Available at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/speech>

⁸ Whitechapelgallery.org Available at: <http://www.whitechapelgallery.org/downloads/AMP.pdf>

⁹ The gallery was, and remains, free to all but in this case there was a proposed admission charge: a pair of workman's boots in good enough condition to be donated to the republican cause. They stood beneath the picture in massed ranks. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/mar/29/whitechapel-gallery-picasso>

¹⁰ Eduardo Paolozzi Kingfisher Shopping Centre, murals Redditch. Image available at: <http://c20society.org.uk/murals-campaign/22-eduardo-paolozzi-mosaic-murals-1981/>

¹¹ Ben Eine min 2.40; OUTSIDE IN The Story of Art in the Streets. Available at: <https://vimeo.com/61768230>

List of Figures

1. Artists studios, Old Truman Brewery, London 2013. Will Edgecombe.
2. Martha Cooper at Stolen Space, London, 2016. Will Edgecombe.
3. Paolozzi murals at Tottenham Court Road Station, London 2017, Dave Stuart.
4. Jonesy sculpture, London 2017. Dave Stuart.

Power of paint: Political street art confronts the authorities

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Abstract

In the context of Spain's economic crisis, waves of protests have transformed the streets of Spanish cities into sites of place-specific spatial activism. City space has been shaped through protest, marches, squatting and street art. During Spain's austerity years, street art has become an important part of political participation. Based on artists' interviews and on my visual ethnographic research in the Spanish cities of Madrid (2013–2016) and Valencia (2016), this paper seeks to illuminate how political street art forms a part of social expression toward the authorities. Street art is a media through which artists can question decision-makers and challenge policies made by statesmen. The examples of political street art highlight how creative contestations become barometers of dissatisfaction and how street art confronts institutional power. Ultimately, political street art is argued in Spicca and Perdue's (2014) term as 'spatial citizenship' producing more polyphonic space.

Keywords: Political Street Art, Protest, Political Participation, Visual Ethnography, Spain

1. Presenting the scene:

Prime Minister in political turbulence

Walking on a narrow street in the neighborhood of Lavapies, which is an active painting zone in Madrid, I suddenly saw a painted dog between two store doors.

The dog had a plasma display in his head. My interest was provoked immediately by this particular work and this painting felt like a puzzle I had to resolve (Figure 1).

Mariano Rajoy became Prime Minister in 2011, about three years after the Spanish economy collapsed. To improve



Fig. 1. A dog with a plasma display in his head. Artist unknown. Photographed in Madrid, May 2014.

Spain's economic situation, Rajoy has implemented vast cuts on public services, including education, health and social care and impaired employment rights and conditions. The effects of these actions have had an impact on the daily lives of the citizens, who then began to protest against these austerity measures. After six years of practicing fierce austerity politics, Spain is still struggling economically, socially and politically. The unemployment rate at the end of 2016 was the second highest in Europe (Eurostat, 2017) and a large number of protests and demonstrations are held in Spain every day.

Several corruption charges against Rajoy's immediate entourage and party members have diminished his popularity, and the unpopularity of the Prime Minister has grown during his administration period. By the end of 2016 about 76% of the Spaniards respected him very little or not at all as a politician (CIE, 2017: 60). The dog in Figure 1 refers to Rajoy's unpopularity. In February 2013 Rajoy held a press conference about his party's Partido Popular members' alleged corruption and bribery charges. What was not expected by the journalists, was that Rajoy presented his speech via a plasma display in front of the media. During his press conference The Prime Minister did not accept any questions from the journalists. He was present in the same building just a few meters away but in another room. The headlines from this press conference was not the content of Rajoy's speech but the use of plasma display which was interpreted as "craziness" and "medieval" towards journalists (Periodista Digital, 2013). The press conference turned into an historical event.

The word 'dog' in Spanish language is 'perro' and is used as a negative description of a person. Perro refers to 'worthless, unpleasant and rotten person'. The passers-by who know about Rajoy's exceptional press conference are able to catch the meaning of the wall painting. The image does not need any words to clarify the painter's deep disapproval of the Prime Minister's actions. For me, as an outsider of Spain, figuring out the meaning of this painting started to reveal itself by typing 'plasma display Spain' in Google search.

A different piece about Mariano Rajoy was placed on a building in another popular street art district of Malasaña in Madrid. Compared to Figure 1, this poster is easier to place in its context: Rajoy's face is recognizable and the artist has

left clues for passers-by to catch the meaning of the work. Clues — the European Union's flag on the shirt collar and the big canines — indicate that the poster is a commentary on Rajoy's austerity measures. This reading is confirmed with a text 'menos es menos' (less is less) (see Figure 2). During Spain's financial crisis the European Union has demanded Rajoy's government to implement more austerity measures in order to pay Spain's foreign debt. Rajoy's structural adjustments have affected the Spanish welfare state especially on pension, health care and education. Also, due to Rajoy's labor reform, the average annual salaries have fallen back to year 2001 levels (Barbero, 2015: 271). With more than a third of children at risk of poverty, Spain is one of the worst developed countries in childhood inequality. The rate of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Spain has increased by 5% between 2008 and 2015 and is now one of the highest in Europe (Eurostat, 2016: 2).



Fig. 2. Menos es menos (Less is less). Artist: Noaz. Photographed in Madrid, April 2013.

The poster in Figure 2 is a work by Noaz who is a Madrid born and based artist. Most of his works could be classified as political or social street art. His focus during the last few years has been on EU politics and Spanish administrative actors¹. Noaz says his works target the political establishment and especially people whose “ideological or economic interests ruin the lives of those who have the least” (Archivo de Creadores de Madrid, 2010).

Noaz’s poster is a comment to the series of austerity measures Rajoy has implemented: Spanish people have less jobs, less money and less high-quality public services. There seems to be no end to the cuts that the Spanish government is making. In Figure 2 Rajoy has a cross in his forehead which I assume is a reference to the Catholic Church. Mariano Rajoy’s right-wing, conservative party has a close relationship with the Catholic Church. Commentary from the artist himself, Noaz, supports my interpretation:

The Spanish state is non-denominational and the Catholic Church should not be present in public institutions. Yet its coexistence within the legislative, judicial and executive powers as an accomplice has carried out the most conservative legislative decisions we have had in Spain over the last 38 years. Currently many members of the government, like judges and prosecutors of the Spanish State, belong to the Catholic sect of Opus Dei. The image of Mariano Rajoy with the cross responds to the characteristic that distinguishes this government from the previous one: now the influence of the Church is more direct. The hyena face (scavenger predator) represents our president: after its passage all that it leaves behind is carcass and death. A health care less and less equal and with less quality. An educational system emphasizing support on the private rather than the public sector. Teachers with less tools and equipment and with poor academic level.²

The poster is provocative: the prime minister Rajoy is portrayed as a predator. It is indicating that Rajoy makes cuts from the Spanish citizens in the name of the EU in an unjust manner and with drastic outcomes. Rajoy’s actions result in Spaniards having ‘less’ of everything. Due to Rajoy’s austerity implementations the proverb ‘Less is more’ does

not apply here. These two examples of street art (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) which I have presented above illustrate that different forms of street art can provide an opportunity to question the decisions made by the Spanish prime minister.

2. Political crises and street art in Spain

Ryan (2017: 5) describes political street art in the following manner:

a loose category for interventions whose creative and material use of street is in some way tied to their political meaning... it holds that to be political is not just to express political expressions but rather to be oriented toward society and to engage with its variegated terrains of power³.

I also agree with de Neve and Olteanu (2011: 79) who have stated that street art is used as a form of political participation in “order to clearly and briefly present or comment on political positions”. I include in the definition of political street art also an objective to “influence public opinion, policy, or government decision making” (Waldner & Dobratz, 2013: 378).

Many researchers before me have studied the relationship between street art/graffiti and political crisis. For example Goalwin (2013) has analyzed the situation in Northern Ireland; Hanauer (2004/2011), Rolston (2014) and Peteet (2016) have focused on the issues on the West Bank; Abaza (2016), Khatib (2013) and Smith (2015) have paid attention to the Arabic Spring; Tsilimpoudini (2012/2015) and Tulke (2014) have both researched street art in Athens during times of crisis.

In Spain, political street art has a long history as a communication tool in times of political changes. There are recorded examples from the beginning of the last century (see Chaffee, 1993: 38–65). Activists, artists and participants of social movements have always been aware of the political power of street art. Different street art forms, from posters to murals, have been utilized to express political ideas, to make claims and project opinions. Political street art has been present during periods of political turbulence such as dictatorship, elections and in the birth of Spanish democracy.

The latest boom in political street art in Spain began with the financial crisis in 2008. As I have demonstrated elsewhere

(see Tolonen, 2016), political wall writings, street art and graffiti cannot be considered as being separate from the rise of the anti-austerity 15M-movement in Spain. For example, political stencils had an important communication role in the ongoing movement. They have been used as tools to inform, activate as well as mobilize people and to strengthen the collective spirit (Tolonen, 2016: 214–224). Crisis can also motivate people to begin creating political street art. Madrid-based street artist Por Favor started painting street art because of the 15M-movement: “First, I was pasting posters in favor of 15M, but soon I needed to say in the streets what I was thinking” (Por Favor, 2015).

Political street art establishes new alternative spaces into the city. As Youkhana (2014: 174) describes it: “Thereby,

the artists reframe a public debate and sensitize for social drawbacks and political conflicts in order to challenge the hegemonic discourses and to mobilize a broader public”. This is important especially with issues that are excluded from the media. The Spanish public service media is struggling with its media transparency since it has both political and economical ties with the Spanish government (Arriza Ibarra & Nord 2014: 73, 81). This complex relationship has had an effect on the World Press Freedom Index of Spain. Spain was ranked at number 29 and the government was criticized for exercising an unusually bold control over the news program of the state radio and TV (Reporters Without Borders, 2017). Some street artists see this situation as a motive to spread criticism toward the political elite through their work: “The Spanish mass media is completely controlled by the



Fig. 3. Portrait of Rita Barberá. Artist unknown. Photographed in Valencia, October 2016

government” (Por Favor, 2015). In Spain, political street art has established its place as a medium for communication and contestation.

3. Target: Valencian Mayor Rita Barberá

At some point in their careers city authorities all around the world seem to be keen on trying to buff city walls. Spain does not make an exception to this. For example, former Madrid Mayor, Ana Botella, wanted to get rid of graffiti by pushing through restrictive legislation and hardening sanctions for illegal graffiti. As a reaction to this, Madrid-based artists formed a group called Ana Botella Crew. The group created pieces based on photos of Botella and criticized the mayor and her statements (ABC 2011; Ana Botella Crew, 2013)⁴.

Also the former Mayor of Valencia, Rita Barberá⁵, was determined to clean up the streets of Valencia. During her governance she organized systematic buffing operations in the city but the painters and artists fought back:

As soon as the pieces were covered over with grey paint, several more would soon pop up to the same spots. It was impossible for them to overpower us. It was a war between Valencian painters and Rita Barberá. But since we were determined not to surrender, the city authorities finally gave in.”⁶

Rita Barberá was a popular subject to street artists not only because of her anti-graffiti attitude but also because of her colorful political career. She was, among other things, investigated for money laundering. Valencian artists and writers have dedicated pieces to Rita. The messages in some works are faster to catch than others. For example, a small stencil of Rita Barberá in the old city of Valencia, in a popular nightlife street, is located in a small corner near ground level (Figure 3). By the staining and the odor in the corner, it is easy to confirm that Rita’s portrait seems to be designated as a urinating spot.

Rita Barberá is the topic of another noteworthy piece too, even if not so obvious. The mural is by Valencian street artist Escif. The painting in El Carmen, in the old city of Valencia, is unavoidable for the passers-by. It is a car with the text: ‘Todo lo que sobra’ (Everything in excess). (Figure 4)

The story behind Escif’s work is that Rita Barberá had her own personal car parked for free for more than two decades in the city premises. The car was parked in a garage from 1991, which was the beginning of her period as mayor. During this time, the car was not used at all, it just stood there in the same spot. When photographs of Barberá’s dusty car with flat wheels came out, some members of the Valencian town hall wanted her to pay the parking fee for the 23 years and called the car a symbol of Barberá’s way of ruling: “She does not seem to make any difference between the public and private funds or property and continues to take personal benefit from most of the situations” (El Diario 2014).

Escif’s piece ‘Everything in excess’ is yet another comment to the ones in political power: even in the era of economical crisis the political elite can afford to have a car without using it. They are also exploiting the public assets in order to make private benefits. The mural was made in March 2015⁷, but due to cuts in the anti-graffiti program in an era of financial crisis, the works tend to have a long lifespan. The piece does have some tags on the edges of it and when looking closely, it seems that Escif himself has recently done some touch-ups to the mural. Escif continued with the ‘Everything in excess’ theme and built a life-size replica of Barberá’s car and burnt it as part of the traditional Valencian festival, ‘Las Fallas’ (The Falles)⁸. The original idea of the celebration is very fitting to Escif’s work — to burn all things that are no longer needed.

Valencia’s former Mayor Rita Barberá may also be the only politician in the world to have a graffiti color named after her. In 2016 the Spanish graffiti color company Montana Colors released a new graffiti paint in order to remember Barberá’s attempt to buff the city of Valencia. The idea for the naming came from Escif and it is an appropriately grey color called Gris Rita (Rita Grey). It is “an ironic tribute to the Mayor Rita Barberá who was responsible for the disappearance of countless amounts of graffiti” (Montana Colors, 2016).

These two street art pieces that I have introduced above criticize the same person, Rita Barberá, but in a different way (see Fig. 3 and Fig. 4). The image used in Figure 3 is based on a photograph of Barberá but the reading relies heavily on the location of the work. The content in Figure 4 – a car with a text ‘Everything in excess’ – is probably incomprehensible for most passers-by and it needs some



Fig. 4. Todo lo que sobra (Everything in excess). Artist: Escif. Photographed in Valencia, November 2016.

background information in order to reveal the rather complex meaning of it. Still, both pieces illustrate the ways that street art confronts institutional power. Furthermore, Figure 4, if partly painted with color 'Rita Grey' as I suspect⁹, takes another stand. By painting the city of Valencia with grey – as Barberá intended – Escif is also demonstrating how the color can be used in the city in a more sophisticated way than buffing grey blocks into the walls.

4. Last but not least: King Philip VI and his sheeple

Near Valencia's main beach La Malvarrosa in the historic fishermen's quarter of Cabanyal, I spotted a human figure whose head is replaced by a power plug. The text around it contains Spanish words 'país' (country), 'borregos' (sheep) and 'rey' (king) but I had difficulties understanding the overall meaning of it (Figure 5). It seemed I had yet another puzzle to solve.

Street art and graffiti pieces often play with slogans or sayings. The text in Figure 5 is actually a twist from an old proverb that says: "In the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king". This saying refers to difficult situations in which "someone with only a few skills is in a better position and more successful than those who have none" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017). The word 'el enchufado' means 'plugged in' but in slang it is also an expression that refers to a person who gets something "without a merit, because he knows someone or by family favoritism" (see e.g. ELL, 2016).

The stencil in Figure 5 is based on a portrait of Spanish King Felipe VI in his General Captain of the Army uniform. The artwork seems to be an exact copy of the king's official photograph with his royal medals and ribbons (see e.g. Casa Real 2014). In the stencil the head of Felipe is replaced with a power plug. This seems to suggest that the current Spanish king has gained his status only because he was born as a son



Fig. 5. En el país de los borregos el enchufado es el rey (In the country of sheep, the well-connected is the king).
Artist unknown. Photographed in Valencia, November 2016.

of King Juan Carlos I. It was in no way measured or tested if he was particularly capable for this powerful position. Kings are not selected by democratic elections, the position is inherited by blood. The word 'el enchufado' refers to this.

The Spanish form of government has not always been monarchy. It was a republic between 1873–1874 and 1931–1939. In 2014 when former king Juan Carlos informed about his abdication in favor of his son Felipe, questions about the future of the Spanish monarchy were raised. There were demonstrations both on behalf of the 'Third Spanish Republic' as well as the monarchy. Around 36–44% of the Spaniards supported the Spanish republic. During the financial crisis the Spanish monarchy has received questionable publicity, for example on Juan Carlos 10,000 euro-a-day hunting safaris and Felipe's 10-year-old daughter's 100,000 Euros annual salary (see The Guardian 2014a). Almost two-thirds of the Spaniards wanted a referendum on the future of the

monarchy but it was rejected by prime minister Mariano Rajoy. He appealed to the Spanish constitution which would have needed a legal revision in order to execute a referendum (see The Guardian, 2014b).

The handwritten text around the stencil calls Spaniards 'sheep' (see Figure 5). Sheep is used as a metaphor for 'mindless mass'. The artist behind the work is taking a stand both questioning the reasoning of the Spanish citizens and the competence of the ruling King Philip VI. It is as if the artist is disappointed in the Spaniards' lacking their own will to think and accepting blindly the blood rights of monarchy. The text is written in blue to emphasize the royal 'blue' blood. The work in Figure 5 is a pro-republic piece that reveals what the creator thinks about monarchy and its supporters.

5. Manifesto: Street art is street politics

The recession has turned Spain into an interesting observatory point from which to analyze street art during times of economical, social and political crisis. During my ethnographic field trips in Madrid and Valencia, a number of questions came to my mind about the relationships between statesmen, street artist, and political participation. As seen in the analysis of the artworks (Fig.1–Fig.5), street art poses alternative political understandings that are not present within conventional media outlets.

Waldner and Dobratz (2013: 377) describe graffiti as “micro-level political participation” and I include political street art in this definition too. I see political street art as bottom-up activism that creates more polyphonic and therefore more democratic space. I also agree with Ryan’s (2017: 8) statement that political street art can be an alternative way of doing everyday politics. It is a way to take part in the political debate and to contest those in power. Generally speaking, political participation is divided into legal forms (e.g. voting, petitions, boycotts) and illegal forms of action (e.g. illegal demonstrations, sit-ins, squatting buildings) (Christensen, 2011: 16). Unauthorized political street art can be seen as an illegal form of political participation (Kopper, 2014: 444; Tolonen, 2016: 31–32). The objective is to have an impact on people: “Political participation is understood as actions conducted by citizens in order to influence decisions on different levels of the political, economic and societal system” (de Neve & Olteanu, 2011: 77). Therefore, many street artists do not just paint randomly, they set objectives for their political pieces.

As illustrated in this paper’s artworks, austerity measures and corruption scandals have had an effect on the credibility of Spanish political representation. Citizens have brought out in the open their dissent toward the ones in power by protesting. I would call political street art in Spicca and Perdue’s (2014) term spatial citizenship. Usually citizenship is seen as a set of rights and responsibilities. Spatial citizens attempt to produce a more democratic environment by reclaiming space. Unauthorized political street art is a way of achieving it. It expresses thoughts, ideas, dissatisfaction and demands justice. The idea of citizenship containing illegal and lawbreaking attributes which political street art contains, is slightly radical. On the other hand, Isin (2008) claims that sometimes citizenship might include questioning laws, even

violating them in order to convert passive citizenship into an active one.

This paper seeks to reveal some of the relationship between street art and politics. The artworks that I have presented serve as a diagnosis for political confrontations. As I have stated elsewhere (Tolonen, 2016), writers and street artists can have different kinds of motives for their work. Political street artists are often strongly politically motivated and have a need to express themselves in the difficult socio-political situation that Spain is currently facing. Artists are not necessarily active members in political parties but they want to manifest with their pieces that they have a clear political message. This message is usually undermining the ruling powers, and against the discourse submitted in the mainstream media. (Tolonen, 2016: 223; see also Tulke, 2004: 105) Strongly politically motivated artists, like Noaz and Escif, whom I have introduced in this paper, are well known and their works respected by others so their pieces do not usually get painted over. Therefore, political pieces made by well-known artists tend to last longer on city walls. In this sense, this illegally reclaimed space is communicating and having an impact on people for some time.

Returning to this paper’s original claim – political street art confronting institutional power – the issue of street art’s communication power becomes a central consideration. Political street artist Noaz has stated: “I hope to make some kind of an impact on everyone. The advantage with the street is that you can reach 100% of the public and you can use the simplest and the most effective codes of communication” (Archivo de Creadores de Madrid, 2010). Ultimately, I think political street art offers a tool to analyze the mode of the citizens’ views on political representation and serves as a platform to practice spatial citizenship. Political street art pieces are like small bombs – spray can bombs as illustrated around King Felipe in Figure 5 – saturated with meanings of dissent.

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Notes

1. For more detailed collection of Noaz's artworks see Noaz's profile on Instagram. www.instagram.com/noaz
2. Street artist Noaz. An interview via Messenger. 28/2/2017. Italics mine.
3. This article does not make any judgment of the artistic qualities of the works presented in this paper. I focus on unauthorized political street art for three reasons. First, I see authorized street art as a part of official city space that is planned by authorities. Second, authorized street art includes elements that restrict both freedom of speech and freedom of expression. For example location, size, technique or/and content of artworks are prior decided by city authorities. Third, I argue that unauthorized street is an equal media: it is difficult to define the ethnic background, gender, social status or age of artist nor these factors have hardly any effect on who can create it.
4. For detailed analysis of Ana Botella Crew's actions see Luis Menor (2015). www.urbancreativity.org/journal-volume-1--2015.html
5. Rita Barberá was the Mayor of Valencia from 1991 to 2015. She passed away in November 2016.
6. Anonymous Spanish street artist. An interview in Spain. 22/10/2016.
7. As documented in Escif's blog: Street Against. www.streetagainst.com/category/relatos [Accessed: 7/3/2017]
8. The video of burning the replica: Cremà Falla Mossén Sorell-Corona 2015, 3:05min., video, March 25, 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v=-n3SMXEPWkg
9. It is almost impossible to confirm the exact colors Escif uses in his artworks by looking at them. He does seem to use a lot of color grey in his pieces. For more examples of Escif's works see his blog: Street Against. www.streetagainst.com

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Creative city practices in the Lusophone space the case of São Paulo and Lisbon

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the creative city, and thus urban creativity in the Portuguese-speaking world, through eight in-depth interviews with leading figures of creative city practices in São Paulo and Lisbon. Both cities share a common language, similarities in history and culture, and in recent years they have been facing serious economic, political and social problems. Over the last few decades, various initiatives have been created with aims of involving and collaborating with locals in order to directly influence the quality of urban life. This research explores how changes in power and political and economic circumstances influence both the city and the lives of locals. I examine how specific bottom-up initiatives address various problems in society; I assess the best practices of urban creativity and how current problems and solutions arise in a contemporary metropolis. The research is based on study trips to São Paulo and Lisbon in 2016 where a number of interviews were conducted with representatives active in innovative creative economy organizations, routinely providing solutions to the needs of people in urban public spaces.

Keywords: Creative City, Urban Creativity, Lusophone, São Paulo, Lisbon

1. The Portuguese-speaking world

The Portuguese-speaking world, also known as the Lusophone world, can only be understood within the complexity of the Portuguese Empire and its colonial system. Over centuries, Portugal's global empire used and distributed the natural and human resources of the colonies, and functioned as a melting pot of diverse lusophonic territories and cultures. As Cunha refers (2012, pp. 215) "it is worth recalling that the former Portuguese Empire spanned four main areas: the mainland and its adjacent islands (Europe), Africa (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique), Brazil and Asia (Portuguese India, Macau and Timor)."

This colonial system had ensured the supply of natural and material resources flowing to the motherland, and it was a cause of the inflow and mixing of other cultures in Portugal. This process had long functioned by the time the country became one of the richest provinces of the Roman Empire as well as Islamic territory (Birmingham, 1993). The geographic and geopolitical history of the country, the age-old authoritarian empire-building rhetoric, the civilizational

mission and exceptionalism are all prime examples of how Portugal's lusophone, European and tropical character appears as a symbolic and unique unit; other European entities never reached similar symbiosis (Szilágyi, 2013). Over the decades it was an issue for the motherland to strengthen the notion of a "Lusophone space", which was greatly formed by the press, "thus allowing it to attain greater vividness than through language and culture alone, it also created the conditions for the eventual independence of colonial territories, such as Brazil (1822)." (Cunha, 2012: 215).

After Brazil's declaration of independence (1822), the mainland's aim was to consolidate its areas in Africa and to keep its territories of Portuguese India and East Timor in Asia. By the shadow of the financial crisis in the late 1920s, a new policy emerged which was later also essential for Salazar: Portugal should maintain control over its overseas areas. In 1930, the Colonial Act declared that colonies were not separable from the mother country. (Szilágyi, 2015: 56).

The foreign policy of the New State (*Estado Novo*) is determined by colonial objectives. In 1933, the Constitution declared African colonies as overseas territories, considered the internal markets of the mother country. As such, Portugal is not a colonial, but rather a multi-continental empire (Szilágyi, 2015). After the Second World War, despite the international integration, Portugal did not want to give up its colonial empire, although a more loose federation image had appeared when words *colony* and *empire* were taken out of the 1951 Constitution (Szilágyi, 2013). In the 1960s colonial wars began to consume a huge number of human and material resources (particularly in comparison to the size of the country) which the system could not handle (Salgó, 1990, p. 215). The war eroded almost half of the GDP, and subsequently 1.5 million people emigrated from Portugal between 1958 and 1974 mainly from rural areas (in 1973 alone 123,000 people left Portugal) (Tóth, 2004). On April 25, 1974, the Captains movement overthrew the dictatorial regime (Salgó, 1990). After that, with the independence of the colonies and the new left-liberal political system, the previous international isolation began to dissolve. Portugal opened to European and Atlantic countries, and started to form strong partnerships with the former colonial countries based on common interests and values as well as language and cultural heritage. In 1996, this shift led to the formation of CPLP, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa) (Szilágyi, 2013). This cooperation is also contributing to the *lusophone cosmopolitanism*, which allows the free flow of people, goods and cultures within the Portuguese speaking territories (Cunha, 2012). During the conquests the civilizational, cultural and religious heroic mission was emphasized, where between continents not only the flow of trade, but also of the arts, education and languages were provided by Portugal. The economic and cultural exchanges had become internationalized, which contributed to the establishment of a state where culture is born outside the country's borders (Saraiva, 2000).

Brazil experienced a dictatorial regime between 1937 to 1945: the New State (*Estado Novo*) and later a military regime from 1965 on over 20 years. In regard to broadcasting media as a source of culture, language, interest and knowledge, Cunha states that the organization of the Portuguese-speaking world “was founded on cultural, historical, political, economic and human ties and includes a potential market

of 300 million consumers and producers of media” (Cunha, 2012: 216). According to Cunha (2012), the Lusophone world is a virtual territory of mobility based on common interests and affinities, which are shaped by language, culture and media consumption.

2. Creative economy and the city

The theory of creative economy and the creative industries are a relatively new field of science, with extremely diverse approaches and explanations. Despite its novelty, creative economies and industries give regions a competitive advantage due to the effects of globalization and increased accumulation of knowledge; as a result, concentrations of information and innovation can be found.

The theory of creativity in economics emerged in the 1980s in the works of Törnqvist (1983) and Andersson (1985). With the decline of industry and the development of the information society and information technology, not only the structure of society has been transformed but also the world of work. In addition to the emergence of multinational corporations, local experiences can mean significant competitive advantage (Farkas, 2002). As thus, there is greater emphasis on local knowledge base and informal relationships, and atypical forms of work become more widely accepted work (e.g., flexible working hours, coworking offices, incubator houses). The dynamics of innovation development, the lower transaction costs, the role of institutions that are providing specialized environmental and competitive advantages of social capital (e.g., universities) are factors that show the importance of local advantages (Lengyel, 2003). These aspects are concentrated in cities, where the expression of knowledge society is completed with creativity, increasing the utility and value of knowledge (Kao, 1999). Especially after the global economic crisis, creativity in economy was valued as a given response to the uncertain situation. 2009 was the official year of creativity and innovation of the European Union. According to the United Nations, creativity from the point of view of economy can be derived from human resources. These appearances are developed in the areas of arts, science and economics (United Nations, 2008). Individual creativity itself is an attribute that we can interpret in large measure. This appears in the system of creative industries and creative economy as the basic property of being human, as an activity of economy that creates value, as the background of culture and arts (Ságvári, 2005).

One of the approaches of creativity states that without social recognition and without space, creative production cannot exist. According to this concept, Howkins's (2002) claim that using the creative adjective for a person creating something new should be added to Csikszentmihályi's (2008) explanation. He goes further, arguing that any kind of individual production must be a creation. A product or service is considered to be creative, whether it will be accepted by the field and the domain. Social experts determine (i.e., influential institutions and/or people) what the individual idea may be in the cultural environment. This means that the individual should be immersed in the symbolic range of the cultural environment in order to fill it with new content, which can pass through the filter of social domain experts. In this respect, the creativity of someone's production is a common product determined by the cultural environment and social actors.

According to Kao (1999) individual creativity is a factor that increases the usefulness of knowledge. The expression of cultural economy is necessary for the expression of creative economy (Scott, 1997) and cultural services and products are pieces of cultural economy. Cultural services are services that have been maintained by the state such as education, public education and arts services.

To summarize, the characteristics of the creative industries:

- include among others the cultural industries,
- have a creative value and include the arts, in addition to economic ability,
- create and distribute products and services produced and consumed by society,
- begin (first input) as creativity and intellectual capital.

3. The place and the creative class

Because of the criteria mentioned above (e.g., information, innovation, networks, concentrations of informal relations and knowledge), the ideal place for creative economic activities are large cities (Florida, 2002). Florida (2002) argues that the real competitive advantage for cities lies in the creative society that uses information and knowledge as tools, and in which creative industries stand in the cross-section. In his book *The rise of the creative class* (2002) Florida points out that the driving force of creativity is knowledge and

information, and, as thus, innovation can be produced. He argues that local values have been reevaluated, and the success lies beyond the realization of creative cities, whose cornerstones are the 3 T's: namely *technology*, *talent* and *tolerance*. *Technology* refers to economic-technological development, *talent* stands for the quality of available human resources, and *tolerance* signifies the inclusive socio-cultural environment (Florida, 2002). The economic importance of cultural and creative activities and their relation toward the level of urban development and competitiveness are some of the aspects where urban creativity can be examined (Costa et al., 2009).

In the context of the international project *Accommodating Creative Knowledge* (ACRE), between 2006 and 2010 in 13 European large cities the factors of establishment of creative activities were investigated (Musterd et al., 2007).

The factors are as follows:

Dependence of the road: to understand the current economic situation, we must investigate the development roads in this explicit area of the city. From the point of view of the creative industries, it is favorable if the site has international recognition of cultural history and education and training (Boschma and Martin 2007), if it has decision making political-economical functions, if there are economic activities that need high qualification, and if services are more important than heavy industry (Eckert et al., 2010).

Agglomerate theory: One of the characteristics of the creative industries is the grouping of companies and workers, which is related to regional development (Scott, 2000). Clusters are important because of competitiveness (Porter, 2000).

Theories of localization: existence of raw materials, availability of adequate labor, infrastructure, capital, institutions, regulation (Lengyel and Rechnitzer, 2004).

Configuration function factors such as human resources, knowledge society, networks, environment, quality of life, tolerance, quality and diversity of cultural life are complemented by the physical function factors, such as land, labor, and capital. What is essential is that with the emergence of atypical work, individual

creativity and these incentive stimuli are appreciated.

Individual factors: social networks, experiences, organizational links (Bontje et al., 2011).

According to the ACRE project the creative economy can be divided into sectors. The parties to this are the creative and cultural industries, and industries with an intensive knowledge base, which has relatively strong content, such as infocommunications, finance, law, business services, research and development, and higher education. The recent study assumes that the above mentioned elements are essential for the creation of a creative city like Lisbon or São Paulo.

4. Methodology

The fieldwork was carried out in São Paulo and Lisbon in 2016. Interviews were held with leading figures from projects from both cities. The semi-structured interviews were led in English and/or Portuguese languages. In total, twenty-four exploratory interviews were completed, twelve in each city. The interviews were recorded and processed. In this paper four interviews from each city were selected and analysed (see Table 1). This selection was made according to the relevance of the Lisbon Street Art & Urban Creativity International Conference 2017 and along the call *Intangible heritage and knowledge transfer*.

In the research the urban creativity aspects of the Portuguese-speaking countries are investigated and questioned to explore whether, in addition to the common language, there exists a common Lusophone identity and if so, whether it can be seen in urban creativity methods and added to the creation of the *creative city* model. As such, the study also researches city and governmental policies and the tolerance factor, which could be crucial for dynamics in the city (Florida, 2002), as well as the identity of a common language as background. Following the structure and analysis of the conducted interviews, the aim of the research is to make an empirical comparative structure between the selected cities in the Lusophone world, and map innovative and creative spaces and the characteristics of each city.

The field research employs semi-structured interviews, focusing on companies, organisations, actors, policy

makers (of models of creative economy and creative city), and incentives and venues (which currently or operated or operated at some point in one of the cities). Field researchers also collected and researched the literature of the field (situation of creative economy and creative industries; regulations and examples to enhance variety of urban creativity; population and characteristics of the city). Through the interviews the aim is to answer the following questions:

- Does historical background influence the tolerance and urban creativity development in the city?
- What is the role of the political decision makers in urban creativity development?
- How can urban creativity be boosted?
- Does something like a common Lusophone identity exist? If so, what does it mean and in which ways does it occur? Does this identity impact urban creativity? How does this identity appear in creative economy? How does Lusophone identity appear in gentrified areas and reclaimed buildings with new functions?
- Are there measures/steps from organizations of Lusophone identity (e.g., CPLP), which could influence urban creativity?
- If historical, Lusophone background can strengthen the tolerance factor of Florida's 3T's, and whether it helps the settlement of a creative class, affecting urban creativity?
- What is the city image? If and how urban creativity appears in this?
- What kind of influence does urban creativity have on economy, tourism, and international relations?

5. Urban creativity in Lisbon

After the world economic crisis in 2008, many urban creativity initiatives were started in Lisbon. Examples are projects in the scale of street art, when city hall started to renovate downtown's Bairro Alto area, and thus, providing street artists with legal walls to paint. This project was organized

Table 1. List of interviewees

City	Name	Organization/position
São Paulo	Carlos Augusto Machado Calil	Professor at Department of Cinema, Radio and Television, Universidade de São Paulo; former Secretary of Culture of São Paulo; Founder of Project Virada Cultural
	Baixo Ribeiro	Choque Cultural Street and Urban Art Gallery; founder
	Ricardo Ruiz	Laboratory of Cidades Sensitivas; leader
	Alex Romano	Graffiti artist
Lisbon	Catarina Mendonca Ferreira	Time Out Market/Time Out Magazine; journalist, curator
	Joana Branco Gomes	LX Factory/ Mainside Investment; PR, Communication, Project Management
	Luís Pousinho	Galeria de Arte Urbana, Lisbon City Hall; event producer
	Vasco T. Rodrigues	Street Art Lisbon - The real street art tour; journalist and tour guide

Source: The author, 2016

by Galeria de Arte Urbana, an agency operating within the frames of Lisbon City Hall. Other examples are initiatives of start-up culture and transformation of old warehouses, factories into creative and cultural hubs, recreation of old spaces, and adapting them to current day demands and needs (see Table 2). Many of these projects were born with the help of local policy makers (e.g., city hall, government). In 2013, the Department for Innovation and Economy of Lisbon City Hall published a comprehensive study of the city's creative industry, in which strategic directions are determined until 2020. In the study, creative operators and related economic development and tourism dynamism are detailed, emphasizing that Lisbon is a multicultural, inclusive and tolerant city, where in addition to well-trained and talented manpower, the appropriate technological background is also provided.

All initiatives that bring a new flavour to the urban space build urban creativity, and started to flourish towards the end of the 2000s:

I believe Portuguese people are creative. I think Lisbon 20 years ago was not the same as today. Now is about creativity, innovation, and people who live here can feel it, that is a creative hub and they can participate. Before it was more like a village. (Joana Gomes)

All the interviewees mention that the support of city hall was important in urban development and in their own projects, and these spurred a spin-off effect for other initiatives. Urban creativity plays an important role when we talk about a growing economy or tourism. There is a huge investment in start-ups and co-working places and Lisbon is a European leader in urban creativity, which results in recreating parts of the city. Like LX Factory in Alcântara, which has a big influence in tourism, on social relations:

Alcântara is an old neighbourhood and did not have any investments. But after the opening of LX Factory in 2008, many tourists are coming here to

visit us. Also outside the Factory, shops, restaurants started to open up, young people started to move here. (Joana Gomes)

Another example of urban creativity and tourism is the street art project in Quinta do Mocho run by Loures City Hall (see Figure 1), which is a result of Lisbon's City Hall initiative Galeria de Arte Urbana. These street art initiatives from different City Halls are reflections on the importance of how political decision makers are promoting street art, as well as using urban creativity as a tool for restructuring neighbourhoods and involving communities. There is a significant presence of Portugal's historical colonizing background especially in urban art, as evidenced in the Amilcar Cabral painting in Quinta do Mocho or *40 anos 40 murais* project. Urban and street art is no longer considered vandalism, but an artistic movement supported by the authorities.

Two years ago, there was no reason to visit Quinta do Mocho, people went there only to buy drugs. Now people visit that neighbourhood because there was an artistic rehabilitation of the place. There was the artistic creation, the change of the scenario. It didn't solve the problems of the people who live there, but something has started. In Quinta do Mocho there is a buzz now. Coffee shops and restaurants are beginning to open. Nothing like that existed before. Now you have 65-80 walls painted by street artists, of course people want to see them. (Vasco Rodrigues)

All the interviewees agree that their projects have an influence on urban development in the city. These are considered as pilot projects or role models in Lisbon's urban scene and they are often renowned as examples of best practices in the international context as well.

About Time Out Market, people from abroad came here and studied the case as a good example, were interested how it was done. At the beginning it was a Portuguese company, was independent and paid royalties to London. But when the market was opened, the international Time Out magazine bought it. They saw this could be a good and best example, so it will be replicated in other cities like London, New York, Berlin. (Catarina Ferreira)

There is no competition, but rather cooperation among the actors from the same field in urban creativity. Often, after seeing the success of the pilot project the project owners are recognised and asked to fulfil other projects in different areas in the city:

In the beginning we just managed this building, we were isolated. Then the city hall understood our ability to make projects happen, they invited us to do more projects, like the renovation of Cais de Sodré. Now we are working on a project in Intendente. (Joana Gomes)

All of the interviewees agree that their organizations influence the image of the city in a positive way. As mentioned above, all these projects are held as models and best practices, and reinforce its creative city image upheld by higher decision makers while maintaining the genuineness of the city.

Table 2. Urban Creativity examples in Lisbon reported by the interviewees

Big scale urban development investments by political decision makers	Street art initiatives	Recreated places as creative hubs
EXPO - Parque das Nações, City Hall Initiatives in immigrant neighbourhood like Intendente or Mouraria, CCB, FabLabs	Galeria de Arte Urbana, Lara Seixo Rodrigues organizer of Muraliza/ Wool festival/Lata65, Vhils (artist), Underdogs Gallery, Os Gémeos piece, Blue wall, Quinta do Mocho	LX Factory, Time Out Market, Fabrica do Tijolo, Co-working places

Source: The author, 2016

We used to say this is the best of the city under one roof. Here tourists have a good idea of the city. (Catarina Ferreira)

I think we have done a great job and put Lisbon on the map of urban creativity, to have great urban art. Now our focus is to work with the community.

(Luís Pousinho)

We influence the creative city image a lot, if you want to show creative Lisbon, you come to LX Factory. (Joana Gomes)

If they pass near a monument I can explain what the monument is, so I am giving them the same tour what the tour bus would give them but my point of interest is to show them the artistic creativity.

So I am giving them an extra positive view of the city. Obviously from the feedback I know that they leave Lisbon with a different perspective and they definitely understand why Lisbon is on the top cities for creative art, for urban creativity.

(Vasco Rodrigues)

6. Urban creativity in São Paulo

In the city of São Paulo, marginalized communities have a strong demand for urbanism and urbanization. The desire for urbanism has a great influence on urban culture, for instance guerilla planting (see Figure 2). There exists a lack of canalization and green space and a large demand for community spaces for locals to congregate. In most cases implementation is hindered by bureaucracy and



Fig. 1. Mural in Quinta do Mocho, Source: The author, 2016

politics. Another barrier is the mixture of different nations and cultures, where a homogenous group demanding their shared needs and values be met does not exist.

On the other hand, urbanism is brutal in São Paulo, like the aggressively protected private property (e.g., barbed-wire fence, high walls), density of population, extremely high number of cars, low quality of public transportation, gross and narrow pavements, and problems of distinguishing between public and private property.

In this environment, urban activism is becoming wide spread, where a group of people (both specialists and non-specialists) are seeking new forms of occupying public space, executing micro-transformation on the street scale and macro-transformation on the scale of public policies.

Urban creativity is to create and explore freely in the city. The aim is to create a tolerant territory and to understand how to deal with conflicts. According to the interviewees, examples of creativity practices in São Paulo include cultural institutes, large-scale urban development projects, transformation of special neighbourhoods, street festivals and activities as well as educational programs (see Table 3).

The interviewees explain the environment and the case of urban creativity in the city, as well the issue of identity in São Paulo:

I lived in São Paulo during the 1990s. It was shocking for me, I was not used to that, I was from a forest. It was violent, everyone was for themselves, you could be killed easily. It was the creativity for surviving, selling drugs, robbing cars. Often there



Fig. 2. Urban creativity in front of Gallery Choque Cultural, neighbourhood Vila Madalena, São Paulo; Source: The author, 2016

was an issue with the police. São Paulo police is the most violent one. What is urban creativity to survive? Skating for instance, but if you made any graffiti, it was a crime. So for me urban creativity has a strong relation with crime. (Ricardo Ruiz)

São Paulo does not have an identity. All my efforts about the center to restore the identity were lost. There was a strong movement to look for identity in Avenida Paulista, later in Faria Lima, then this process was moving away from the center. Mooca has an Italian identity, but now it has the process of mobilization. Mapping the identities, as public policies can value them. Culture today passes through urbanism, which some fifteen years ago did not happen. (Carlos Calil)

Authorities do not fulfil the needs or finance initiatives of urban interventions. There is no significant pilot project in terms of urban creativity financed by public authorities. As the interviewees underline, there is a lack of common ideology and network required in order to articulate needs to political decision makers.

We are restricted to ideological issues. For example the Park of Rua Augusta. Praça Roosevelt. There is a lack of common sense and ideology. (Carlos Calil)

Society needs to be better organized into groups and networks, to discuss certain public policies, and to create articulations for these epic policies. (Baixo Ribeiro)

Since there is a deep crisis in the political issues (i.e., impeachment) there is a lack of leading figures who serve the public and stand for the locals' needs. On the other hand, the project Cidade Limpa in 2006 was a new law, which forbids outdoor ads in the city. This allowed for massive creativity in street art:

The recent mayor was an important figure and supporter of urban art, he got his own spray can and made his own piece. The state has the duty to support financially the project, but they don't do it. That is why many private initiatives came out. Some months ago I gave classes of street art for elderly people, which was financed by Toyota. I am afraid of the new major, who is a real business man." (Alex Romano)

Romano's prediction came true. In 2017 the new mayor had street art works erased and urban creativity is not promoted any longer.

On the other hand, some argue for the importance of change

Table 3. Urban Creativity examples in São Paulo reported by the interviewees

Educational projects	Street festivals and activities	Cultural Institutes	Parts of the city, big scale urban development
Seminarium of question of city in the night, Escola a cidade, cidade a escola education program	Virada Cultural, Largo da Batata, Minhocão	Praça das Artes Institute, Biblioteca Tiradentes, Abandoned buildings in the service of the community like Vila Itororó, Choque Cultural Gallery, SESC Pompeia, Tomie Ohtake Institute, Sala São Paulo	Vale de Anhangabaú, Largo da Batata, Minhocão, Abandoned buildings in the service of the community like Vila Itororó, Vila Madalena, Parque Ibirapuera, Mooca

Source: The author, 2016

in political attitudes:

The political system has changed a lot recently in the ideology and invest into the public sectors. Now communities are supported and fostered to get trained, and establish themselves economical actors. (Ricardo Ruiz)

Urban creativity is connected to values like redistribution and revalorization, which can serve the locals and work to their benefit:

Redistribution of the wealth is cruel. If you get people think creatively, critically, using the city as a medium, that kind of experiment is a possibility to change the oligopolies and provide access to the more. There are also good examples like start-ups or a shop in entire Brazil, called Magazine Luisa, which provides products for the poor. This is a shop all around Brazil, good products for poor people. (Ricardo Ruiz)

Urban creativity means revalorization, repositioning, gentrification of certain areas. There are big differences between areas of the city – for instance Jardins in downtown are rich, outskirts are poor. But in both areas nights are dangerous. Urban creativity brings a new hint in revalorization of abandoned and old buildings. (Carlos Calil)

Interviewees have different ideas on the influence of urban creativity on economy or tourism:

About tourism, foreign tourists want to see the new things of urbanism, they are curious about the real São Paulo. Locals want to take foreigners to malls, but it does not make sense, someone from the US can buy things cheaper there than here. Another strange and bizarre example is Sala São Paulo in Cracolândia...The Virada Festival happens in an area which was forgotten for many years. Now it brings visibility and tourism, there is nothing like this, not even in Rio de Janeiro. It doesn't exclude the periferias, is neither elitist nor discriminative. For instance, on the day of the festival public transportation is free, thus people from periferias can come to the downtown, otherwise this would be hardly possible. (Carlos Calil)

Although the city is strong in street art and gives space to internationally renowned artists like Os Gemeos, “the city is still not exploited for tourism, but there are graffiti tours.” (Alex Romano)

There are areas of the city, like Vila Madalena, which have recently become popular due to the visibility of “creativity”, and are going through a strong gentrification process.

The neighbourhood Vila Madalena is a good example of recent gentrification and relatively strong tourism. Also city center provides a great scale of different activities, cultural experiences, galleries, schools, spaces of culture. (Baixo Ribeiro)

In terms of international relations, there are examples from Germany or England--even the British Council made a project in the city. According to Carlos Calil “we can make exchanges, we can talk, but it won't bring solutions. For example, High Line is great but not the same as Minhocão.” (Carlos Calil)

While the interviewees argue if São Paulo can be considered a creative city, they all agree that the city has very strong energies, “Architecture, artists, periferia movements are strong initiatives.” (Carlos Calil)

I do not consider São Paulo that creative, because the industrial culture killed the focus on traditional culture. For instance, people consider Mooca district Italian, but that has a fake tradition of Italy. We have some indie or black community, but they are whitening (branciado). Capitalism in the 1950s-1970s got the globalized idea as a pattern, and happened very well here. (Ricardo Ruiz)

In my opinion São Paulo is a creative city with intense energy, includes also violent and strong fights. The city has many problems, that is why we are in a war of transformation, which means many deaths and political violence. We use creativity in a strong way. (Baixo Ribeiro)

For me this city is very much creative and incredible from a certain point of view: the poorer areas you go the more creativity you find. In most cases it

means innovation and recycling. Brazil was the first country where muralists used wall paints instead of sprays, because that was cheaper. How ghettos, shanty towns came out, it was a very brutal colonisation of exploitation. Brazil came up with a big violent culture, racism, graffiti was a screen for the poor neighbourhood, poor people went up on the buildings and write their names. It is very depressive, to get out of poverty. (Alex Romano)

7. Conclusion

The Lusophone space is mostly described as a virtual territory shaped by common language and culture. As language and culture are prior “soft power” elements to maintain common interests and affinities, and identity, the question is if there are recognizable traces in urban creativity which reflect on the common Lusophone history or cultural details and if there are any common strategies in promoting urban creativity in the examined cities. Although both cities are able to fulfil different criteria towards the establishment of a creative class and creative city, such as Florida’s 3Ts (talent, tolerance, technology) or ACRE factors (dependence of the road, clusters, localization, configuration and individual factors), there are strong differences in the ways of promoting and dealing with urban creativity.

With the world economic crisis, urban creativity activities have started to flourish in Lisbon, mainly due to the fact that political decision makers saw the potential of a boom within a creative city. Since then, start-up and urban art culture is significant, as is transformation of old warehouses and factories into creative and cultural hubs and big scale urban development investment. Indeed, urban art is no longer considered vandalism in Lisbon, and is often used as a medium to reflect on colonial history.

In the case of São Paulo, such a visible starting point is undetectable. Here graffiti still works as a medium of the periphery and resistance, and as a tool of social projects in the communities. On the other hand, since the ban of outdoor advertisements there is more space for graffiti artists to create. In São Paulo creativity derives from a very strong need and desire for a better quality of life, for more friendly environments, and for urbanism in general. This brutal urbanism (e.g., the lack of legislation, high criminal incidences) give a solid base from which urban activism

can grow. Urban creativity includes cultural institutes, large-scale urban development projects, transformation of special neighbourhoods, street festivals and activities as well as educational programs.

In Lisbon, urban creativity projects are strongly supported by the city hall, which is a much wider political issue in Portugal, promoting the “tolerant” city and relationships with ex-colonies (e.g., CPLP). In São Paulo, instead of public policies, urban creativity projects are based on private organizations and locals gathered in communities. This is a rather bottom-up process, and urban creativity is more related to urban development because of the needs of the locals. In Lisbon, it is a more centralized, top-down process. City Hall in Lisbon sees urban creativity as part of its development strategy, in São Paulo there are some projects (like FabLab) run by city hall, but there is no comprehensive strategy.

Urban creativity in Lisbon has a strong spin off effect, and significant influence on the economy and tourism, as well as recreation and gentrification of formerly disadvantaged city areas (immigrants, social, industrial neighbourhoods). In São Paulo, there are certain areas which were recently gentrified, although these attempts often fail (see Sala São Paulo in Cracolândia) and redistribution of wealth is still problematic. The city is still not exploited for tourism, but there are attempts to realize it.

In interviews in Lisbon it was common for agents of creative projects to use the space in a new and creative way, which is acknowledged by the locals, tourists and the political leaders. It seems that many believe these kinds of projects shape the image of a creative city in a positive way. In São Paulo the opinions regarding a creative city image is more fragmented, likely due to a strong urban energy need.

A future aim of the research is to extend the interviews to other Portuguese speaking countries, and establish a comparative study of the different methods, examples, and financing systems of urban creativity in order to better describe and understand the Lusophone space and its characteristics.

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Artscaping in public places: Jeddah, the city of urban art

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Abstract

This paper argues that urban art is an inclusive conception to contemporary placemaking, which has contributed significantly to (re)shaping the notion of public places in unprecedented dimension, perception, and scale. The concept of urban art implies an inclusive approach to public art, urban life and the public realm. Following the notion “the whole is greater than the sum of the parts”, the emerging design trends attempt to (re)present public places as a comprehensive synthesis and interactive form of urban art combining elements of temporary and permanent, form and space, static and dynamic, active and passive, effects and impressions. This process has greatly transformed not only the way of making and/or remaking places, but it also extends to new horizons of perceiving, and interacting of both public space and the public arts by users in their tangible and intangible terms. The paper examines the case of Jeddah, the city of Arts; a case that has transformed the city into an extensive outdoor art museum, through a broad range of urban artworks, including works of many international artists and sculptors. The paper explores the (re)making process of Jeddah’s public places under modern interpretations of aesthetical artistic values, where qualities of excitement, livability, vibrancy, and spectacularism are manifested in the city’s placemaking process. The paper attempts to build on some future directions for urban artscaping as a new perspective for understanding, interpreting and (re) making city spaces.

1. Introduction: Artscaping, urban art and placemaking

1.1. Artscaping

Artscaping of public places has become a spatial placemaking strategy that relies on artistic practices and creative placemaking in response to the processes of social and cultural changes in urban landscapes. In that conceptual context, public places are representative spaces reflecting place identities. Living spaces that allow interaction and self-expression are identity representative sites. Hence, they are obviously localities for the development of stimulating processes of urban art, which can be labelled as “artscaping” of public place.

The term “artscaping” is subject to a variety of interpretations according to the cultural context where it is dealt with, the nature disciplines that it related and types of artworks addressed. Conceptualizing the artscaping of public places originates with concepts developed by Becker (1982), Crane (1992), Guerra and Costa (2016), where the ideas of

public place as a scenic space of specific artistic, spatial and formal qualities have been addressed and promoted. According to them, the idea of cultural scene that was developed from the concept of artscaping, can articulate the extents of and/or type of artistic production. An example of this could be the interaction of public art with public places, which transcends artistic and cultural messages to create or to endorse identity of a place (Straw, 2004). Many propositions on the contemporary public art/public place were argued by scholars, such as Scott (2000), Costa (2008); Costa and Lopes (2013), who support the idea that urban art has become gradually associated with a set of specific characteristics of urban situations, challenging urban interventions in those places.

1.2. Urban art

The term “urban art” can be described in many ways and in relation to several cultural contexts, denoting that public art in urban settings are placed in specific sites with meaning and intent. Urban art is often used to summarize all visual

art practices that relate to cities and city life. Often, the relationship between content and audience, what the art is saying and to whom, is just as important if not more important than its physical location (Knight 2008). Historically, the notion of “urban art” has been developed from street art and graffiti culture. Today, the term “urban art” is applied to creative artistic/design works ranging from monumental installations, landmark sculptures, to graffiti and murals. As such, it includes an entire spectrum of artistic and visual interventions connected to outdoor spaces. Urban art often exists in a setting defined by positioning artworks in physical spaces that accommodate them, and it generally has several interfaces with its location, besides its visual and aesthetical characteristics. Urban artworks hold strong connection to their urban and social contexts, as one of the most used approaches that brings public art into people’s lives through interaction and participation, rather than focusing only on conventional urban beautification. In contrast to “public art”, urban art is very inclusive, in which it is both part of and reflective of current processes of global urbanization. Following the current forms of urbanism, the transitions between art, architecture, urban design, city planning, and social cultural characteristics are in continuous process of change, interaction and transformation.

Urban art should be valued by the community. However, in Jeddah, understanding artworks among residents is not up to standard. This is due to inadequate knowledge of art, misplacement of the artefacts, and the lack of community participation. In most cases, conventional planning deals with urban art in a way that is limited to just filling-in, decorating, or beautifying a space, and this is done in ways that do not provide a “sense” of place or display thoughtful ideas.

1.3. Urban art and placemaking

Over the past few decades, the relationship between urban art and public places has been manifested in rapidly growing and diverse trends in various public realms. These trends include mainly creative initiatives: for example, the emergence of new sorts of urban art and the change of artistic modes of production. Moreover, they include new experiments in the interaction of architecture, such as some visionary interventions in city spaces. It is argued that the current changes in urban landscape in many cities are direct results of the fact that traditional boundaries between time and

space, real and virtual, tangible and intangible, physical and spiritual, inside and outside, and ephemeral and temporal, are being blurred by contemporary urban transformations. In that respect, Soja (1989) suggests that a “spatial turn” of art phenomena configures a new interpretation of the relation between the social and the spatial patterns, which renders a wide diversity of urban interventions in public places. These artistic interventions have been introducing a new perception on how placemaking and urban life are shaped through innovative interactions with their specific social and cultural processes.

Hence, encompassing various media and techniques used by the urban art practitioners, like advertisements, graffiti and street artworks as well as entire installations and art performances, urban art has inevitably become an important part in the evolution process of placemaking. In addition, it is becoming extensively involved within fields such as urban regeneration and re-interpretation of urban landscapes, as well as commoditization such as advertising and city marketing.

2. The need for a new paradigm

Literature on aesthetic aspects of public artworks in urban and cultural contexts has rarely debated the characteristics and the associated features of urban art in public places of contemporary Arab cities. On a theoretical level, there is a lack of research on the relationship between public art and public space, although, a theoretical discourse on planning for public art is an inseparable aspect from the essence of “public” arts. As Hunting (2005) points out, “the established institutions in the art and art history world have failed to realize that when art moves into the public sphere, different standards and objectives must be applied if that art is to be successful, or even coherent”. Moreover, Hunting claims that this lack of research on the planning for public art is due to “the interdisciplinary nature of public art, combining the disparate fields of fine art, museum management, art history and public administration, complicates discussions about exactly what public art is and where it should be going”. In this context, Philips (1999) states lacking “the creation of the kind of sustained theoretical or critical framework required to transform ideas and impressions into meaningful relationships and connections”. However, this lack of research can be attributed to the absence of a clear understanding of a theoretical framework and sound

practical guidelines for the complex relationship between urban art and public place, as well as the interaction of the characteristics of both in the contemporary Arab city.

Urban art can be a catalyst for achieving distinctive urban aesthetics and a vibrant civic life. Phillips (2003) has questioned that urban art is situated at “the congested crossroads of aesthetics, public life, cultural ideas, and political issues. It is an art which is absolutely engaged with the world and this engagement often invokes spirited disagreement.” He asserts that it is an “art when it encourages and expedites connections between the private and public, the intimate place and the municipal space, the body and the community. There are moments of reflection when an image, or sound, or space allows individuals to embody, in a unique and often specific way, the vast and various issues of public life” (Phillips, 2003).

In this context, Miwon Kwon (2002) introduces a contemporary understanding of “site specific art”, stressing the concept of “site specificity” and the significance of public art’s relationship to place. She addresses the dimensions of site specificity through three main paradigms:

1. The “phenomenological” paradigm, in which the “site” is the “starting point and reason for being of the artwork. This paradigm strongly links the physical place with the artwork.

2. The “social” or “institutional” paradigm, in which the “site” is formed by “a much broader framework, with the focus on the social, economic and cultural political conditions, in which art is produced and presented.”

3. The “discursive” paradigm, where “the dematerialization of the ‘site’ and of the artwork are summed up” and artists expand their field of operation, in the sense of location, form, content and function, far beyond the context of art.

Hence, there is a need for a new paradigm of public places, addressing urban art and urban intervention as an innovative city development strategy towards successful placemaking, with particular reference to regeneration and revitalization initiatives. It is assumed that the new paradigm will focus on the main patterns, approaches, and trends to the (re)making process of city squares under alternative interpretations of the relevant urban aesthetical artistic values, where qualities

of excitement, livability, and vibrancy, among other qualities, are manifested in placemaking.

Places of urban art challenge common ways of thinking about the urban visual arts and their role in everyday life. This unique urban intervention pattern will necessitate a careful investigation of the relationship between the urban artworks and the appropriate spatial context, distance, movement, visibility as well as the townscape elements that should be considered for a successful setting of public art in public space (Helmy, 2005). The planning for urban art will dictate an essential layer for the city master planning on different scale levels, from the overall strategic urban art planning to the individual site planning of public place. The task of such planning is to organize and define urban art selection and its setting (Helmy, 2008).

3. Jeddah

Jeddah is a principle Red Sea port, a leading commercial city in Saudi Arabia and a main access point for visitors to the holy Muslim city of Makkah. The city has nearly 40 kilometers of coastline, providing a road, walkways and attractions along the coast. It has a multifaceted history associated with travelling and tourism. In the 1970s the city initiated a long term urban art program called *Jeddah, the City of Art*. The initiative illustrates the role that can be played by art in shaping the urban environment and how built spaces and public artworks do interact with one another or converge within a culturally rich context. It implies a citywide and large-scale urban project that manifests how urban art contributes to the formation and transformation of public places. In addition, the Jeddah Art Initiative demonstrates the way people conceive the aesthetic dimension of urban design (from architecture and landscape design, to spatial networks, placemaking, and city planning).

3.1 Jeddah city form

The city has been greatly influenced by its original functions: its port, historic core surrounded by the Central Business District (CBD), vast residential areas, shopping centers and services, a creek, and several recreation areas. Administrative services, commerce, and shopping facilities shaped the land use of the old core, and extended beyond it along with the north-south axes dated back to the 1970s and 1980s. Residential neighborhoods were developed along these axes, where some cross connections constitute a large-scale

orthogonal grid, following a dominant physical planning model of that time. The cosmopolitan character of the city and its residents, historical and commercial characteristics to goods and pilgrims have had a great impact on its form and structure.

Generally, the city's urban patterns are characterized by intensified development, where several urban archetypes and large subdivisions dominate the city spatial structure. As Helmy (2008) points out, four main patterns can be identified:

Grid Patterns: the iron-grid networks, as the large-scale mixed-use developments along major axes.

Radial Patterns: traditional forms that radiate from the historical core.

Organic Patterns: as in the complex historical fabric, i.e. traditional buildings, markets and streets.

Linear Patterns: fabrics defining the edges of the waterfront, i.e. tall buildings along the Corniche.

The visual identity of Jeddah is summarized through the representative aesthetics of its skyline, traditional buildings, modern squares and vistas, where a mix of traditional Hijazi architecture (local vernacular architecture of the region), modern international styles (of European/American references), and authentic and innovative forms, are juxtaposed with great variations. Major landmarks in the city include numerous mosques, which act as icons along the Corniche strip and vistas along main roads in the city. Moreover, the mixed-use complexes centered in the core of the city, the Municipality Headquarters building, the airport terminals, the sea port and the port observation tower are the most identifiable landmarks of the city. In addition, the large number of super scale sculptures and works of art situated in traffic roundabouts act as strong vistas. The urban iconic artworks of Jeddah are visible from many vantage points around the city. They mark the city's major locations, helping visitors and residents to navigate its zones and spaces. Numerous of the landmarks of Jeddah frame well its public spaces.

3.2 Jeddah public places

With few exceptions, the harsh humid hot weather of Jeddah most of the year does not enable outdoor public gathering in a comfortable atmosphere, except for a few limited locations. Outdoor public places are to be found in the old traditional markets as well as along the Corniche strip, where recreational and special outdoor seating facilities

are available. Indoor gathering spaces, found in mixed-use development and in numerous shopping malls of different scales and areas all over the city, are dominant public space patterns. The major outdoor places can be categorized as: Green Parks and areas, including some green stretches along main roads and urban parks.

Traditional spaces found in historical markets and plazas.

Urban squares, large-scale traffic roundabouts resulting from the major roads intersecting, devoted to the organization of traffic around them. They cannot be considered as public gathering places.

The Red Sea Corniche long strip, including promenades, gathering areas, pedestrian zones.

3.3 Jeddah's urban art scape

In the 1970s, Jeddah's mayor Mohammed Said Farsi envisioned Jeddah City as a global cultural art hub. Consequently, the Jeddah Beautification Project was established to realize such a vision. Contrary to European and American public art culture, public art in Jeddah's cultural and urban contexts, was seen as the major part of the city beautification program, disregarding community involvement or citizens artistic understanding and acceptance. Hence, the main role of the Jeddah art initiative was to make a visual statement. About 526 public artworks were scattered in the city's landscape with an array of visual sculptural elements of many sorts (Susie of Arabia, 2012), such as murals, installations of various scales, fountains, and architectural miniatures.

The main themes of Jeddah public artworks include religious, historical, geometrical and science subjects, traditional and everyday objects, such as Arabian coffee pots, and water vessels, Quranic verses using Arabic calligraphy, abstract and monumental as well as many whimsical art works by internationally renowned artists, assuring the international nature of the envisioned city. One may drive or walk by the public works, or specifically visit it as a destination. The sculptures are fashioned out of everything from bronze, steel, marble, concrete, local stone, and even scrap iron and recycled machinery. A number of the sculptures are made of recycled aircraft and boats. The art works are mostly abstract, avoiding the use of human form in order to sidestep religious conflicts. Some of the local artists and the world's most distinguished masters participated in the creation of Jeddah's art works.

Acting as landmarks for the city and reflecting the projected identity of the 1980s, *Jeddah, the City of Arts*, is the art initiative that seems to capture mostly the eyes of today's residents and visitors. The urban artworks have transformed the city into an extensive outdoor museum, although there is no tradition of sculpture in Saudi Arabia. They are much more significant than the space surrounding them. The artworks represent a broad range of styles including works of many renowned international artists and sculptors, such as the Spaniard Julio Lafuente, the Italians Arnaldo Pomodoro, Pietro Cascella and Di Giovanni, the American Robert Cook and some of the "giants": Henry Moore, Joan Miró and Jacques Lipchitz, and the Hungarian Victor Vasarely. Many of the artworks are abstract and deviate sharply from topics such as science, technology, nature, especially the sea, which link the other artworks with the city's heritage. (Susie of Arabia, 2012).

3.3.1. Locations of artworks in Jeddah

Locations of artworks in Jeddah vary from locations along major roads, along the Corniche strips and the sculpture museum, to positions in the middle of road crossings (traffic roundabout islands) to urban parks and green zones. Fig. 1 shows a summary of the typology of locations for Jeddah's public artworks.

Art in roadways

The islands dividing/or along the roadways are becoming common settings for artworks of different scales, sizes and forms. Notable examples for artworks are the *Four Lanterns* by Julio Lafuente, and *Tahlia Fountain* by Mustafa Senbel, which are both located at Tahlia street, and the *Fish* by Al Hindi and Banjabi in Corniche Obhur.

Urban parks

Urban parks and green zones have also become common settings for unique artworks. Major examples are found in the *Rotating First Section* by Arnaldo Pomodoro (1975); the *Large Spindle Piece* by Henry Moore (1968); and the *Antagonistic Contacts* and *Sun and Beam* by Giò Pomodoro, which are all located in Jeddah Sculpture Museum.

Traffic circles (roundabouts)

The huge scale of the major road crossings resulted in the creation of monumental scale traffic roundabouts. Instead of creating a vast lost space within those crossings, it

was considered an appropriate ground for super scale artworks. Examples include: *The Acciden'!* (*Crazy Speed*) by Julio Lafuente, at the Northern Corniche road; *The Globe Roundabout* by Julio Lafuente; and the *Seagull Roundabout* by Mustafa Senbel, located at Northern Corniche.

The Corniche strip

The "Corniche", adorned with sculptural elements, became synonymous with beautification along Jeddah's seacoast strip. It denotes the creation of all kinds of sculptures, plastics, art objects and installations that adorn the Corniche area. The Corniche delineates several sorts of public places, green areas and parks for leisure and entertainment.

3.3.2. Types of major urban artworks

Urban artworks in Jeddah include all kinds of sculptures, murals, small-scale architectural elements, art objects and installations. Artworks are all abstract in form and their types can be summarized as follows:

Architectural icons

Architectural icons play an interesting role in the Jeddah Art Initiative. Architecture is represented through fine ensembles and award-winning Mosques, some landmark buildings, or a miniature for full-scale traditional buildings and old city gates in some locations. Illustrative examples include the Commercial Bank in Jeddah, by Kin Jordon Bunshaft in the Historic Jeddah (1988); the Floating Rahma Mosque Corniche Jeddah (2005); the Camel Roundabout by Rabi Al Akhras, Obhur Jeddah, and the Historic Jeddah Gate, in Albalad.

Sculptures and murals

There are no clear specific criteria for sculpture and murals. They can be of any size, form, shape, style, material or theme. This in turn makes it difficult to integrate the urban artwork within particular settings. For example, the works of Henry Moore or Victor Vasarely are not exposed enough and do not fit visually nor physically, in terms of scale, theme and proportions. Moreover, little is known about the significance of those works for the public. Examples include: *The Changing Positions* by Victor Vasarely in the Jeddah Sculpture Museum (1981); the *Eye* by César Baldaccini, Jeddah Sculpture Museum, the *Fisherman's Net* by Mustafa Senbel, Jeddah Corniche; and the *Verse Boat* by Julio

Typology of Urban Art in Jeddah: Location

Art in Road Ways				
	<p>Lanterns and Tap By Ali Bayoumi and Mohamed Farsi Prince Faisal bin Fahd Street Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/lanterns-and-tap</p>	<p>The Four Lanterns By Julio Lafuente Al-Tahliah Street. Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/the-four-lanterns</p>	<p>Tahlia Fountain By Mustafa Senbel Tahlia, Jeddah Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/tahliah-fountain</p>	<p>Fish By Al Hindi and Hesham Benjabi Jeddah Corniche Obhur Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/fish</p>
				
	<p>Rotating First Section No. 3 By Arnaldo Pomodoro The Jeddah Sculpture Museum 1975 Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/rotating-first-section-no-3</p>	<p>Large Spindle Piece By Henry Moore The Jeddah Sculpture Museum. 1968 Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/large-spindle-piece</p>	<p>Antagonistic Contacts and Sun and Beam By Giò Pomodoro The Jeddah Sculpture Museum Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/antagonistic-contacts-and-sun-and-beam</p>	<p>Large Ball Bearing By Ottmar Hollmann The Jeddah Sculpture Museum Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/large-ball-bearing</p>
Roundabouts				
	<p>Accident! (Crazy Speed) By Julio Lafuente Jeddah Northern Corniche Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/accident-crazy-speed</p>	<p>The Globe Roundabout By Julio Lafuente Northern Jeddah. 1970 Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/the-globe</p>	<p>Engineers' Tools By Hisham Benjabi and Ali Amin Engineering Roundabout Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/engineers-tools</p>	<p>The Seagull Roundabout By Mustafa Senbel Jeddah Northern Corniche Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/the-seagull</p>
				
	<p>Sunrise By Mustafa Senbel Jeddah Corniche Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/sunrise</p>	<p>Sunflower Field Fountain By Eila Hiltunen Jeddah Corniche. 1980 Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/sunflower-field-fountain</p>	<p>Peace By Leonardo Nierman Jeddah Corniche. 1984 Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/peace</p>	<p>The Island Mosque By Abdel Wahed El-Wakil Jeddah Corniche. Source:http://www.sculpturesofjeddah.com/sculptures/detail/the-island-mosque</p>

Fig. 1. Typology of Urban Art in Jeddah according to their location

Lafuente, North Jeddah (1981).

Landscape art

Mixing artworks with the hard and soft scape are often successful within the Jeddah Art Initiative. Green areas and lavish parks contribute significantly to the overall social interaction with the artworks. Examples include: The Jeddah Sculpture Museum on the Corniche by Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives (ALJCI), and the *Seagull Roundabout* by Mustafa Senbel, Jeddah Northern Corniche.

Seascape art

There are many artworks located within or along the seacoast. Water adds unique value to the overall scenography of the artworks. Sometimes waterscape is part of the artwork itself. Notable examples include: the *King Fahad's Fountain* donated by King Fahad at the Corniche; the *Fish* by Al Hindi and Hesham Banjabi, Obhur Corniche; and the *Sunflower Field Fountain* by Eila Hiltunen at Jeddah Corniche (1980).

Lightscape art

Lighting has an important role in the presentation of urban art works in Jeddah. Some significant artworks are based on their night-lighting images, particularly on the roundabouts. Examples include: the *Four Lanterns* by Julio Lafuente at Al-Tahliah Street; the *King Fahad's Fountain* donated by King Fahad, *Jeddah Corniche*; and the *Globe Roundabout* by Julio Lafuente at the Northern Jeddah (1970).

4. Current issues of artscaping Jeddah

After almost three decades of realization, the Jeddah Art Initiative proved considerable success in developing a strong visual identity that helped shape the image of the city, especially with the development of particular areas such as the Corniche or some major roads. It has successfully contributed to identifying and naming new urban areas and large-scale neighborhoods. However, some sculptures and installations of monumental scale are simplistic in their form and superficial in expressions, such as *Al-Darraga/ the Bicycle* (located in Al-Darraga roundabout, designed by Julio Lefuente), *Al-Handdassa / Geometry*, installation (located in Al-Handdassa roundabout and designed by Hisham Benjabi and Ali Amin), and *Al-Falak/ the Cosmos* (located in a Al-Falak roundabout, designed by Ottoar Hollmann) (fig. 3).

Although the Jeddah Art Initiative enhanced the city's identity, it revealed a number of shortcomings that could be improved and addressed in the future. This is important because the initiative was not well integrated with city development and masterplans at that time. It was laid out to deal with the gaps in city-planning and the issues resulting from those gaps. More importantly, in many locations, artworks are not integrated with their relevant urban setting or social context. Major shortcomings can be summarized as follows:

- Some artworks are not conveying a meaningful message.
- Some artworks reflect a direct meaning that should be considered out of urban and/or cultural context.
- Some artworks are not seen as vital elements in the public sphere; they are not centered within public activities, which could encourage people to appreciate their value and beauty. The scale of some of the public places is exceptionally huge, which makes them difficult to perceive, especially in the city squares; this turns them more into picturesque elements than active ones for the urban sphere.

5. Concluding remarks

The experience of Jeddah, City of Art, illustrates how public art can enhance the character and identity of a city, which is very important for the improvement of its living quality. The analysis has shed light on the significance of the quality of spatial and visual environments within the public sphere. Public artworks should be treated as landmarks for social interaction and cultural awareness, which reflect livability and identity. Consequently, public art can add value to places in Jeddah that attract social interaction and tourism.

Urban art in public places should be integrated into the planning framework of the city or the place. Placing artworks in urban settings is, therefore, a planning process that should bring together relevant input from city development departments, partner agencies, collaborating developers, architects and designers, artists and the local community. Setting of artworks in public places in terms of form, function and content is an important element in the process of successful place making. The process should identify the opportunities that are possible in a specific area, such as a particular street or square. It can be an important factor in the social integration of urban art with the local community and the way of building up the identity of a public domain.

Major design principles for planning public art in Jeddah should be considered as follows:

A public art master plan should be an essential layer of the city's overall planning, and it should organize the selection and setting of artworks.

A public art master plan should respond to the main city axis in order to emphasize the city's identity as well as acting as landmarks.

Public art placement should be based on certain criteria like integration with the adjacent surrounding built environment, and applicable public art perspective views

Public art should complement public buildings

A careful investigation of the relationship between the artworks and the urban context, distance, movement and visibility as well as the townscape elements should be considered.

Public art placement should be integrated in the surrounding landscape as well as in relation to existing amenities.

Public art placement should be studied in relation to the surrounding roads with its different categories, e.g.

pedestrian or vehicles roads, in order to satisfy different forms of perceptions.

Public art should be constructed with an appropriate scale in light of surrounding buildings.

Public art and public spaces need to engage with, and cater for, people in all their diversity of needs, aspirations, and resources, encouraging users to create activities for themselves.



Fig. 3. Public artworks as urban landmarks in Jeddah. Above right: Al-Handdassa roundabout, above left Al-Darraga roundabout, Below: Al-Falak, roundabout

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Design workshop: The case of creating a stencil mural

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Abstract

Street art, as a global art movement, affects the daily lives of people in towns and cities of our world. Taking that into consideration, this paper reports on the concept of creating a stencil workshop with the goal of painting a stencil - mural (large scale artwork on a vertical surface). This co-design workshop includes some type of Maker technology approached through experiential learning and educational methodologies similar to those used in Design courses, as the ones taught at the Department of Product and Systems Design Engineering of the University of the Aegean. The multidimensional character of street artists is presented in this paper's introduction and their role as creators is examined under the light of design. The techniques and methods they use can be analyzed as design processes, one of which is the creation of stencils. Specific reference is made to the history of this artistic medium, alongside other ways of transferring a draft from paper or the screen on to the wall. The stencil-mural workshop took place in the city of Hermoupolis, Syros, Greece and was attended by 24 participants, young design students from different semesters, who worked individually or in groups for three days. The final artwork and the individual steps of its production are presented, and the paper concludes with all the results and insights provided by the study of the process and the feedback received from the workshop participants.

Keywords: Stencil, Mural, Workshop, Design, Street Art

1. Introduction: Street artist as designer

In search of the etymological framework referring to Public Art, Urban Art, Street Art and Graffiti, there are many different correlations, relationships, overlapping concepts, sections, subsections, terminology, meanings and symbolisms. Efforts to examine this phenomenon by separating and categorizing its concepts is a process in the making by circles of scholars worldwide. In this paper, street art is viewed under the prism of design, following the systematic approach of the doctoral research conducted at the department of Product and Systems Design and Engineering of the Aegean University, which is associated with the triplet Design - Street Art - Creation.

In the writings of Hilde Hein, the term public art is described as a design and implementation process that involves a series of complex and high level negotiations for reaching agreement between all stakeholders, who may have conflicting interests (Hein, 1996). The author clarifies the

time and space in which this process is performed and the meaning that it carries, but, most importantly, public art is called a "design process". This is an effective demarcation for defining public art and street art, that can be broken down into an innovative and dynamic range of design methods and techniques for projects, media and manifestations.

The multitude of different techniques and approaches for creating street artworks and the continuous emergence of new artists are both factors that do not leave much room for a thorough and timely documentation. Having a long past and great complexity, elements under the term street art include "spray-painted stencils, large scale murals, paper paste-ups, ephemeral sculptures - only at the turn of the twentieth century the term emerged as a global category, eventually producing its own system of legible forms, leading practitioners, galleries, publications and events" (INOPINATUM, MacDowall, 2013:125). As shown, the flow of

data on street art is constantly changing: mostly expanded on a global base of information, main representative of which is the Internet.

However, being a type of art which is usually under no rules, what remains timeless is the free spirit and the ideals it represents. The works of street art and graffiti convey many different messages and can be performed with a number of different techniques. These techniques vary depending on the tools (spray, brushes, stencils, markers, trowels, compressors, etc.), the “artistic way”, which is a combination of tools and techniques to achieve the purpose (painting, drawing, sculpture, collage, knitting, etc.) and, finally, the surfaces of urban space or objects in which the artistic expression takes effect (walls, pavement, columns, windows, cars, etc.).

Street art, besides spray, indelible pens and markers that are normally used by graffiti artists, allows artists to deal and work with whatever means best serve their artistic style. That is a reason why many artists, in their routine, take advantage of a vast repertoire of mixed techniques with one or more forms of different media [Hughes, 2009]. Some of the techniques that are now associated with street art, such as posters and stencil creation, have been used for various purposes prior to their adoption by artists. Most of these techniques were exploited by graffiti artists to be more productive, or because they better help them to manage the quality of their work, but also because it contributes to their faster creation (Bofkin, 2014:24).

As in other fields of art, but also in graffiti and street art, it is common for the people involved during, before or after the process of production, to shift between roles of artist, designer or user. The role of the craftsperson could also be added, as, according to Phillips and Pilz, “when street art is practiced media-driven is more craftwork than art. The focus is on manual skills, procedures, and media usages.” (INOPINATUM, Phillips, Pilz, 2013:125). Often unconsciously and sometimes knowingly, street artists adopt elements that facilitate the flow of their work, which derive from other cognitive environments, such as those of design or technology.

Another element that refers to the multidimensional nature of the street artist is mentioned by Sarah Thénot, in her thesis

(entitled UNFRAMED - A system of connections between artists and people through mural arts in a Colombian city). The relationship between the artist, work and the end user has changed. For example, the artist, at first, had direct contact with the customer, but then several intermediaries began to appear, who facilitated the flow of information, the purchase and leasing of art projects and, also, demand / supply issues, such as galleries, dealers, museums, curators, and auctions. The role of the artist changes from “decorator” to a protagonist of society’s everyday life as a builder of expression and a visionary. The parenthood and uniqueness of his/her art projects, render the creation “alive”, both in terms of emotional and economical value, often making it a luxury item and an investment which few can access (Thénot, 2011:81).

Of course, there also is and will continue to exist the need for an open and free expression on the street, since “Street art is gaining popularity and is becoming a stand-alone focus for many students, artists and galleries, as well as advertisers and youth-based marketing. Although there is no study dedicated to this genre, it may be a matter of time before critics and scholars begin looking at the potential of this rapidly growing phenomenon” (Deitch, J., Gastman, R., Rose, A., 2011:14). Indeed, street art has already been embraced by several research communities and will continue to expand on this course.

Undoubtedly, as advocated by Stephen Wilson, there is another side, where the artists themselves can contribute to many aspects of scientific research, putting on the table new topics for discussion, planning “unorthodox” approaches and discovering methods to visualize their findings. Artists may help researchers explore, or even understand unknown dimensions and cognitive frameworks and can establish channels of communication with the audience outside of the scientific community (Wilson, 2010: 16). The view of Christopher Frayling, in his paper *Research in Art and Design*, which studies research as a driving force in art and design is also very interesting. The artist, by definition, is someone who works through an expressive idiom, rather than a cognitive, and masterly work for him/her is the result of personal evolution: it is more like autobiography rather than understanding the reality that surrounds him. The researcher - scientist is characterized by strict organization and the habit of raising speculations and hypotheses which

she tries to prove or disprove according to a set of formal and systematic procedures (Frayling, 1993).

It is vital that Graffiti and Street Art “should be embracing municipalities’ support to focus on projects that intervene in aggressive urban infrastructures or resume the spontaneous and ephemeral character of Street Art that are in fact, its nuclear strength” (INOPINATUM, Simões, 2013:125). In this direction, private and public bodies should invest in educational norms and expand the channels of communication between artists and other stakeholders, so that both can indulge and reap the benefits of street art’s multidimensional reality.

Methods for reproducing art on the wall - Stencils

The study of the techniques and methods that were used in the past, the ones that are being used now and those that will continue to be discovered by street and graffiti artists is a very interesting one. Especially if the search on their roots gets deeper, it is observed that they are often based on the use of known traditional techniques, separate or mixed, or even their blending with other brand new, emerging methods.

In most cases, if it is not about an improvised, unscheduled expression. What precedes the creation of a certain art or other similar type of project is the creation of the draft. The draft is the main guide and the first step to a “safer” approach, especially if the final artwork is going to be a large-scale mural. There are several ways to transfer a draft or an outline from the paper or the monitor on to the wall, and the use of some of the major traditional ways, include:

Grid - The use of grid is an inexpensive, traditional low-tech method for reproducing or upscaling an image from one medium to another. It can be quite a lengthy process, depending on how large and detailed the final project will be. For this method, all that is needed is a ruler, a small-sized copy of the reference picture and a pencil to design the grid lines on the desired surface.

Transfer paper - This technique is used very often, especially by beginners wishing to transfer their projects on to large-scale surfaces. It relies on the use of transfer paper, a paper surface coated with a powder-like kind of material, which is mounted onto another surface when pressure is applied. The transfer paper is a medium that has high precision, but cannot easily be used on uneven surfaces.

Pounce Pattern - A traditional method of transferring drafts from papers onto other surfaces is this ancient technique. Pouncing refers to the use of graphite or coal which with consecutive blows is gently transported through small holes of a paper forming a pattern or a border, to another surface. The holes are made with the help of special tools, such as an awl. A great advantage of this method is that the perforated paper can be reused many times and the transfer of the pattern is very fast.

Video Projectors - A projector is a handy tool for both beginner and master artists. Painters working on photorealistic projects often use projectors to magnify and transfer the image from a small picture onto a large canvas. Moreover, the use of projectors for transferring projects on a large scale, also shows how the development of technology provides a solution to basic issues of art and creativity.

Direct drawing - Many street and graffiti artists consider these aforementioned techniques invalid or “fraudulent” because the work is not direct and spontaneous, and each of them contains many technological aids. In direct drawing, artists simply stick the paper with the draft up on the wall with tape and begin to slightly sketch the basic outlines. Throughout the process they are taking steps back to see the project from a distance and at the same time adjust and improve the necessary areas until the artwork is completed. Of course, this process requires much more skill and thinking to run, while it is also very concerning that the artwork should always be viewed from afar so that the artist is sure that everything is going right. Drawing on a large scale is demanding and much time can be spent erasing and redesigning parts of the project. Although, among the advantages is the entertainment provided by this creative process, but also the possible “pleasant accidents” that may eventually enhance the project.

Another reproducing method is the stencil, which is very close to the pounce pattern, only the painting tool used is spray paint. Stencils can be used either as drafts or as integrated tools and their extensive use in street art applications, has led to the emergence of a distinctive artistic style derived solely from them. Images made from stencils range from simple hearts or circles to complex scenes of cities or realistic portraits. The applications are endless, from creating decorative designs for use at home to street artworks or even

to stencils for construction use. Stencils have a long history. Hand outlines in many prehistoric rock paintings in caves can be characterized as the first stencils. They were also utilized as a tool for coloring fabrics for centuries, especially in Japan. In the mid-fifteenth century, they were used for coloring black and white prints from wood engravings. The illustrations on playing cards or books in mass production, for example, were made in this way. Today, their use is often found in street art projects.

The stencil is one of the simplest and most accessible means of artistic intervention in the streets. Since the 1960s it became applicable in Europe and the United States, and very popular from the work of Ernest Pignon-Ernest in France, Hugo Kaagman in Holland and Chaz Bojorquez on the West Coast of America. The stencil can be made easily at home. Many artists make complex stencils in their workplace, and they later create their designs on the street much faster (Catz, 2013: 52). One of the most famous street artists nowadays, using stencils to create most of his artworks is Banksy.

2. Related work: Street art and co-creation

There are numerous examples of collaborative art projects and experiments that have been performed in the past or running at the moment. This type of research is carried out either by universities, institutions, schools, separate departments, by organized groups or even individuals. The creation of a mural or a stencil may be a personal matter, but it can employ a number of people of different professional and artistic disciplines. In street art and graffiti festivals, artists are invited to work individually or together to create artworks on large prefabricated surfaces, walls, or buildings.

A well-known collaborative project is the Favela Painting project, which is about the creation of enormous murals painted on the walls of favela housing and was developed by two designers, Jeroen Koolhaas and Dre Urhahn or Haas & Hahn. The Dutch duo, through an online funding platform, managed to get together, on several occasions in the years 2009, 2010 and 2013, a large group of builders and painters, children and adults, with a common goal of completing an artistic project in two favelas of Rio de Janeiro. The result not only helped in the beautification of the favela, but also in the regeneration of the surrounding area, where the previously unfinished homes were completed, achieving double

benefit, because better living conditions were offered for the residents (Rahman, 2014).

The redevelopment of the city of Tirana in Albania (Abazi, 2014) and the giant murals of Philadelphia (Golden et al., 2002) both show that the impact of street art in social, touristic, economic and communication issues are particularly advantageous. Especially when such actions are launched by experienced professionals in the field of architecture, design and other similar disciplines, then the result can contribute to the improvement and the fulfilment of predefined needs and desires or to address specific problems.

Like any other art form, in street art, individual styles and techniques can be the core of instructive material, which, depending on the degree of expertise and requirements, can be used at different educational tiers as a separate formed course or as “condensed” knowledge that will be presented in workshops, art studios or laboratories.

3. Design workshops and fabrication labs

The different approaches to learning procedures and teaching methods are many, as well as many are the references in the literature, with a starting point on the works of Dewey, Kolb, and Schön. Moreover, textbooks rich in information and examples on the collaborative artistic creation and construction are, Connected! LiveArt by Waag Society and FAB by Neil Gershenfeld.

Creating (Making) is currently applied in different places, permanently established as Makerspaces and FabLabs or temporary, such as Hackathons. An important aspect of the Maker movement is the need to integrate the ideas and culture of educational contexts or learning activities, associated with the idea of “learning through making or constructing” which is rooted in constructivism, considering that learning can occur more effectively when people act while making tangible objects in the real world (Anderson: 2012).

The Department of Product and Systems Design and Engineering has repeatedly offered its infrastructure and equipment to support the hosting and running of several different workshops over the past years. Indicatively, one of them is the recent Open Design & Fab Workshops: The

Case of Making Use of 3D Printing Technology in Scenarios of Recycling Plastic. This workshop worked by training participants through the making process, which followed a certain constructivist approach, such as active learning, experiential learning, reflective practice and problem-based learning. These approaches can be applied to any learning context ranging from academic to vocational training.

The Stencil Mural Workshop that is presented in this paper was based both on the philosophy of active and experiential learning and on the methodology adopted in the Design Studio (Studio 7c) course of the D.P.S.D.E. [Bofylatos et al.: 2016]. In this way, students who have already attended the Service Design Studio class, can work under certain conditions which are familiar to them, addressing the process of making a stencil and creating a large collaborative artistic work, as a process for designing any other product or system that will later be used for a particular service or

for a predetermined purpose. Additionally, they can work in groups, as they are accustomed to during the execution and delivery of projects in specific courses of the department.

4. Stencil mural workshop

The main subject of the Stencil Mural Workshop was the learning of a basic method for designing and creating a stencil, individually or collaboratively, in order to use it to create a mural composed of stencils. The workshop had a total duration of 24 hours and was divided into three different classes of 8 hours per day. One of the main goals was that the participants could work in groups or individually, after having received all the necessary information for each step in the manufacturing process and use of the stencil.

The workshop took place under a class project for the Design Studio 7c, of the Department of Product and Systems Design and Engineering of the University of the Aegean, and

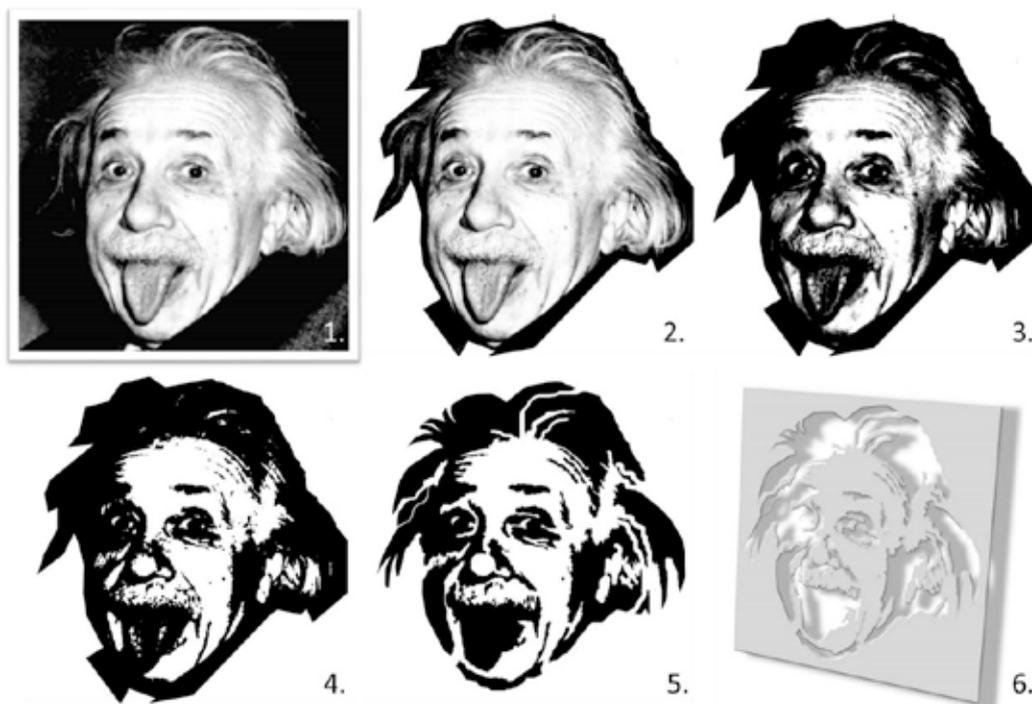


Fig. 1. Using a photo to create a stencil. Step 1. Image selection, Step 2. Background deletion, Step 3. Brightness/contrast adjustment, Step 4. Saturation adjustment, Step 5. Technical details adjustment, Step 6. Printing, pasting on the desired surface and cutting. Steps No. 4, 5 and 6 when using a drawing and steps 5 and 6 when using a photograph are those that require the most attention and are the most time consuming. The better completion of these steps would guide the ultimate success in the making of the stencil and for this reason the participants were instructed to deal with them diligently to avoid the possibility of errors, which would create problems later. Many of those who attended the workshop initially had difficulty understanding the usefulness of islets, bridges and the margin (Fig. 2) but in the end, when they put their stencils on the wall, they realized their importance in the construction.

was originally proposed by a six-member group of students as part of their work for the semester. The central axis around which the teams' work revolved was the design of a service, and, more specifically, the analysis of the ways of tool-sharing, in order to bring together designers with artisans or craftspeople so as to exchange knowledge and experiences. For this purpose, this workshop was created and organized considering that the participants are students who are invited to create a project using tools and methods that are known to urban artists.

The total number of participants was 24 (19 women), from 18-24 years old and all of them were students of different semesters. The six-member organizing team secured the necessary materials and premises essential to the workshop. Specifically, the workshop amenities included razors, pens, papers, rulers, sprays, paperboards and old x-rays films to

create and cut the stencils. The use of recyclable materials, such as x-rays, enhances the sustainable character of the design process. The laboratory and the departments' amphitheater were also used, containing the necessary desks and computers with pen and tablets for those who wanted to work in digital software.

The first part of the presentation on the first day of the workshop concerned the history of graffiti and street art and their different manifestations. The second part focused on the history of the stencil as a tool for the creation and reproduction of images, patterns and other graphics and gave fundamental information on creating and cutting it. There were also presented many works by famous street artists engaged in the practice of the stencil, such as Banksy, C215, Blek le Rat, 3 dot and others. After the presentation, the participants were divided in groups or individually started

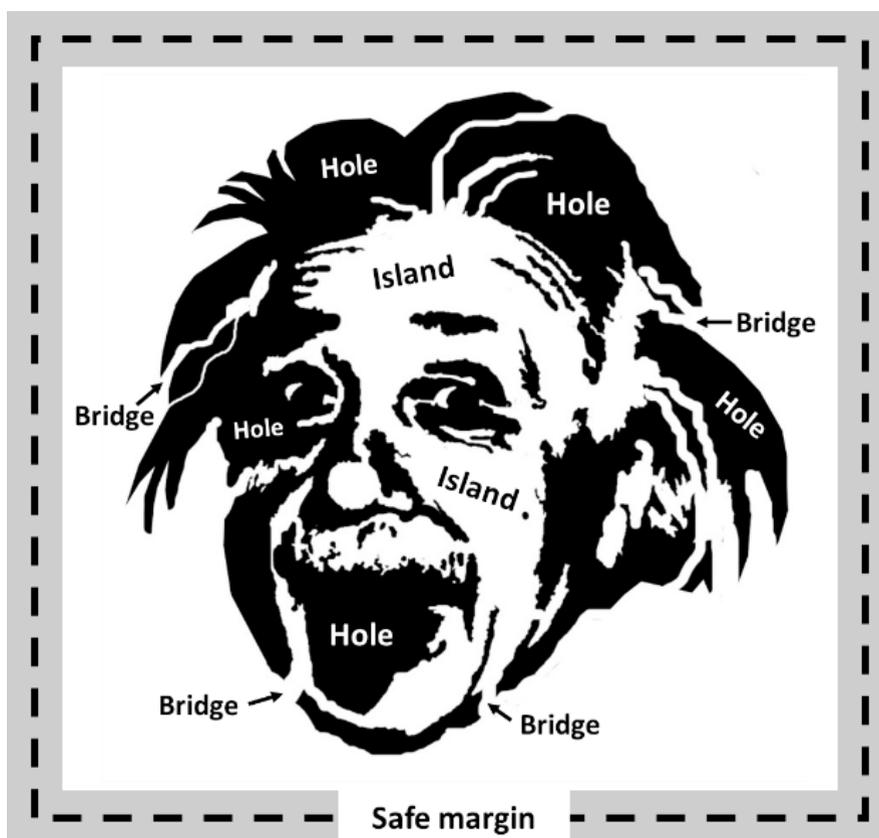


Fig. 2. Bridges and the margin

thinking about what they wanted to create as a stencil. To make and cut the stencil they followed the steps below:

Theme selection. Participants were allowed to either use a ready-made image from the web or to design whatever they wanted.

Creation of a draft. If they had chosen a photo from the web (Fig. 1) instead of this step, the participants were called to edit the photo to make it black and white, and then to adjust the brightness, contrast and threshold levels to obtain the desired result. In a few words, they were taught how to “trace” the image.

“Cleaning” the draft. At this stage, the participants had to present an as “clean” as possible draft or photo, without visual noise or unnecessary details, so as to facilitate the process later during the transferring to the cutting surface.

Technical details. After the “cleaning”, the participants added in their images, by hand or digitally, the details needed for a stencil to be cut

correctly. These include the “islands”, the “bridges” and a safe margin around the stencil.

Transfer to the cutting board. Whether by printing and pasting, or simply by placing their designs with tape, the different themes were transferred on the x-ray film or the paperboard and were ready to be cut.

Cutting the stencil. At this last step, the participants completed their stencil.

Most of the participants chose to create their own themes, with preference to those depicting characters, humans, animals or cartoons. Other topics included decorative designs, objects, abstract designs or a combination thereof. It is noted that three of the participants chose to deal with the making of multi-layered stencils which they managed to successfully carry out on the wall. The main paper sizes used were A4, A3 and A3 multiples. For cutting stencil sizes larger than A3, they used cartons or many x-rays joined together. In the final count the number of all various sized stencils were 38, after some of the workshop members constructed over

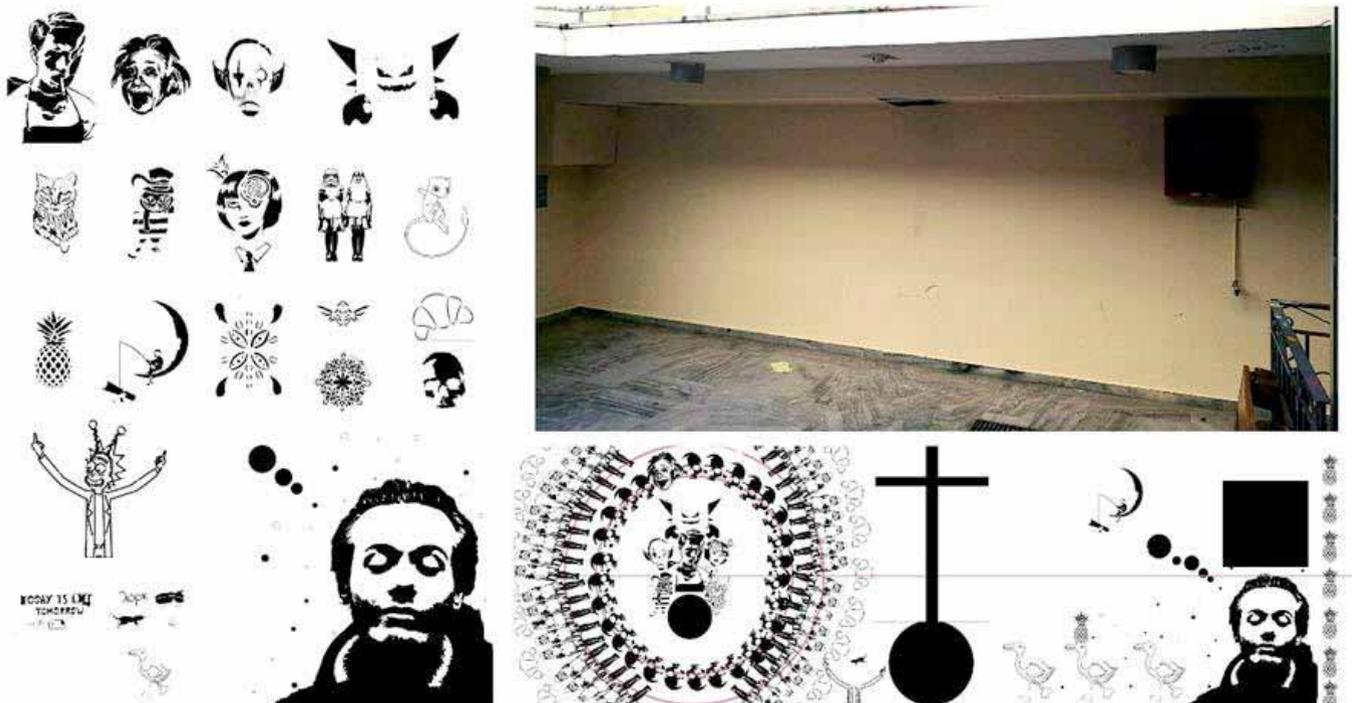


Fig. 3. Stencil workshop elements - Some of the stencils of the workshop (left), the wall before (top right) and the draft sketch created (bottom right).

2 individual stencils.

On the second day of the workshop (Figure 4.) the students finished cutting the stencils that had not been completed. Once this happened, all the projects were stored in digital jpeg file format, with 70 dpi resolution, in proportion to their actual dimensions. Thus, all projects could directly be used in the digital draft model of the wall using the appropriate software (Adobe Photoshop), in order to develop the overall draft, which would be the guide for the creation of the final artwork. The overall draft was formed in cooperation with the organizing team and the participants, at the end of the

second day by co-decisions and adjustments that took place in real time. The goal was that the groups and each lab member would propose a spot where they would like to draw their stencil, and to finally arrange and place them all together to create the final artwork.

Final corrections to the stencils were made at the start of the third day while the first circular guide lines were sketched on the wall. As co-decided, some stencils on the left part of the wall would be reproduced along these circular lines, creating concentric circles surrounding a subject made of other stencil designs. When all groups and individuals



Fig. 4. Snapshots from the first two days of the workshop - 1. Sketching before cutting, 2.,3., and 4. Participants cutting the stencils, 5. One of the completed stencils, 6. All the stencils together.



Fig. 5. Snapshots of the third day of the workshop -
1. The first circle is completed, 2. and 3. Participants working together for the final creation.

were prepared, the first stencil was created by the author and, subsequently, under his guidance, the participants began to make the rest. The colors used were pre-selected with subjective criteria by the organizing team, which also painted the wall with emulsion paint, before the beginning of the workshop. The wall is 1.90 meters high and 6.20 meters

long. The spray paint used was Montana Gold of pink, turquoise, black and white color. There were 6 cans for each color (total 24 cans), but eventually it took about half of each. The remaining colors were stored to be used in the future in a similar activity.



Fig. 6. The final artwork (stencil - mural).

For the creation of the final artwork (Figure 6.) none of the above methods of transferring (section 2 of the paper) was used. Actually, it was not necessary, since the stencils themselves had the needed size and were able to work as individual pieces of the master draft and could also perform simultaneously as guides. The only thing necessary was the creation of the circular lines, that were made using a nail, thread and a pencil. The end of the workshop was marked with the completion of the stencil - mural that was made entirely, from beginning to end, by the workshop participants.

5. Conclusions and future research

Throughout the workshop the participants showed a lot of enthusiasm and interest, especially the younger ones, having received a first impression of how an organized design approach can lead to interesting results, even if it concerns artistic fields, such as stencils and street art. Thirty percent of the students had never made a stencil before, nor had ever attended seminars of such type. For them it was a really special experience, as they mentioned at the end.

Many students were initially worried, because they thought that they would be required to work for the creation of an artistic work, which requires talent and imagination, but after their familiarization with the materials and the clarification of the “tricky” areas of the process, they were very satisfied and confident about the stencil they produced. After the workshop, all participants were asked to answer a questionnaire. The most useful data were plotted in graphics, from which some useful conclusions were derived. The majority dealt with character creation (74%) (Figure 7.), most participants said they acquired a new skill (65%) (Figure 7.), as well as many answers confirming the beneficial and educational function of the different aspects of the workshop (presentation, tutoring, creative approach, and so on). A participant said, “I realized very quickly the way of making a stencil, although I’ve never made one before”. Another said, “I liked it so much that when I went home I continued to make more stencils”. The aspect of co-working received many positive comments, both about the creation of the

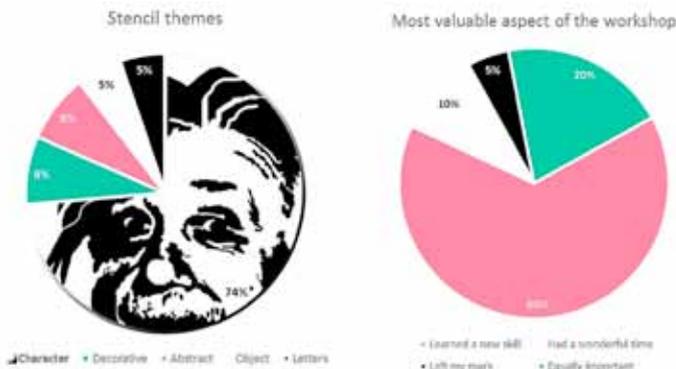


Fig. 7. Pie charts 1 and 2. Different stencil themes (on the left) and most valuable aspect of the workshop (on the right).



Fig. 8. Participant information - Past and future



Fig. 9. Participant trends - Different aspects of the workshop from low to high regarding different matters.

collective stencils, and also about the creation on the wall. Questions regarding the stencil making and the cooperation between the participants concerned a) the needs of the workshop, b) personal needs, c) neither d) both, the clear majority responded both times the fourth. Also, on the question on which workshop day was the most interesting, the third day prevailed against the first by 2 votes, mostly because the participants enjoyed working together on the final artwork.

A part of the workshop which did not work as dynamically as the rest, was the creation of the digital draft on the second day. Some of the participants were able to express their opinions in the way they wanted, while others had a stronger will. This has led some in the decision not to participate and simply observe the process of creating the final draft. This did not create any particular problem in the smooth implementation of the remaining parts of the workshop, but a little resentment was obvious on the part of some participants. In a future workshop, this would be one of the first pieces that should be studied and designed more thoroughly, as it appeared it was one of the weak points.

Ultimately, the three-day seminar on stencil making to create a co-operative mural, can be called a success according to the participants, the large and loyal attendance and the final result. It was a first experiment, which can work as a base for exploring respective themes in the future. Further projects would be very interesting if the participating audience could come from environments that are not related to design or artistic mindsets and working methods, or even children or elderly people.

Of particular interest would be the study of the results of the implementation of such a laboratory in a public area and the documentation of the public's reaction and the degree of the final project acceptance. In addition, quantitative and qualitative criteria which could be explored is the use of a wider color pallet, the making of larger stencils, the creation of artworks in larger and more areas. Finally, possible future research could focus on the interaction with other academic fields, and the standardization of many individual procedures of the workshop with the aid of other disciplines.

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Fig. 1. (Step 1.) Albert Einstein's photo by Artur Sasse (<http://www.storypick.com/wpcontent/uploads/2016/01/AE-1.jpg>)

Fig. 4. (1 to 5) and figure 5. photos by Nefeli Karaslanidou.

All other figures and photos created or taken by the author.

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The influence of graffiti writing in contemporary typography

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Abstract

With the entry into the so-called postmodern era we see significant changes in the paradigm of visual communication in general and design in particular, promoted by new ideas and principles that emerge as, what some call, a reaction to Modernism. It is in this environment that graffiti writing arises, controversial, irreverent and creative, becoming a reference for many graphic designers who adopt its characteristics. The development of graphic editing software has facilitated not only the creation of these new works with a hybrid character, but also the practice of graphic design. Consequently, typography, sharing with graffiti its passionate dedication to letters, also explores new forms and variations by the hands of professional designers and enthusiasts. This research aimed to identify the influence of graffiti on contemporary typography. To this end, we analyzed the work of graphic designers where marks of this influence have been found. These provided us with clues to the understanding of the changes that have occurred in the type design practice and their relationship with graffiti.

Keywords: Visual Communication, Graphic Design, Typography, Calligraphy, Graffiti Writing

1. Introduction

1.1. Objectives

Our study, within the field of graphic design research, intends to answer the following questions:

- having proven the existence of characteristic marks of the influence of graffiti writing in graphic design (Craveiro, 2011), do we also find them in contemporary typography?
- given that a large number of currently active graphic designers were, or are still, graffiti writers (Craveiro, 2011), is it also possible to verify the existence of typographers whose work shows some influence of graffiti writing?

- if confirmed, will this influence be significant enough to have a place in the history of graphic design and typography, thus contributing to a better understanding of the practice of these two disciplines?

In view of these issues, the following objectives were defined: proving the existence of marks of the influence of graffiti writing on contemporary typography; verifying the existence of designers / typographers, whose typefaces or compositions, show signs of this activity's influence; contribute to the understanding of graphic design practice, as well as the contemporary typography practice; complement and deepen the scarce bibliography on graffiti writing and its relation with contemporary typography and graphic design.

1.2. Typography

Typography, etymologically of the Greek *typos* (form) and *gráphein* (writing), is the process of shaping writing. For the sake of readability, it is based on the arrangement of the mechanical alphabet, characters - letters, numbers, punctuation marks - in the composition or layout of the text, each representing the “type” (Figure 1) which is the origin of the word typography.



Fig. 1. Movable type - metal and wood.

Typography is the discipline within Graphic Design that studies the different ways of optimizing the graphic emission of verbal messages. It has a technical and functional dimension based on the work of typographers and printers (...) has a humanistic dimension that is based on writing, abstract representation of objects and ideas, which made possible the perpetuation of culture, organization of thought and intellectual development of men. Understood as a discipline, Typography deepens and enriches, in various ways

the objectives of Graphic Design (Juárez, s.d.: 7).

1.3. Graphic design

Graphic design is born as a consequence of the industrial revolution and the resulting development of the graphic arts. Frascara (2006) defines graphic design as an activity that organizes visual communication in society. It adds that graphic design is both a rational and artistic activity. For Richard Hollis, graphic design is: “(...) a kind of language, imprecise grammar and continuously expanding vocabulary whose essential elements are the alphabet and the image. It attributes to graphic design three main functions: to identify; inform and / or instruct; present and / or promote” (2001: 4). Tyler (1992) further suggests that the audience should be taken into account as an active participant in the design process because it has cultural beliefs that influence its interpretation of visual language.

1.4. Modernism and Post-Modernism

In design, postmodernism is understood as a reaction to Bauhaus modernism, new typography and international style, to its elementary principles, the concepts of functionalist design, which have had a great impact on the design and typography of the twentieth century. However, some designers like Dan Friedman questioned whether postmodernism was a decisive break with modernism, or whether it was its natural continuation. He believed that it was possible to embrace the new postmodern tendencies without dismissing the modernist teachings (Poynor, 2003).

For modernism, the main purpose of both graphic design and typography was to communicate the message as efficiently and briefly as possible, disregarding the decoration and ornament in favor of a rational design, oriented to the communicative function. It sought to present the information based on clarity, readability and objectivity (Meggs, 2000; Cauduro, 2009). The famous phrases “less is more”, adopted by the architect Mies Van der Rohe, and “form follows function” by Louis Sullivan, became symbols of the pedagogical program of the Bauhaus, as well as of the modernist movement itself, contributing to a new functionalist movement, the international style.

Designers such as Emil Ruder, Armin Hoffman (Figure 2) and Josef Müller-Brockman (Figure 3) advocated the standardization of the visual form through simple, concrete and rational information so that it could be universally understood. They proposed restrictive graphic solutions,

rigidly controlled by the typographic grid giving preference to clear and functional, simple and harmonious sans serif fonts such as the famous Futura (by Paul Renner) (Figure 4), Helvetica (by Max Miedinger) (Figure 5) and Univers (by Adrian Frutiger). These minimalist solutions eventually became a predictable formula, often boring and

uninteresting, becoming almost invisible after some time (Pelta, 2004; Heller, 2007; Cauduro, 2000).

On the other hand, postmodern design values and cultivates difference, plurality, disorder, heterogeneity, hybrid, irony, paradox, ambiguity, mutability, and improvisation



Fig. 2. Armin Hofmann Giselle, Basler Freilichtspiele 1959



Fig. 4. Futura (designed in 1927 by Paul Renner).



Fig. 3. Josef Muller-Brockman, Juni-Festwochen, 1959



Fig. 5. Helvetica (designed in 1957 by Max Miedinger)

(Harvey 1998). Designers seek to imprint their individuality, based on their experiences and preferences, denying dogmatic solutions. There is a tendency for the ludic and the reinterpretation of the alphanumeric signs of Western writing stimulated by the new digital technology. The new typefaces tend to mutability, due to the manipulations and experimental transformations improvised by the designers such as Neville Brody (image 06), where the transgression of the purist canons is encouraged, being common the customization according to the project (Cauduro, 2002, 2000; Felton, 2006).

The type itself becomes a form that carries meaning (s) and should be competent to hold our attention. Letters and words become images that may not be tied to their meaning. The form thus ceases to be subordinate to its function (Lupton, 1996). Type can, therefore, entertain, amuse, please, persuade, go beyond meaning.

In the digital age, type design can be eccentric / original, unique / personal and subjective, as the aim is to promote multiple readings / interpretations, rather than just one, fixed interpretation. It aspires to provoke the reader so that she becomes an active part in the construction of the message (Poynor, 1991). This new reader should be completely free to explore and interpret what she observes, free from constraints. Thus, a graphic design object, like other artistic objects, is incomplete until the reader interprets it.

This freedom implies the sense of pleasure, the visual aesthetics of the sign (Eco, 1962). However, this new way of approaching and practicing typography and design itself, has raised many questions, namely related to legibility and readability, which are vehemently debated by designers of different generations, with different ideologies and formations, hindering a consensus.

Although David Carson (2003) states "Just because something is readable does not mean it communicates. More importantly, it does not mean it communicates the right thing." Scher (in Byrne & Witt, 1990) considers that readability depends on the purpose of the work, whether it is supposed to be more, less or not readable at all. Many designers think like Herman Zapf: "Reading is the most important part of the whole design. If you limit this - if you slow down the speed of reading - I think it's wrong."

1.5. Legibility and readiness

Ovink (in Heitlinger, 2007: 19) defined readability as "the ease and precision with which the reader perceives printed texts". Ovink adds that this process involves two terms, legibility (visual perception), and readability (intellectual understanding of the text, and explains how to differentiate the two terms:

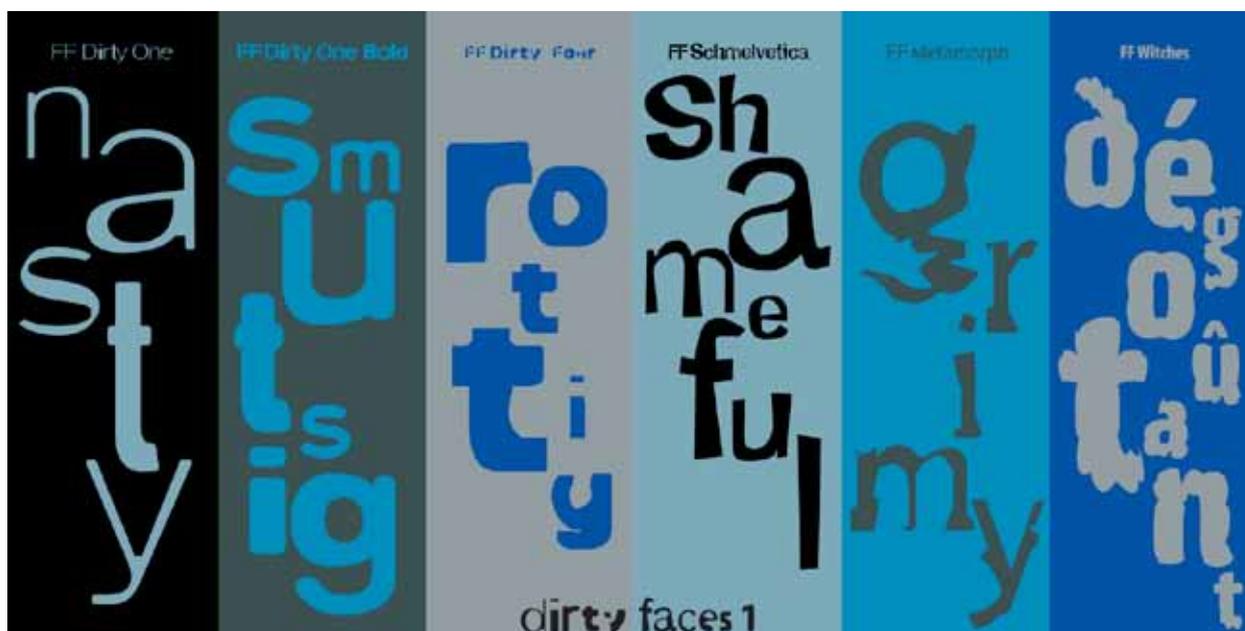


Fig. 6. FF Dirty Faces 1 (designed by Neville Brody, 1994)

To recognize. It is the most immediate level of recognition of the characters, shape and arrangement of glyphs in relation to the background to which they are inserted. To be recognized, the letter must be visible. To interpret. It is the intellectual acquisition of the text by those who read it. It's about content and the author's ability to communicate it to their readers. Authors should be aware of anything that may decrease the ability to decipher a text. In the field of typography, readability is a quality of a given text, typographic font, or document (book, newspaper, etc.). Many typographic fonts were created to meet the specific reading difficulties of a medium (Heitlinger, 2007: 19).

Today we know that legibility is just a matter of habit, as Zuzana Licko (s / d) says:

Typefaces are not intrinsically readable. Rather, it is the reader's familiarity with typefaces that accounts for their readability. Studies have shown that readers read best what they read most. Legibility is also a dynamic process and the readers' habits are ever-changing. It seems curious that blackletter typestyles, which we find illegible today, were actually preferred over more humanistic designs during the eleventh and fiftieth centuries. Similarly, the typefaces we perceive as illegible today may be tomorrow's classic *choices*.

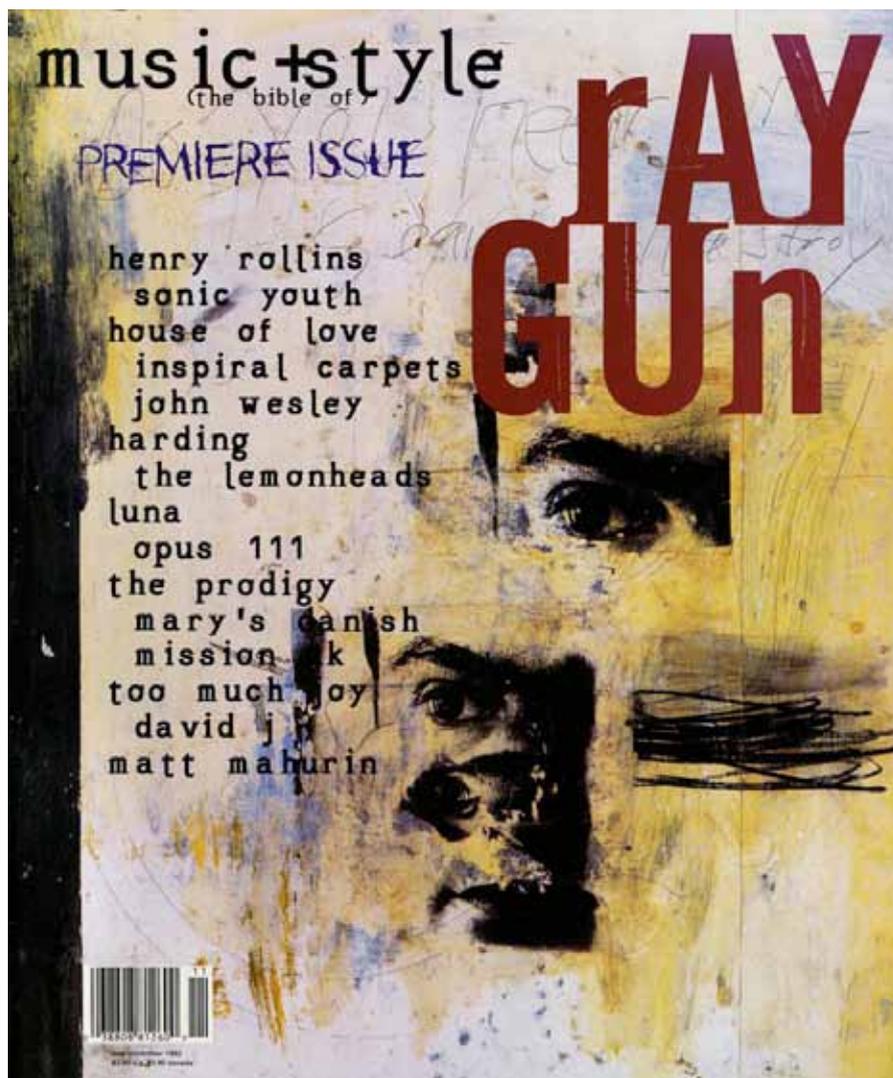


Fig. 7. Premier issue cover of Ray Gun Magazine (designed by David Carson, 1992).

With the growth of multimedia applications, the way fonts were thought and designed has also changed to include readability issues for desktop and mobile screens (Ambrose and Harris, 2006).

According to Cheng (2006) there is not only one correct method of creating fonts since each designer will have his own. Typography is an “art” that continues to grow and evolve constantly. Each new generation of graphic designers establishes their own conventions and boundaries with respect to their activity. Some creations endure over time, while others reflect only fashions and fleeting tendencies, but all have a part in the history of typography (Dawber, 2010).

1.6. Graffiti writing

Graffiti was born in the United States during the 1950s as a result of the combination of social and cultural factors linked to the French student movement in May 1968 and the American hip-hop culture.

The term “graffiti” has Italian origins and is plural of “*graffito*”. It derives etymologically from the Greek “*graphein*”, the name given to the inscriptions made on walls since the Roman Empire, meaning “inscription”. It generally refers to any form of unauthorized inscription on a public surface (Phillips 1999; Lewisohn 2008). It refers to the inscriptions made in urban space, in various supports, such as walls and urban furniture, through several instruments, these usually being the spray or aerosol can and the marker (Campos, 2007).

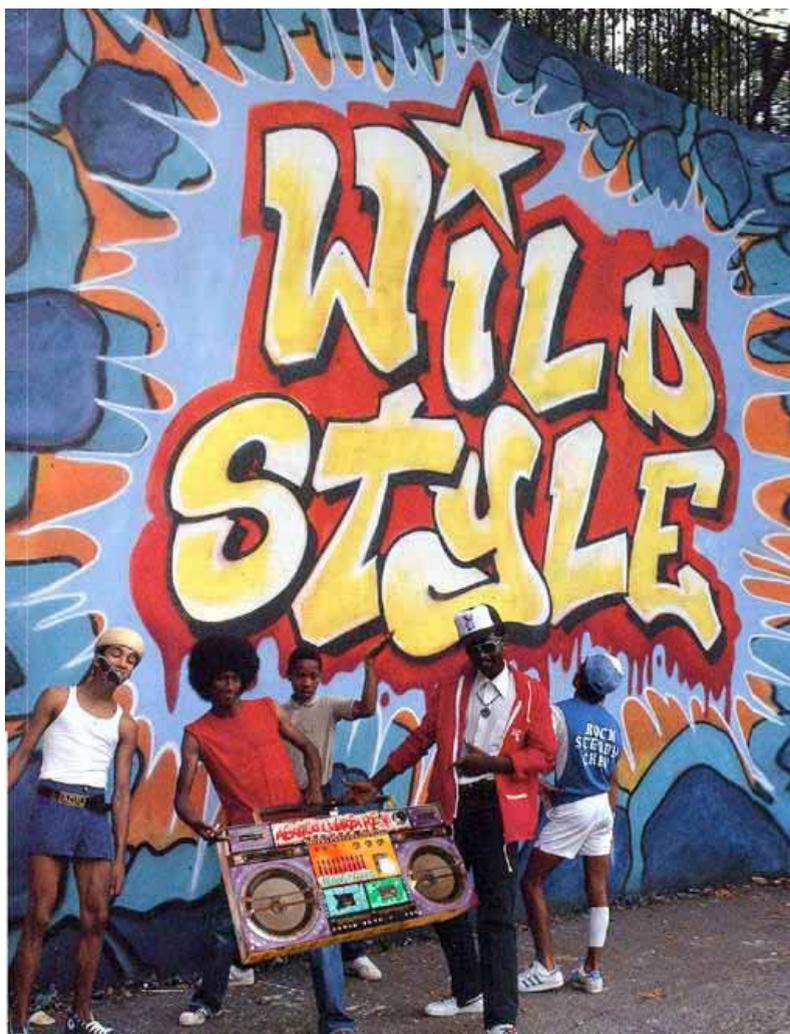


Fig.8. Rock Steady Crew and *writers* Zephyr e Revolt.
Wild Style first movie cover, New York City, 1982.

The present study focuses exclusively on graffiti writing, a term used to identify and differentiate this activity from others, whose definitions refer to completely different objectives. Thus, graffiti writing refers to the activity associated with hip-hop culture, originating in Philadelphia, which was established in New York City during the 1960s,

(Lewisohn 2008, Austin 2001). Graffiti can be considered a predecessor of other movements such as street art or post-graffiti, with which it shares certain graphic, formal, philosophical and social characteristics. Fig. 10. Marker graffiti tag by Sever.



Fig.9. Spray graffiti tag by writer Amaze.



and whose central theme is the tag, or the author's signature



Fig. 11. Wild Style by Molin One, 2016.



Fig. 12 - Bubble Style throw-up by Cope2.

Since its inception, graffiti writing has been specializing in drawing letters, usually of a specific name. Writers have developed numerous styles and variations of the ones that have been defined over time. The great majority of these styles are variations of those that are considered as the typical styles of graffiti writing, the stylistic foundations of graffiti, to which wildstyle (Fig. 11), bubble style (Fig. 12) or 3D (Fig. 13), are examples (Walde, 2011).

Graffiti is, therefore, a cultural practice that presupposes the production of a cultural object that communicates through



Fig. 13. 3D graffiti by Odeith (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 2014)

a series of verbal, iconic and pictorial codes, giving rise to a culture or, as writers prefer, an urban movement. A universe composed of interrelated norms, patterns, representations and imaginary that have established themselves over time (Campos, 2007).

1.7. Graffiti writing, graphic design & typography

Letter is a fundamental element of graffiti writing, communication, graphic design and typography. From advertising posters and TV ads, through urban clothing and footwear lines to album covers, there are innumerable types of graffiti-inspired typography, or with visual marks that refer to it (Kimvall, 2016).

There are testimonies of graphic designers claiming to have gained a taste for typography through graffiti, many of whom have been or are graffiti writers such as Pettis "Originally I got into letterforms in high school when I was into graffiti" (in Dawber, 2010: 118).

According to Ferreira (2008) we can consider that graffiti writing, with regard to typographic compositions, sometimes resembles the work of a professional designer. Both share a common ancestor, the written word (Lynam, 2008); the two work at both microtypography and macrotypography. Microtypography refers to the shape of the letter itself, to the issues of spacing, alignment, size, among others (Spitzmüller, 2007).

Since the letter is the basic element on which graffiti writing develops, as the collective Sicksystems says "Graffiti is all about letters" (in Dawber, 2010: 58) many writers have invented and continue to invent, a large repertoire of alphabets, created initially in their blackbooks and later passed on to walls or subway and train carriages. However, the letters created by graphic designers and typographers are different from the ones conceived by writers. Typefaces created by designers are usually designed for mechanical or digital reproduction, for a standardized and versatile use, so



Fig. 14. Poster for the “Air Force One” promo made for Nike Sportswear, by Sycksystems



Fig. 15. Graffiti piece by Dmitri Aske, Sycksystems



Fig. 16. Zoo York t-shirt design.

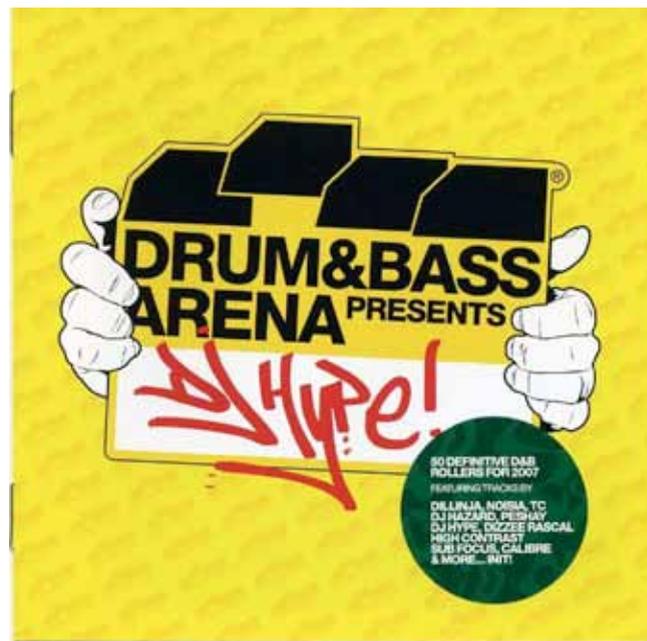


Fig. 17. Drum And Bass Arena Presents DJ Hype, album cover.

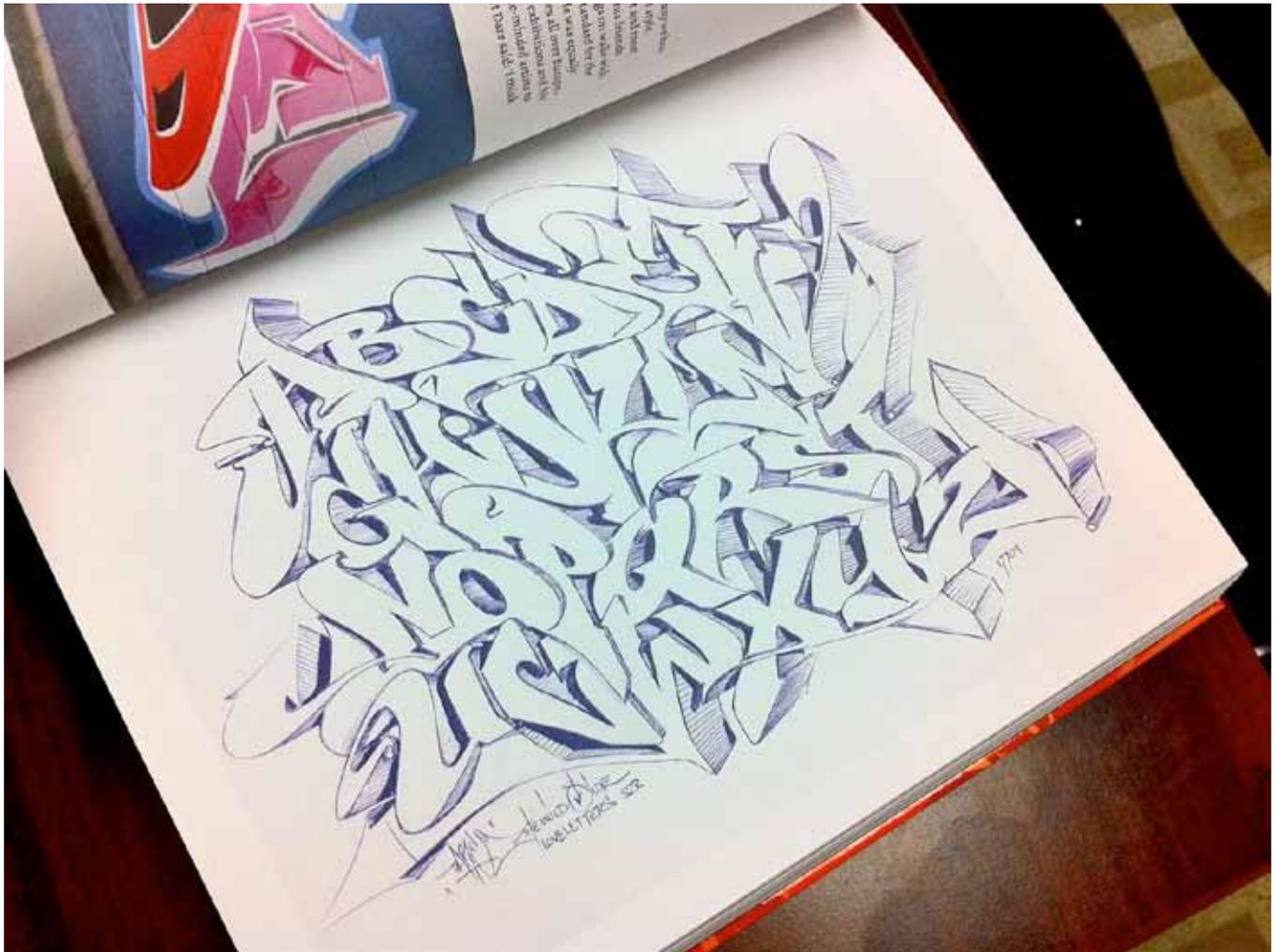


Fig. 18. Graffiti alphabet by Dare

that they can be applied in different texts, without losing their characteristics. The alphabets created by writers are usually designed for specific inscriptions (Sartwell, 2004). However, there are writers who draw whole alphabets. They can be used to determine the consistency of a style, enhance the improvising ability of the writer or even allow him/her not to limit productions to a single tag.

Many writers adopt different tags throughout their career, often simultaneously. Names, nouns, verbs, phrases with ironic or satirical meanings, painted on walls and carriages, among other supports, constituting messages addressed to both a more specific audience and a wider audience, depending on the writer's intention, but each one resulting in a different letter design. Attempting to reproduce exactly the same shapes turns out to be almost impossible, given the limited control of the inscription tool, the dependence

on the movement of the arm and hand, and in the case of the aerosol can, up to the finger pressing the cap. Even the surface on which graffiti is applied can have consequences on the physiognomy of the painted letters. Thus, each work of graffiti presents a typographic variation.

Unlike traditional typeface design, graffiti does not aspire to an exact repetition of the typographic forms it generates, on the contrary it can even be considered as unoriginal or too repetitive. It's this idea that Giant conveys by stating:

The whole thing with graffiti letters is that they should be unique every time you paint, but should have a recognizable style every time. A font set only gives you one way of doing each letter, within a certain style (Giant in Lynam, 2008: 139).

However, it must be borne in mind that being repetitive in graffiti is subjective. A writer who devotes himself more to bombing has the greater aim of spreading his name, the tag, the greater number of possible places, being less concerned with stylistic variations or formal characteristics of the letterings than a writer who is dedicated more to the painting of murals and halls-of-fame, from which greater differentiation from work to work is expected.

In graffiti, the drawing of the letters has a close relation with the movement of the body, being dependent and closely linked to the expressiveness and fluidity of the lines, which is an example, according to Lynam (2008), the tag, often drawn with a single stroke, with marker or aerosol spray, referring to the old calligraphic tradition, where the brush and pen were the tools.

Calligraphy refers to the art or technique of handwriting, forming letters and other elegant, harmonic graphic signs according to certain patterns and stylistic or beauty models and artistic excellence. Writer Mode 2 compares the writers' calligraphic work to that of Japanese calligraphers, saying that this differs primarily in the respect earned from the general public (Lewisohn, 2008).

If we can tie together graffiti and calligraphy as spontaneous approaches to linguistic images, we can contrast them both with the highly specialized craft of drawing letters with a pencil and the demanding practice of designing words. These are anything but spontaneous processes. They are all about patience, trial and error, careful refinements and critical judgment.

(Meulman and Eeuwens 2010: 11).

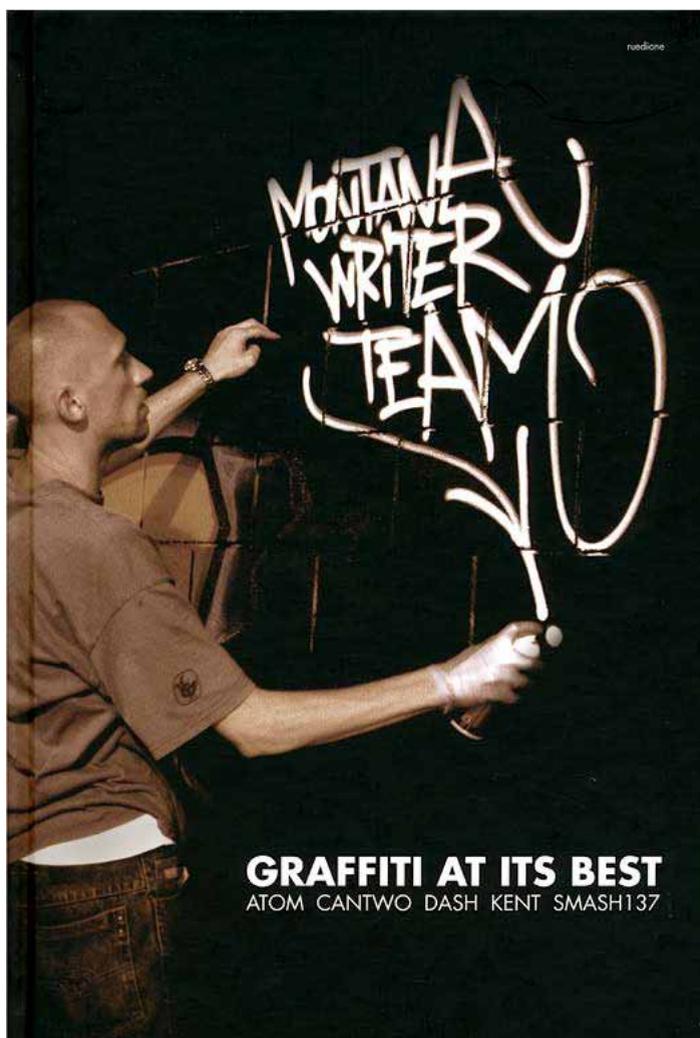


Fig. 19. Montana Writer Team book cover. Writer Kent tagging.

Macrotypography is concerned with the formats of the text areas, as well as the organization and hierarchy of all the graphic and typographic elements (Spitzmüller, 2007). Just as the graphic designer organizes and hierarchizes the elements in the layout, so that the message is clearly conveyed, the writer also does something similar on the surface in which she works. The graffiti work is typically composed by arranging the piece (the main element), tag, phrases and dedications, and the other pictographic

elements. Thus, the main part, be it a bombing, a throw-up or a piece, acquires the most prominent role, following the tags, phrases and dedications, depending on the purpose of the writer. All of this is organized and framed in a format delineated by it or dictated by the characteristics of the surface.

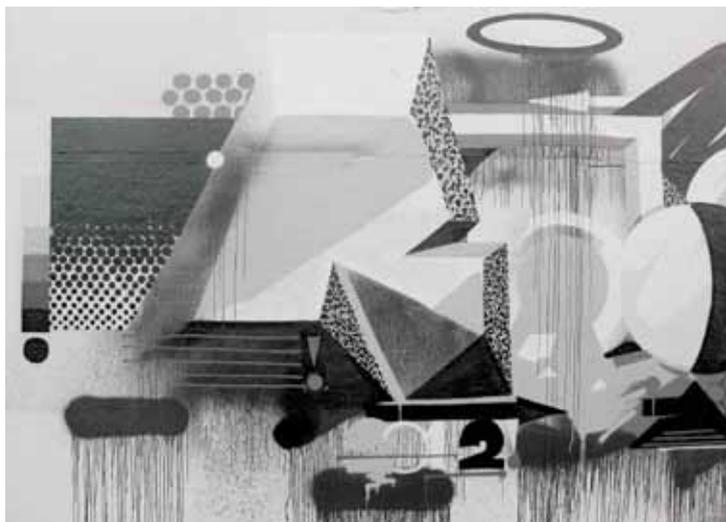


Fig. 20. Characteristic effects of the tools used in graffiti by Roid MSK - spray can



Fig. 22. Adidas Campaign by Vasava

Getting to know your tools

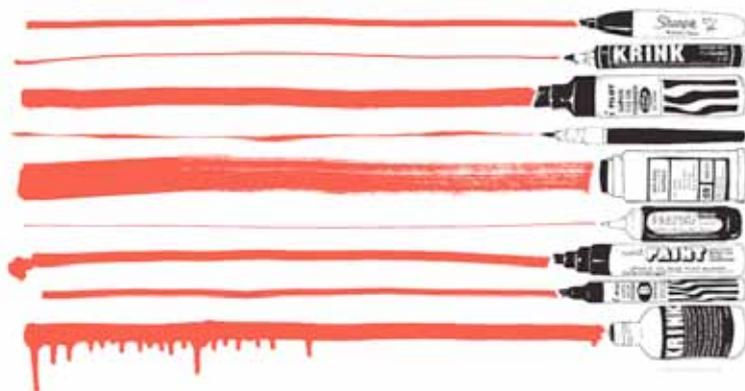


Fig. 21. Characteristic effects of the tools used in graffiti - markers



Fig. 23. "A dripping marker" graffiti font



Fig. 24. Graffiti piece by Rogue-one and Ejek.



Fig. 27 - Graffiti piece by Cey Adams.



Fig. 25. "Degrassi" graffiti font



Fig. 28. Beastie Boys logo (1986) by Cey Adams



Fig. 26. Crookers party flyer by Glossy TV and Kalimodjo

Based on the review of the literature presented, the academic formation and work as graphic designer and the experience of the author as a writer, we substantiate it theoretically. In order to carry out this analysis, we have established criteria that serve as indicators in the analysis of the elements that may be present in typographic / graphic / graphic design objects that suggest the influence of graffiti:



Fig. 30 - "B-Boy" graffiti font.

2. Methods

In order to fulfill the objectives of the study, a set of typographic / graphic design objects was analyzed. The method used in this analysis was the direct observation that, characterized by its subjectivity (Fortin, 1999), takes into account the cultural background and experience of the observer, in this case as graphic designer and graffiti writer.

Materials - when the elements present characteristics of the tools used in graffiti;

- Formal - when formal characteristics are the same as graffiti;

- Typographic - when it comes to letters with characteristics similar to graffiti, that is, letters based on graffiti writing. We do not include in this criterion the letters based on graffiti's characteristic calligraphy.



Fig. 29. Graffiti piece by Bando, 1985

- Calligraphic - when it comes to elements that have similarities to the calligraphy characteristic of graffiti writing, namely tagging or, in other words, graffiti-based calligraphy;



Fig. 31 - Graffiti tag by Bates.

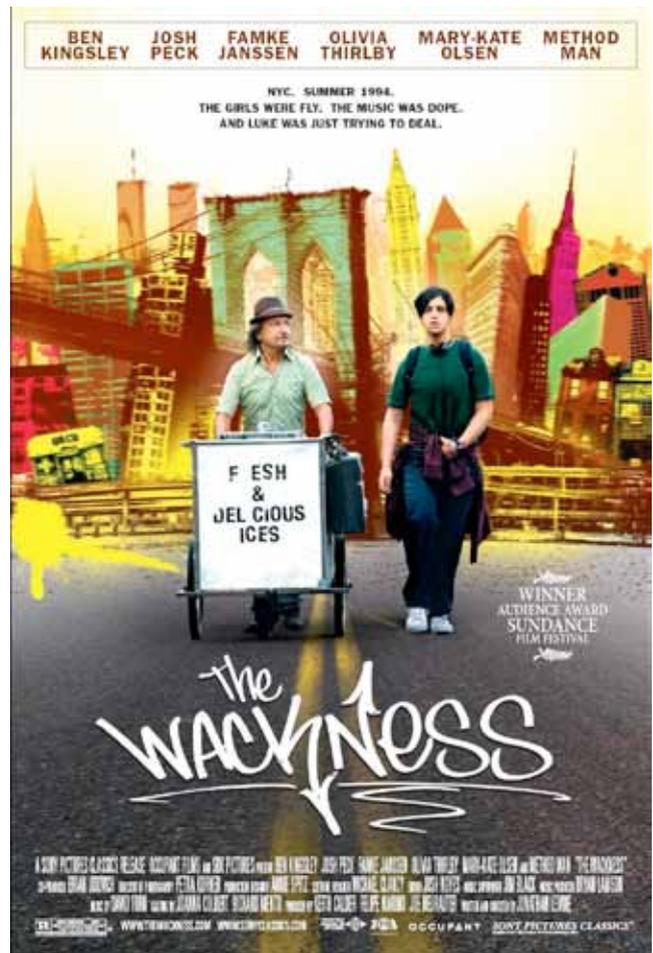


Fig. 32. Poster for the movie "The Wackness", 2008



Fig. 33. "Pilot Rase 1" graffiti font

We analyzed 50 graphic objects, whose typographic elements could possibly present some kind of graffiti writing influence. The objects were chosen because they integrate professional practice, regardless of their perceived quality. This sample includes graphic objects by graphic designers, who still are or were writers, and others whose authors we do not know. They are, above all, two-dimensional objects, intended for printing or viewing on digital media,

such as billboards, posters, flyers, logos, album and disc covers, packaging, a catalog, a website and contemporary typefaces.

3. Results

In this analysis of the 50 objects of graphic design we obtained the following results:

Taking into account the previously defined criteria, the most frequently identified mark was the calligraphic type (36%), which consists of graffiti writing calligraphy. Second, we identified elements that share common formal characteristics with the tools and / or techniques used in graffiti writing (characteristic spots of spray / aerosol paint, drippings, writing simulation with marker brush, among others). They are marks based on the characteristics of the tools used in graffiti writing (26%). Thirdly, graphic marks of formal nature (21%) were identified. They are marks as bold outline, second and third outline to create contrast between figure and background; Arrows as an integral part of the letters and links between letters that refer to wildstyle graffiti; shapes and ornaments typical of graffiti. Brands that are related mainly to the customization of letters, not concerning to the letter shape design itself.

The marks included in typographic criterion (17%) appear in the last position, among which there is a varied typography that shows similarities with typologies and styles characteristic of graffiti writing, such as the throw-up and bubble style. Some of these marks have been identified on the same object.

4. Conclusions

Through this study, it was concluded that it is possible to find graphic marks of the influence of graffiti writing on contemporary typography.

Since the calligraphic markings, which consist of tag-type calligraphy, have been identified in a greater number (36%), we can confirm that calligraphy done by writers are now frequently transformed into typography by designers. It's exactly this type of calligraphic graffiti that most graffiti-based typefaces, available on the internet, try to reproduce. They are made up of letters that can be classified, in some cases, as cursive, which simulate handwriting styles, done using pen or brush, replaced in this case by the spray can or marker that gives them their own expressiveness.

It is this characteristic expressiveness of the tools used, which led us to define the criteria for elements that share common formal characteristics with the tools and / or techniques used in graffiti writing (characteristic spots of spray / aerosol paint, drippings, writing simulation with marker brush, among others). They are marks based on the characteristics of the tools used in graffiti writing (26%).

The fact that this creative practice (i.e., graffiti writing) presents common traits throughout the world, regardless of its variations, contributes to a certain artistic / stylistic unity, based on certain expressive and technical values (Pais, 2000).

Graffiti writing is based on letter design, however, in addition to the design of the body of the letter itself, there are graphic marks of a formal nature (21%), mainly concerning the customization of letters. Typical graffiti shapes, elements and ornaments, consist of arrows or links between letters (ligatures), and often work to create a style of graffiti known as wildstyle. In this sense, Campos (2010: 291) states that:

In the beginning, graffiti basically consisted of a set of letters. These letters later acquire visual properties and pictorial potential, serving as raw material to sculpt the imaginary in ways that are original and ideally inimitable.

In part, these are formal features that help define typical graffiti writing styles, such as wildstyle.

To the consolidation process of graffiti's characteristic styles, the shape of the letter it is equally important. Its structure, predefined by the shapes of the original characters that constitute the different alphabets, can be changed to a certain point, if it is intended that it remains more or less readable.

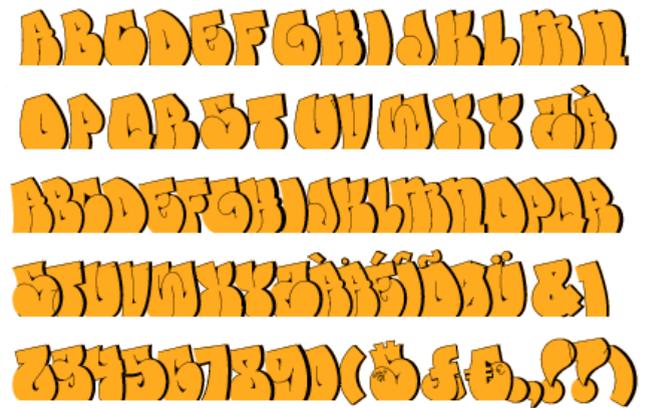
There are, however, stylistic conventions that allow us to identify and distinguish the different typologies and styles of graffiti writing, allowing us to find and identify typographic marks (17%), which consist of typography that simulates some of these typologies. This is a key point to answer our second question of investigation, fulfilling the objective of verifying the existence of designers / typographers, whose typefaces and/or typographic compositions created by them, show signs of the influence of this activity. Many of these typefaces are not designed by writers (Lynam, 2008), inevitably "sinning" for lack of style and genuineness. They

are, for the most part, fonts whose design presents an irregular spacing between letters, which means that when applied, certain elements of a letters anatomy invade the body or “limb” of another, which gives them, to a certain degree, the dynamic and spontaneity feel of graffiti writing. Some of them also show characteristic expressiveness of the tools and / or techniques used in graffiti writing, such as the ones mentioned above.

Christian Schwartz (in Acker, 2013) points out that, at first glance, graffiti and typography / typeface design seem to have little in common, except at its base, letter design. This is especially so given that spontaneity and illegibility (except in specific cases) are rarely objectives of traditional type design. He adds that a deeper analysis allows us to understand how much these two activities share and influence each other, which is evident in the influence of gothic types in some styles of graffiti writing, and some of these styles in typography / letterings used in graphic design objects.

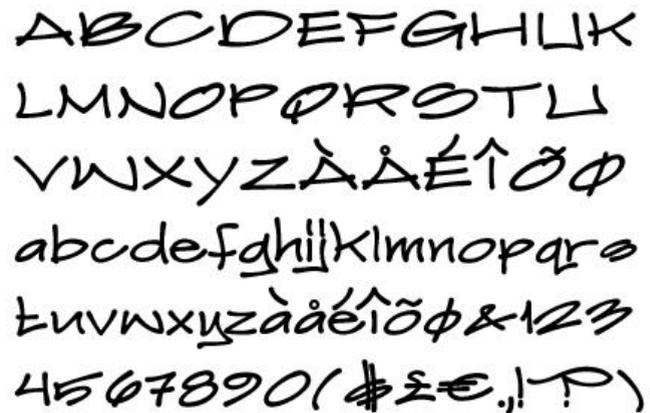
Both typography and graffiti grow together, reinventing themselves and influencing each other. Acker (2013) argues that, just as calligraphy has been an inspiration to typographers and type designers, for many generations, urban characters serve as inspiration for contemporary typography. Although this kind of influence is not always easy to detect, there are situations in which it is obvious. *“There is an often hidden relationship between these two lettering practices, typeface design and graffiti, that is worth looking deeper into.”* (Lynam, 2008: 21).

The project Handselecta, directed by Christian Acker and Kyle Talbott, writers and graphic designers dedicated to typography, aims to preserve and document the various styles of graffiti through the publication of books on this subject. As an integral part of the project, the two designers work directly with various writers in the United States to create graffiti-inspired digital fonts in terms of their visual expressiveness but later adapted to the parameters of conventional typography. This project explores the connection between graffiti and calligraphy and simultaneously tries to establish a link between graffiti and typography. In the transposition of the fonts to the computer, that is, in the process of scanning / vectorization/ digitization, designers try to be faithful to the forms given by the writers, in order to preserve the original



49

Fig. 34. “JokerStraightLetterBold” graffiti font by Handselecta.



44

Fig. 35. “Nike_6 b” graffiti font by Handselecta

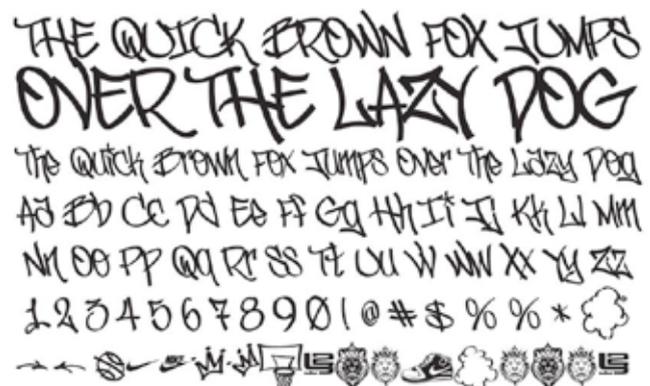


Fig. 36. “MeneOneNYThrowie” graffiti font by Handselecta



Fig. 37. “The Influence of Graffiti Writing in Contemporary Typography”
original poster by Rodrigo Craveiro, 2014

In short, there is a close relationship between graffiti writing, graphic / communication design, calligraphy, and typography. Although they are distinct practices, they are intimately linked by a common bond, the letter, each one working according to different methods and using different tools, yet serving different objectives in different contexts. It can be affirmed, to the extent that typefaces are created based on the expressive characteristics of the letter design of graffiti, that this influences graphic design, namely in the typography field. The fact that these fonts try to reproduce the writing through spray / aerosol and brush-type marker, also gives them their own expressiveness.

It is concluded that, since typography is an indispensable part of graphic design, it also allows itself to be influenced by these contemporary forms of visual expression that cohabit in the urban landscape, surrounding us daily, and to which we are not immune. When we talk about how graffiti writing influences typography and / or design, it can be considered that it influences us, graphic designers, communication professionals, individuals, spectators and observers attentive to what is happening around us, especially with regard to forms of visual expression and image. This assimilation, this hunger for novelty and freshness, imposes itself on an activity that, in a society constantly bombarded by images, seeks to communicate effectively with increasingly heterogeneous, specific and unique target audiences.

Although we feel that modernism has contributed unequivocally to design, with principles that still make sense today, it is also true that some of its ideas have become obsolete, old-fashioned, no longer attracting, persuading and communicating with much of the population that now seems to need new visual stimuli that somehow touch and interact with it.

With regard to typography, specifically, the postmodern era brought what may be characterized as a new enthusiasm, which translates into new communication strategies. It seems to leave out the idea that typography serves only and exclusively the purpose of decoding text content, accepting that connecting emotionally with the recipient of the message is essential.

Thus, readability seems to gain ground on legibility, as it becomes more important for the audience to understand and identify with the content that is being communicated. It is understood that the public is not universally equal, existing different “tribes” that respond to different stimuli. We understand that without this new way of thinking and practicing design / typography, this connection to graffiti and reciprocal influence might not have been possible.

The way our senses perceive the world and the information presented to us seems to be different. Technological advances force our perceptual capacities to evolve, so it seems logical that we can decode complex messages more easily. The amount of stimuli, signals and signs that we are able to process at the same time seems to be much larger, and consequently we need more challenging and stimulating messages, that is, the public’s ability to grasp and digest information has changed, especially due to new media. Samara (2007: 121) states that:

just look at documentaries and television news, where various types of presentation - oral, video, icons and still images, mobile typography - succeed or overlap in rapid editing, to understand that people are accustomed to having more complex experiences with design.

Designers in general and typographers in particular, find in their own experiences and environments that they inhabit references that influence them and, consequently, influence their work, namely, typeface design. Graffiti writing is just one such reference. Consequently, we consider that our

conclusions allow us to complement and deepen the bibliography on graffiti writing, contemporary typography and graphic design and the way they relate to each other, therefore contributing to the understanding of these practices, thus giving a response to the last one of our study. Graffiti may be illegible for most people, but it will always be effective in communicating with its target audiences, who are more than accustomed to finding letters and words in ways other than the usual or variations of them.

We ask ourselves, therefore, if the canons of what should be the basic structure of the design of each letter or character, remain the same, or if it is moving towards new typographic principles, which redefine the design of types, conscious of this new way of practicing design.

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10. Marker graffiti tag by Sever. (http://68.media.tumblr.com/a80fd68eea09213c195e265bf151cd29/tumblr_nrcl2sfNmb1ru5p4do1_1280.jpg)
11. Wild Style by Molin One, 2016 (Personal Archive).
12. Bubble Style throw-up by Cope2. (https://www.flickr.com/photos/archi_philou/15113805940)
13. 3D graffiti by Odeith (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 2014). (<https://i.ytimg.com/vi/73fl-6uU3Uo/maxresdefault.jpg>)
14. Poster for the "Air Force One" promo made for Nike Sportswear, by Sycksystems. (<http://www.sicksystems.ru/entry/93/>)
15. Graffiti piece by Dmitri Aske, Sycksystems. (<http://www.sicksystems.ru/entry/67/>)
16. Zoo York t-shirt design. (<http://i3.stycdn.net/images/2013/02/09/article/kt90/kt9033902/zoo-york-fat-n-juicy-t-shirt-black-940-zoom-0.jpg>)
17. Drum And Bass Arena Presents DJ Hype, album cover. (<http://photobucket.com/gallery/user/Skilaz/media/bWVkaWFJZDoyMDU3ODA2Mg==/?ref=>)
18. Graffiti alphabet by Dare. (http://blog.epicuno.com/2011_06_05_archive.html)
19. Montana Writer Team book cover. Writer Kent tagging. (<https://hstore.com/en/books-magazines/graffiti/montana-writer-team-book/>)
20. Characteristic effects of the tools used in graffiti by Roid MSK - spray can. (<http://graffuturism.com/2012/09/18/wall-update-roid-black-and-white/>)
21. Characteristic effects of the tools used in graffiti - markers (Acker, C. P. (2013). *Flip The Script: A Guidebook for Aspiring Vandals & Typographers*. Berkeley, CA: Gingko Press.).
22. Adidas Campaign by Vasava. (<http://www.iamfatterthanyou.com/2010/08/adidas-campaign-by-vasava/>)
23. "A dripping marker" graffiti font. (<https://www.ffonts.net/a-dripping-marker.font.download>)
24. Graffiti piece by Rogue-one and Ejek. (<https://frankiebeane.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/rogueejek.png>)
25. Crookers party flyer by Glossy TV and Kalimodjo. (Personal Archive).
26. "Degrassi" graffiti font. (<https://www.ffonts.net/Degrassi.font>)
27. Graffiti piece by Cey Adams. (http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_rpMu1BNo6s/U6o1dqyzPBI/AAAAAAAAAfpG/iGiLvljgR8/s1600/DSC_2035.JPG)
28. Beastie Boys logo (1986) by Cey Adams. (Adams, C. & Adler, B., 2008. *Definitions*. New York: Haper Collins Publishers, p.67).
29. Graffiti piece by Bando, 1985. (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bando_quais_de_seine_1985.jpg)
30. "B-Boy" graffiti font. (<https://www.ffonts.net/Bboy.font.viewreview>)
31. Graffiti tag by Bates. (<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/47/29/4f/47294f6b1d340f7617e88efe92f8c47d.jpg>)
32. Poster for the movie "The Wackness", 2008. (http://www.impawards.com/2008/wackness_ver3_xlg.html)
33. "Pilot Rase 1" graffiti font. (<http://m.font.downloadatoz.com/font/72736,pilot-rase-1/>)
34. "JokerStraightLetterBold" graffiti font by Handselecta. (<http://www.identifont.com/similar?LDF>)
35. "nike_6 b" graffiti font by Handselecta. (<http://www.handselecta.com/commissioned.html>)
36. "MeneOneNYThrowie" graffiti font by Handselecta. (<http://www.identifont.com/similar?LDJ>)
37. "The Influence of Graffiti Writing in Contemporary Typography" original poster by Rodrigo Craveiro, 2014. (Personal Archive).

List of Figures

01. tipos móveis - de metal e de madeira. Foto: H. Wren. (<http://tipografos.net/glossario/tipos-moveis.html>)
02. Armin Hofmann Giselle, Basler Freilichtspiele 1959. (http://www.internationalposter.com/downloads/imgs/ex_arminhoffman/hofmann_giselle.jpg)
03. Josef Muller-Brockman, Juni-Festwochen, 1959. (<https://www.pinterest.pt/pin/419538521507624792/>)
04. Futura (designed in 1927 by Paul Renner). (<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/b5/FuturaSP.png/1200px-FuturaSP.png>)
05. Helvetica (designed in 1957 by Max Miedinger). (<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/28/HelveticaSpecimenCH.svg/1200px-HelveticaSpecimenCH.svg.png>)
06. FF Dirty Faces 1 (designed by Neville Brody, 1994). (<https://www.fontfont.com/fonts/dirty-one>)
07. Premier issue cover of Ray Gun Magazine (designed by David Carson, 1992). (<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/7e/5f/7b/7e5f7be1e02dbaa705d36ad1d1af188d.jpg>)
08. Rock Steady Crew and writers Zephyr e Revolt. Wild Style first movie cover, New York City, 1982. (<http://www.badazzmofo.com/2012/02/12/29-days-of-black-cinema-wild-style/>)
09. Spray graffiti tag by writer Amaze (Personal Archive).

Graffiti or “getting-up”: From site-specific to Web 2.0

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Abstract

Leitemotive - Aveiro, a Portuguese coastal city, has these marks of our contemporaneity idealized under an apex of thought and artistic graffiti gestures that cover walls, tunnels, viaducts, ceilings, arches, carriages and clusters dispersed and that carry colors and “signs” difficult to decipher, but, graffiti is also the reflection of the active life of our city. It is important to clarify the connections between public art and the artistic dimensions of graffiti in the current era of globalization. What is the discourse of public art in cyberspace and virtual territory, understood as an act resulting from digital manipulation, especially in Web 2.0. Thus, aiming to interpret urban artistic alterities, graffiti as a marginal art in relation to its forms of artistic production, even more alternating and alternative (Canclini, 2005 Cit. By Andrade, 2010: 50). It is our proposal to cross the action and the explosion of graffiti in the media and social networks. Objectively, we seek to know what has changed in graffiti with the activity generated on the Web and what the results of this kinetic visual and imaginary universe that the Web allows. This online and digital platform has made graffiti come out of its territorial isolation, moving graffiti - as an ephemeral and artistic manifestation - from a site-specific attitude, in style and painting, to a more competitive and revealing attitude towards a new statute, the dematerialization of the image, its preservation and virtual dissemination.

Keywords: Graffiti, Lifestyle, Social Activism, Freedom and Peripheral

1. Introduction

Graffiti is an expression of self, and the subject-actor who executes it claims the right to be recognized as someone, with a proper name, with a recognized identity and personality. This manifestation materializes by the image and happens “where the periphery gives place to the art”, that is, in the “outer ring” of the city. Citing Pedro Andrade (2010) would reinforce this idea of socio-cultural region in the public / private urban space, as the territory of “leisure or leisure” where marginal public art and / or amateur private art takes place as opposed to the area “of work and professionalization” where the professional and public private arts are legitimized by the local power (Ibid.: 45). Andrade also points out that in times of economic crisis, these peri-urban areas coincide with the unemployment zones, further reaffirming that, “in this area, sub-cultures and arts produced by different social and cultural alterations such as young people or certain

urban marginalities, such as graffiti or other street arts, often emerge in this area” (Ibidem, 46). In graffiti, as in any other artistic project, it is essential to highlight and / or choose the space or physical support of the actions, the scale of the interventions and the discourse of public art in cyberspace, especially in Web 2.0. Social networks emerge from this platform as communicative ways organized by a reticulated system where urban artistic alterities and interculturalities are connected. It is our goal to note the genesis of this artistic movement and its compilers and diffusers on the Web. Still, of the change that the digital tool gave to this marginal and hybrid culture (Gastman & Neelon, 2011), legitimizing it, which is characterized by a strong emotional connection with the territorial areas where graffiti subscribes (words of Alexandre Farto “Vhils” to the DN on February 13, 2017, in Annex A). In the concrete case of the “street art” or the “public art” inscribed in the public / private space

of the polis (Andrade, 2010), where the marginal, illicit art and even the “legitimate” art of Graffiti (Torre, Ferro, 2016), we can collect a set of records that reflect the experiences of those who make graffiti and have the idea or the more or less clear notion of the physical space surrounding the artist - to graffiter. We can also consider this physical and not virtual space, as a territorial extension where the “urban artistic alterities” emerge and confront each other in today’s urban everyday life (Andrade, 2010) and / or consider graffiti in itself defining the immersive space. But, equally neutral, that the graffiter (the performer of the work) uses to distance himself from the rest of the world, provoking, however, the gaze of the passer-by.

Taking another idea from Vhils, the internationally recognized Portuguese graffiter Alexandre Farto, this one defends that the artist must make reflection, and affirms what next we quote:

I believe that the artist must raise questions. Obviously I have answers, but I avoid conducting those answers. Today the urban routines are very close and this brings us very close to the urban side of the world. But at the same time it creates a cleavage between urban and rural areas. And democracies are trying to deal with it, with these two speeds, these two ways of seeing evolution, and it is in that question that the work tries to do, it tries to show how all the identities of the world are affected by that process. It is a discussion that I have been doing for ten years and that today it is being noticed that it creates frictions, and this makes it important the role of art... You are the result of everything that surrounds you” (Vhils, from the reporter Carlos Ferro, under the name of “Vhils, an artist which comes back to its origins” on 13th of February of 2017).

This testimony of a Portuguese graffiter, which is nowadays, by the art of graffiti, a communicative phenomenon of international scale, expresses a social and political critique and demands a careful look at the most segregated and excluded areas of the cities: the suburbs, neighborhood communities, the emigrants from the colonized nations, among others.

Graffiters’ action on the ground and in the cloud

The graffiter works and expresses her drawing in specific places where the contact is full but not immediate, where the manifesto drawings are invisible but still have the visibility necessary and sufficient for them to be perceived on the outskirts of the city. Images, drawings, tags (personalized labels), stencils (decal-inscribed or negative images with a template or a cut-out open-type figure-background), stickers, graffiti, or post diffused on the web each acquire, by itself, a status or a specific category, that of manifestations of “urban art”, of urban artistic alterations. Or, they acquire the qualification of peripheral art, marginal art, being easily embedded in the idea of open space and illicit territorial space, site-specific, or street art, already legitimized by society in general and by the media as of “street art” (Birgit Krols, 2000)¹.

Graffiti can happen in places where people do not live, inside and outside isolated and abandoned buildings, on walls that restrict traffic routes - road and rail - where the speed of the media and its passers-by seems to keep pace with the gesturality of its designers. Graffiti travels on train carriages (Gastman & Neelon, 2011), and goes further in space and faster in the gesture printed by its creator. We quote JUNE CTA, “To me, graffiti is experiencing the entire process of breaking in the systems and leaving evidence of my existence on the trains” (JUNE CTA quoted in Gastman & Neelon, 2011: 402-3). The graffiti travels across land, little and much land, much more territory than the author who is at its origin. And, in this dizzying journey, the graffiter flies higher without leaving her own space.

2. Graffiti on social networks

If it is important to establish the link between graffiti and activism in social networks, it will also be significant to understand the extent of activism that graffiti messages trigger in the Web, in the Cloud, and perceptible through the inter | face | world1 (Loureiro, 2014: 4).

In this order of thought I would add the case of a street artist, Mathieu Tremblin, who defines himself as a translator of tags. This means that this graffiter translates and makes readable

1. The 3D Street Art, edited by Birgit Krols, TECTUM Publishers, 2000, makes an exhaustive record of the art of graffiti from 23 creators from all over the world and authors of 3D Wall Murals, 3D Street Paintings and Graffiti 3D.

the tags - signatures and trademarks - that graffiters write on city walls. This author created the “Clouds” project in 2010 and works as the inter | face | world mediating the images-code (Loureiro, 2014: 1) and decoding in parallel between the street tag and the virtual tag used on the Internet, relating them as if they were the key to the mystery that makes them recognizable and that makes recognizable the orientation of the creative artist, the graffiter subject, in the world.

Mathieu Tremblin is the image-map translator, picking up on anagram type signatures with noise, with visual images of words to be deciphered, with smudges and chromatic spots, and cleans it making it readable. Tremblin separates what is on the side and is contiguous with the visual image: it removes the signature traces of the signature - from the tag - sterilizing the word, graffiti, making it decipherable, close and immersive.²

3. Social networks and graffiti in 1994 - temporal and conceptual evolution

As far as social networking is concerned, we have Susan Farrell as a reference point in the introduction of graffiti on the Web and its dissemination in social networks since the 1990s. Susan Farrell studied English in the State of Georgia and in 1992, following professional and academic needs, to provide properly formatted weekly written assignments, decided to learn to process texts on computer. She learned how to use the Web and HTML language. This knowledge took her to other stops and to a new perception of urban aesthetics. The reality of the graffitis, realized in Atlanta where Farrell began to photograph graffiti in 1986, and later in Prague in 1994, led to the decision to create a webpage for the preservation and appreciation of this ephemeral and transforming art of cities.

We underline the idea of the fracture between conventional

2. “Removing the personal traits of the signature allows everyone to decode it and contact it,” said Mathieu Tremblin in an interview with Atlantic City Lab. “On the one hand, I pay tribute to local graffiti, on the other hand I normalize it”. To translate the names on the same scale, which does not stop anyone from continuing to fill in the blanks and adding the signature between the typography. (...)“I paint using the stencil. Incidentally, my project is drawing attention to some walls to which few were aware because they were full of ‘tags’” (In Line) [http:// www.mathieutremblin.com/](http://www.mathieutremblin.com/)

art, endowed with a status of “uniqueness” and “treasure value” of “reproducible” art, with the value that Farrell imprints on the “temporarily Visible”, “cumulatively transformable”, palimpsest of other images, ephemeral and resistant. In the words of Farrell:

One of the things that makes artwork precious is that there’s only one of it. We don’t think a lot about this concept now, but at the cusp of the digital era it was a very big deal... If we make a copy of this work available digitally what will that mean about the value of the original?... The graffiti artists had a different set of problems than fine artists. They had personal-safety issues... They had an art-preservation problem, and they had the problem that art historians would not take them seriously because their artwork was too ephemeral... I thought, I can solve that problem (Farrell, in Wells, 2014).

Farrell created the first web page dedicated to these artists, “Art Crimes” in 1994, which became a space open to the immersion of conversations, interviews, looks about graffiti production all over the world, a script Visit to sites with graffiti, digital visual manifesto device of graffiti, tags, stencil, the swift gesture of urban art artists. It is reported that in the last twenty years Susan Farrell has received death threats and made friends with some of the biggest graffiters by consulting various organizations about the significance of the internet for this community of artists. One of the consequences was a greater knowledge of the areas of graffiti, its commercialization and ascent in relation to its surveillance and public recognition (Farrell, in Wells, 2014)³.

Farrell created a repository of images of graffiti, preserving the production of works that would otherwise be obliterated. This ephemeral character of graffiti is part of its nature and its preservation implies an attitude of reproduction. However, graffiters act with great openness regarding the reproduction of their works; it is common for graffiters to photograph their tags, their graffitis and, immediately, make digital copies as if they were cards from a deck to collect

3. Interview with Susan Farrell by Lisa Wells in November 2014 in “Interviews, The Toast,” a digital journal with an associate blog “The Toast Journal”, Georgia.

(Farrell, in Wells, 2014). To quote further Farrell once again, “The only way to make works of art survive is the possibility of their mass reproducibility, and consequently their wide distribution by many people in the hope that they will keep them. This act of large-scale preservation will only destroy the artistic production of its destruction, for environmental or technological reasons or crises.”

4. The places where the Graffitiers act

Graffitiers operate in places where anonymous communities reside, which are satellite districts of the city and which fill vacancies of an unplanned urbanity. Most of these neighborhoods have residents who move to the urban center to work there in generic and transversal areas, where they watch precariously and operationally. They are general service providers and, in general, providers of a chain of basic services: they assist in cleaning streets, buildings, civil construction, or provide private and / or public services as workers without their own qualification in health institutions, education, security, and so on. The majority of the population on the peripheries carry with them the idea of a ghetto, a community that is closed in on itself and segregated by the majority of its contemporary civil society.

The graffiti reflect the place, the human and cultural capital of the places where they are represented, but not only that; they take a new look at art and use a specific aesthetic that fits the walls of the street, breaking with the idea of gallery and of conventional exhibition and representation spaces.

The Artistic Plans: the scale of the street serves graffiti as the art gallery serves paintings in frames.

5. BI or the Meaning of Graffiti

Legal term: “Vandalism act”,

The author’s term: the act of making “an illegal piece”

1970-1980 Evolution of the term “Graffiti”

Graffiti appears expressively and materially in the USA and acts as the “Getting-Up” of the individual, that is, the graffiter acts in the direction of “raise your / your name”. “Getting-up” is also giving visibility and a sense of presence: - Look at me / I’m here!

1974 - The idea of Revolution combined with that of manifestation through art.

In Portugal in 1974 and with the dawn of the Military

Revolution on the 25th of April a new artistic, spontaneous, ideological and sensorial attitude emerges, to which the concept of mural art is mirrored in political murals designed with painted posters. Placed on walls and walls of the city, added with paintings directly made and painted on the masonry of the walls and mixed with posters glued, placed and superimposed, among many other pictorial materials added to them. There are archives of images from this period in Portugal that came to us through the hands of artists such as Anna Hatherly⁴ (painter, writer and art teacher) who had the exact perception of an irreducible conceptual phenomenon that was in danger of being lost by its natural ephemeral character and fragility of materials.

It is important to note that in the last works of the series Neograffiti (2001), Ana Hatherly uses the technique of spray on paper, appropriating a language specific to urban solidarity subcultures, which is usually practiced in a nocturnal environment (see João Lima Pinharanda In Ana Hatherly: *The Intelligent Hand*, Lisbon, 2003).

1988 - The manifestation of graffiti

The mural art gives way to graffiti, and this corresponds to the great change of intellectual and artistic attitude, and graffiti not only has a political and social message, but also can go beyond this manifesto a little “fora-de-campo” (Loureiro, 2014).

The great examples of graffiti images arrived through skateboard magazines, which featured “skate parks” decorated with urban art, street art, evidently coming from USA.

6. The character of the works

Seemingly hidden from the eyes of society in general, graffiti invade walls that require the watchful eye of one who watches the urban space. The distracted do not realize the energy of gesture implicit in the drawings; it is necessary to stop, to break the traces and the inscribed words to decipher the sense of representation, the narrative and the pulsar of the

⁴ We highlight the take-offs of Ana Hatherly (exhibition in the Coimbra Plastic Arts Circle) that with a more intentional use of typography or illustration have opened up new possibilities for the exploration and experimentation of languages; Ana Hatherly showed a certain Portuguese vanguard context in the post-25 April 1974 murals (6 Documentaries about the 25th of April in RTP2, April 22-27 April 21, 2014, by Élia Rodrigues); See also “*Exhibition of Ana Hatherly (1929-2015): Obrigatório não Ver, CAPC, 2015.*”

forms. They are hidden in the walls of abandoned buildings. The graffiti of hidden spaces persist in walls that are not visible but more appealing to the fleeting nature of graffiti on anonymity, outside the public eye, evasive but interpersonal of the author's daily life - "Getting-up" act; Of the individual being made present and identified.

When graffiti becomes institutionalized, it once again passes into the status of mural art, a pictorial expression with a permanent character. But there are also graffitis created for walls that come from public or private order; the graffiti made to take art to the public space and to the places where the populations do not have access to the art, in the poorer districts and in ghettos.

7. Graffiti on social networks - FACEBOOK

The act of graffiti is in essence a "hidden" act outside the public eye, but can be the target of a public, national and international audience via sharing photographs online on social media. As graffiti writer SAM explains, "I make a TAG and soon after I do a POST and put it on Facebook: it is the democratization of the marginality of the work." In this quotation we find that the letter design is also important, the tag, the acronym that identifies between equals but which may be hidden from ordinary citizens: "to draw letters and create a pseudonym" is much more than having another identity – it is one with artistic freedom. To SAM, this represents an identity, which is "mine more than others have of me" (SAM, in Blackout, 2017).

8. The future

In 2015, the web page "Art Crimes", active since 1994, decided to divide its database or image bank into two parts: one for archiving and the other for the future-facing copy. The objective was to preserve the 20-year archive of images developed on the website, proving that it was one of the only active websites and functioning as the true historical repository of graffiti. The archived copy is thus preserved online and offline by Susan Farrell and the Fabricatorz team, in addition to the archives that are in partnership and somewhat worldwide (Internet Archive (USA), Sunsite Poland, graffitiarchiv.org (Berlin). The same purpose in view: to create a graffiti and art gallery in the USA, in Europe and in the cities of the world to remain available and accessible, especially for students and historians, for appreciation and diffusion of graffiti.

9. The Future – Today

Graffiti writer André Saraiva asserted that:

Graffiti has to do with adaptation and we sneak to places where we are not supposed to be. But as for museums, graffiti takes place in the city illegally and at night. Anything else is not graffiti. Talking about graffiti, it may refer to graffiti, but I'm not doing a graffiti exhibit. Graffiti is an action, not even a result, so I go out and find a space, graffiti is almost over. Graffiti is a performance without a public and 80% of it is action, the result is only a tiny part. And anyway the idea is to disappear. (Joana Amaral Cardoso, in Público - Ípsilon, Graffiti is a performance without public, interview with André Saraiva, July 4, 2014).

Maybe yes, maybe no. We do not know how we are going to work.

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Comparing mural art policies and regulations (MAPRs): Devising a new conceptual framework

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Abstract

In recent decades, public murals have become a common phenomenon in urban landscapes around the world. This has encouraged local governments to establish Mural Art Policies and Regulations (MAPRs) that employ murals as an acceptable (and even desired) element in the municipal toolkit, while balancing a variety of interests. This paper discusses why and how municipalities regulate and facilitate the creation of murals. It advocates a better understanding of mural art strategies, through comparative analysis of mural policies in different cities. To facilitate comparison, we argue that a conceptual framework is essential. Such a framework enables practitioners, policy-analysts, and decision-makers to identify, compare, and understand different features in mural art policies adopted by different cities around the globe.

Keywords: Murals, Policy, Regulation

1. Introduction

Public murals¹ have become an integral part of urban environments around the world, reflecting and influencing their social, political, cultural, and aesthetic values. Some murals are created spontaneously, while others are actively promoted by the establishment as part of different urban strategies.

Existing literature is brimming with research concerning the role murals play in the production and improvement of urban places. In this regard, murals are perceived as place-makers (Austin, 2010; Dovey et al., 2012; Miles, 1997; Schacter, 2014A; Youkhana, 2014; Young, 2014); community builders (Drescher, 1994; Golden et al., 2002; Sieber et al., 2012); reactions to informal activities (Halsey and Young, 2002; Taylor & Marais, 2009; Youkhana, 2014; Young, 2013;); objects of beautification (Blashfield, 1898; Halsey and Young, 2006; Irons, 2009); and as a catalytic tool

for urban regeneration and growth (Ashley, 2014; Austin, 2010; Evans, 2005; Hall and Robertson, 2001; McAuliffe & Iveson, 2011; Schacter, 2014B).

Recent decades reflect a broader shift towards cultural policies designed to promote urban growth and to address urban problems and challenges. Some of these policies enable the adoption (or cooptation) of mural art as an acceptable (and even desired) element in the municipal toolkit. Many cities around the world have made considerable efforts to establish their own Mural Art Policies and Regulations (MAPRs) in an attempt to generate creative artsy cities, that draw investment and people.

In this context, critics have cautioned against the appropriation of art, stating that the process of 'art-led regeneration' is not comprehensive enough. According to this critique, art-led policies might neglect certain

cultures, undermine the diversity of urban populations, and encourage gentrification (Rosenstein, 2011; Young, 2013). Others have forewarned against cultural planning and art policies which avoid the underlying problems in cities: the problems of decreasing wages, globalization and its takeover, and exacerbating problems of illness, homelessness, gentrification and inequality (Murdoch et al. 2015; Marcuse 2010).

Despite these critiques, our point of departure is that the arts, and murals in particular, are nonetheless an important element in place-making, community building, and in the creation of cities. Therefore, it is important to examine current MAPRs and inquire how they can be improved or nurtured.

2. Challenges and contradictions associated with murals and the diversity of policies

Because of their artistic character, specific locations, and exposure to the public, murals incorporate several tensions and contradictions that present many challenges to policymakers, owners, and those involved in their creation. We identify three prominent challenges: (1) Murals are both a public and private phenomenon. On one hand, they are situated in the public domain and are exposed to the general audience; on the other hand, they are located on specific properties, and therefore are subjected to proprietary interests. This duality is a source of inherent tensions between public and private benefits, interests, and ownership; (2) Murals contain attributes of both public art and street art. Consequently, murals are a mixed phenomenon positioned between hegemony and rebellious culture; raising questions about their role and desirability; (3) Murals are both a private (artistic) and public expression, therefore raising questions about artistic freedom and private property in relation to broader public interests.

Existing studies have pointed out several mural-related policies that are designed to address the abovementioned challenges. Specifically, local policies relate to a range of issues, including the creation and management of mural art. These policies include measures such as laws, regulations, guidelines, and design control instruments. All of these may contain a variety of provisions with respect to ownership and 'freedom of speech' issues (Ehret, 2009; Hoffman, 1991; Jarvie, 2012; Miles, 1997; Rosenstein, 2011). These policies also contain funding tools, such as 'Percent for Art' policies³ and facilitate collaborations with

private partners (Berkowitz, 1978; Hall and Robertson, 2001; Miles, 1997; Rosenstein, 2011). City wide policies may also exempt murals from land use and signage regulations (Conklin, 2012; Droney, 2010; Orlando, 2013) and may also distinguish between legal mural art and illegal forms of alterations, such as graffiti (Halsey and Young, 2002; Young, 2013). At the core of the latter issue stands the very definition of 'murals', which might change from one statutory provision to another.

MAPRs are often autonomic (decentered) local government initiatives that may differ from one jurisdiction to another (Young, 2013; Zebracki, 2011). Difference may highlight a variety of approaches and attitudes to art in public spaces. Some murals are created spontaneously and express individual or community identity and aspirations, while others are actively promoted by the establishment as part of broader urban strategies that attempt to address specific goals, such as urban branding, strengthening of communities, beautification, and regeneration. In addition, MAPRs can be oriented towards public interests, or largely concerned with private interests, such as those of the artist or the owner of a wall. Overall, the differences between MAPRs may highlight a variety of motivations, approaches and attitudes towards public art, order, city planning, public spaces, individual rights and freedoms.

3. Comparing mural art policies and regulations (MAPRs)

A comparative analysis can shed light on different 'versions' of mural policies as well as on the many challenges and objectives associated with their creation. Existing studies on Murals or MAPRs mainly focus on specific case studies (Gunnell, 2010; Kramer, 2010; Sieber et al., 2012) or compare policies in regards to specific topics (Dembo, 2013; Greaney, 2002; Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007). Only few scholars have attempted to compare a range of policies (Halsey and Young, 2002; Young, 2012, 2013). The dearth of studies provides an opportunity for comparative analysis that enables identification, and characterization of a variety of practices.

We therefore suggest the use of comparative analysis methods to identify, characterize and evaluate MAPRs adopted and implemented in various local governments. In order to do so, a conceptual framework can be devised, based on the literature. This framework asks a variety of questions referred to by several scholars of this field, such

as: what are the underlying reasons behind mural strategies in a city? Does a city adopt an overarching mural or art-led policy? Who promotes and decides on the location of a mural? Are there special funding mechanisms? And, are there pathways to ensure community engagement in the creation and placement of murals? These questions, among others, help in creating a portfolio of policies and in investigating the role played by mural policies, and their impact on city planning as well as different stakeholders in the city.

With these questions in mind, the conceptual framework employs certain categories for classifying cities' strategies², such as: (1) Proactive initiatives, encouraged or sponsored by local municipalities in order to stimulate the appearance of murals in specific locations. Prevalent examples include public events such as street art festivals, the promotion of community mural projects, and hired agents that mediate between artists and property owners. (2) Responsive, via consent and permission-based policies: these measures respond to market demand and allow artists and property owners to legalize mural works pre- or post-production. In some jurisdictions, the consent of the property owner is enough; in others, a municipal approval is mandatory, through a mural permit registration process. (3) Tolerance and endurance policies: measures that allow municipalities to locally support informal activities (including murals) without giving their full or formal consent to those interventions in public spaces. (4) Intolerant: this category marks cases where the city administration is intolerant to any initiatives to create murals.

Overall, the abovementioned classifications of MAPRs help in identifying a range of policies, adopted by city-administrations. These categories provide a stepping stone for informed comparison of measures and practices adopted to facilitate, create, fund, and manage public murals.

4. Conclusions

Although existing literature focuses on art-led policies and on murals in particular, only few scholars have attempted to compare a range of policies in order to deepen the understanding of MAPRs. To facilitate a comparative analysis, it is possible to comb through existing literature and to devise a conceptual framework to assess the policies and orientations of different city administrations. In turn, a systematic analysis of mural policies enables researchers,

practitioners and policy-makers to better understand the policies they work with. A single-city analysis can then be compared with other cities, thereby building a chain of policy assessments that look at MAPRs more systematically. This could facilitate a transfer of knowledge, and the development of best practices. A comparative assessment can also ascertain the level of involvement of municipalities in the creation of murals, and reveal the way in which they cater for public and private interests.

Notes

¹ This paper refers to public murals as artistic painting or writings applied to and made integral with an outdoor facade, exposed to the public and created with the permission of the property owner or lessor.

² The categorization of these groups was assisted by the works of: Dembo, 2013; Halsey and Young, 2002; Young, 2013.

³ A popular funding tool that comprises a percentage of developments construction costs used for establishment public art, usually between 0.5%-2%.

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Book review: Graffiti and street art: Reading, writing and representing the city

Graffiti and Street Art: Reading, Writing and Representing the City. Edited by Konstantinos Avramidis, Myrto Tsilimpoundi. ISBN: 978-1-4724-7333-2, Routledge NY, 2017

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1. The first contact

The book being reviewed here is the first edition, hardcover from 2017. The book is of conventional size at 15 x 23cm and 0.6 kg of weight, natural for the volume of pages. The cover image influences very much the first impressions, and in this case it is composed by a black and white pertinence photo of a ruined building covered with nature, the ruin has some painted patterns, some framed letters, a not defined setting in terms of time (night day, year, month) and space both interior and exterior but also city, street and country.

Over this image you can find the title in bigger letters “graffiti & street art” the subtitle in smaller case “reading, writing and representing”, in the left bottom of the cover. The editors names are included. The image is well described both in the acknowledgment, intro and in the back cover.

On the back cover, we can find some paragraphs of the 3rd (non numbered) page. In the 4th not numbered page we can find very small (one paragraph) appointment reviews by Ian Borden and P. Bengtsen.

The interior cover has, as usual, the title, sub title and editors reference. In the next page we can find the credits and the book’s technical information. The book has a good density white paper, times new roman as a chosen typeset, and good font size.

Contents arrive on non-numbered page 7, that corresponds to page number III in roman numbering, the list of figures are on page VII, contributors on page IX and acknowledgment at page XIV. The introduction arrives after page XV on page 1 arabic numbering that goes up to page number 281, all together we have a 296 page book.

Text based pages are frankly predominant, 245 text only, 55 pages with images, all of these are full page non colour images.

The book has well defined sections, conceptually, in terms of content and number of pages. After the intro by the editors there are 3 book parts, with 5 articles each. The first part, “reading” from page 25 to page 100 (75 pages), the second part “writing” from page 101 to 194 (93 pages) and the third part “representing” from page 195 to 273 (78 pages).

1.2 About the contributors

The editors are Konstantinos Avramidis, a PhD candidate with a background in architecture, and Myrto Tsilimpoundi (PhD), a social researcher. Both editors are Greek and have combined international paths with research and academic interest in the city as subject.

The contributors short biographical notes appear in alphabetical order (from page IX to XV). We can identify the country and sometimes the city, and also only sometimes the PhD qualification is referenced, denoting some irregularity in the biographical notes structure, that in any case serve well as an introduction to the authors.

In short we have contributions from:

Abaza, from Cairo, Egypt, Sociology professor;
Andron from UK, history of architecture (PhD candidate);
Brigenti, from Italy, sociology professor;
Edwards S. PhD in Design from Australia;
Ferrell from USA, professor of sociology;
Iveson from Sydney, urban geography;
Lamazares from USA, modern languages;
Landry from Canada, criminology;

Leventis PhD, from Greece, architecture;
 Macdowall PhD from Australia, history;
 Schacter PhD from UK, anthropology;
 Snyder from New York;
 Stavrides from Greece, professor of architecture;
 Vilaseca from USA, language professor;
 Young, professor and PhD in criminology from Australia.

Of the 15 authors, more than two-thirds are Anglo Saxon “world” authors (11 native English speakers). Four are from USA, 4 from Australia, 2 from UK, and 1 from Canada. In very low minority there is 1 from Italy, 1 from Egypt and 2 from Greece (beside the editors). The scientific areas of these authors are diverse and can be grouped into 6 main areas: the main areas are the ones of the editors, architecture and design (4 authors) and sociology/ anthropology (4 authors), also criminology (2 authors), languages (2 authors) and geography and history (3 authors).

If we join the criminology with sociology/anthropology scientific background of the authors we get the bigger group (6 authors, more than 1/3 of the 15), thus the dominant scientific perspective is in these human sciences approach angles. In the back cover of the book the words SOCIOLOGY/ URBAN STUDIES/ VISUAL STUDIES appear (from the publishing perspective) as the areas where this book would fit by order of relevance.

1.3 The acknowledgment

The acknowledgment text is well structured, starts from the revelation where the idea of the book arose from, the conference Disrespectful Creativity, hosted by the Onassis Cultural Center in June 2014, declaring gratitude to the organizers of the conference and also to the professors and institutions that have been supporting the editors work. Also, they are grateful for Blaqq crew as the authors of the cover image, the families, and contributors, concluding the acknowledgments, the book is dedicated to the “anonymous protagonists, holding spray cans and paste ups who challenge how we read, write and represent our cities”.

2. The intro

Admitting in note 1 that there are practices, writers and artists that do their work outside the urban context, the manifestations addressed by the book are assumed to be limited to urban manifestations. It is a book devoted to the

modes in which graffiti and street art (G&SA) have changed our ways of seeing, knowing and representing urban environments.

The intro is structured as a playful comparison between scholarly and graffiti as both writing practices and includes five parts: sketch, background, piece, outlines, and final details and signs. Assuming this book as having the purpose of filling in gaps in literature, as an opportunity to embrace the craft of writing about writing on the walls, done by “crews of scholars”.

2.1 Sketch

The “Sketch”, as the initial moment of the intro, serves as a draft that gives structure and sense to the work, here we can find the deep justifications for the production of this volume.

It contains an opening quote from a psychologist that, according to the book editors, outlines the main tensions, inspirations and research incentives of the publication. This quote values the “ugly scrawls” as a reflection of the “soul” through the hand. Also mentioned here is the usage of the “writing on the wall” expression, coming from Balthasar biblical character, as a prevision of the future, or also interesting the reference to David Ley and Roman Cyb phrase “today’s graffiti are tomorrow headlines”. It is also mentioned here that G&SA are valuable research lenses, through which to unpack some of the tensions and contradictions of urban life.

Mentioned here in the “sketch” part of the intro, a game of words with Robert Reisner graffiti definition as “dirty words on clean walls”, changed by the greek editors to “clean walls dirty conscientiousness”. It’s assumed that G&SA poetically break down monopoly of the messages on urban fabric and open questions on the nature of public space and right of the city, “who’s right and what city”.

The editors share the message that the book intends to focus on the controversies within the scene, especially those that follow from trying to define G&SA scholars, or generating new terms even knowing that part of their meaning will always escape in the process and new interpretations will emerge. The editors identify the concern about what G&SA are, but also what they do, global interpretation of simultaneously physical acts and cultural practices, material and immaterial.

The introduction “sketch” closes by noting arguments about the relations of G&SA with each editor’s scientific field: architecture and sociology.

According to the editors, Architecture tends to see G&SA as a threat, they are in a reciprocal relation, architecture gives material and historical and political background. G&SA are part of the life of architecture and fascinate architects.

About Sociology it is written that it flirts with G&SA, it reveals the frequent illegal aspects that tell stories that otherwise are untold. Sociology also focuses on elements of G&SA as subcultural practices, such as youth, disaffected communities, and legal limits of social performances.

The editors declare that this book is a tribute to Athens as the muse of G&SA editors explorations. They here identify G&SA are used rather to seduce and attract rather than inform. Closing the “sketch” there is a very detailed explanation about the Cover photo, an image of Athens School of Fine Arts, an image that is purposely ambiguous to raise questions.

2.2 Background

The second part of the intro, called “background”, outlines the context from where the book emerges. This intro section is focused on the existent published material, identified as in majority being non academic, making reference here to all the magazines and mostly photo based books, from journalists and photographers (Mailer et al. 1974; Cooper and Chalfant 1984; Chalfant and Prigoff 1987), affirming that they would not want to critically engage with the subject, having as their main purpose to “document the history and development of this writing genre”.

In academic terms the editors propose to organize the produced knowledge in groups of “waves” distributed chronologically, each wave containing a predominant group of authors and works with common array of contents addressed.

This attempt to define a narrative for the knowledge production of G&SA has risks, for instance the common array of contents addressed by each wave are not homogeneous, the works were not coordinated between each other, also the notion of

wave suggests a peak, and this may not correspond to how knowledge about G&SA is produced. Knowledge production may be more cumulative and distributed, without “peaks” that pull the rest of the authors behind. This difficulty is self assumed somehow by the editors when they use quotation marks when mentioning the waves, or when mentioning Jean Baudrillard’s¹ as something offbeat.

In any case it opens an interesting discussion and proposes a needed structure useful for the better understanding of the development of (academic) knowledge about G&SA.

According to the editors, the “first academic wave” of graffiti and street art scholarship comes almost 10 years after “journalist predecessors”. This wave was inaugurated by Castelman (1982) and includes works of, among others, Richard Lachmann (1988). Also included here is the High & Low 1990 MoMA exhibition catalogue (with a chapter devoted to graffiti) by Kirk Varnedoe, Adam Gopnik (1993), and geographer Tim Cresswell’s (1992) work. Although other authors examined local scenes, the majority of works of the (so called) “first academic wave” are identified as focused on the 1970-1980s New York graffiti scene.

In a note, the book editors clarify: *The “first wave” focus primarily on what graffiti is and how it is the expression of dissatisfied youths, while the “second wave” concentrates on what graffiti does essentially in relation to urban space and began in early 1990s.*

The second wave focuses on other subjects and other geographies. Jeff Ferrell’s (1993) *Crimes of Style*, according to the editors, is probably the founding publication of contemporary graffiti scholarship, focused on the Denver scene. Also in the second wave Susan Philip’s (1999) from looking at Los Angeles scene, introduces different kinds of graffiti subgenres, and others such as subcultural and gender issues by Nancy Macdonald (2001), pedagogical potentials by Rahn (2002) and Christen (2003) and commodification by Heitor Avelos (2004). Others, such as Joe Austin (1996, re edition 2001), Ivor Miller (1992, re edition 2002) are also mentioned in the “second wave” but could be also in the “first wave” due to the contents and dates of the first editions.

Belonging to the “third wave” (21st century), coinciding with the establishment of street art in the visual sphere, the

number of academic publications grows geometrically. The editors mention Ella Chmielewska (2007) as an example of the exception to this era of scholarship dominated by “mostly theoretical (sometimes over-theoretical) approaches that study graffiti in plural form rather examining each graffito in its context”. Also, Briguenti (2010) and other researches about spatial control, liminality, militarization of the urban environment and Macdowall (2006) heritage approach, Kurt Iveson (2010), Lisa Gottlieb (2008) classification system, Gregory Snyder (2009) ethnographic study. In this “wave” are also included Waclawek (2011), Kramer (2009), Brook and Dunn (2011) urban maps, Alison Young (2014) public city, and Rafael Schacter (2014) ornament approach.

Also an interesting cluster of rock art and ancient graffiti scholars are included on this wave, Conferences and specifically the SAUC Journal are identified inside this academic wave. It is suggested that the third wave ends with G&SA handbook edited by Jeffrey Ross (2016).

2.2 Fill in

The fourth wave in academic production is envisioned by the editors to begin with the book they have organized. It is a bold statement, that needs to be analyzed in detail and with time. The organization of academic production is a very useful exercise that we all need to dialogue about, and this is very positive. Not so positive is the self positioning on this exercise, although understandable that comes out of the hard work to push even further the boundaries of the field.

The major reasons stated for this purpose are that, all the contributors to this volume, are mapping new territories by offering fresh and innovative ways of approaching the topic. That commences a new wave of literature that continues and reflects the tradition. That new scholars are introduced and new methods are explored, but also assuming that cities as case studies are not critically explored.

The editors state that the book “explodes” some of G&SA definitions that delimit what are the practices that count. The range of geographies and areas of research serve as justification for the volume to work as a map for current and future researches and practitioners.

At the intention level, the editors identify that the volume aims to:

- relate to contemporary urban public writing;
- offer global context case studies;
- gather various disciplines;
- offer new ways of thinking about current research methods;
- explore the position of academics and the implications on the field.

Also mentioned as the intent of this book is to showcase the plurality of uses of G&SA around the globe, reverse the tendency to over theorize and generalize, and invent new methods. “The Piece”, referred to as the content of the book itself, is organized in three parts:

- Reading, as concept, creating new meaning and linking G&SA and the city, analyzing their relations.
- Writing, as concept, writing in space and writing about writing in space.
- Representing, representation of G&SA and as something that is (re)presented, presented in a new form.

The reasons for this sequence follow the intentions of the editors to structure the volume as a narrative, starting from production, to documentation and dissemination, reactions, criminalization and removal.

2.3 Outlines, details and sign

The outlines section talks about the sequence of chapters (reading, writing, representing), each with 5 articles, 4 with data of distinct contexts, and 1 (closing each part) article with provocations for pushing research forward, according to the editors. Concluding the introduction, the editors explain in some paragraphs that they are aware of the subjectivity behind their choices. Classifying the volume as an “interdisciplinary journey into this affective landscape,” a journey without final destination.

3. Parts and Chapters

In the introduction each part has a short description by the editors. In Part 1 (Reading), it is mentioned by the editors that it showcases how distinct perspectives “read” G&SA. The perspectives come from academia, establishment, campaigns, cultural and educational institutes, city authorities, activists groups, and legal system. The Part 1 chapters and topics addressed are:

Chapter 1 - Graffiti, street art and the dialectics of the city - by Jeff Farrell with focus on mapping the existent scholarly territories dualities legal/ illegal, visibility / invisibility, and art/ action.

Chapter 2 - Art or crime or both at the same time? On the ambiguity of images in public space - by Alison Young, among others identify contradictions between street art legitimation and graffiti persecution, addressing cultural appropriation, questions about authority over urban aesthetics and public space.

Chapter 3 - Reading between the [plot] lines: framing graffiti as multimodal practise - by Samantha Edwards-Vandenhoeck, makes a proposal of interpretative framework for nature through the writing on places. With photography theory references to Michael Shanks "archaeography" and Roland Barthes "studium" and "punctum" concepts.

Chapter 4 - Interview walls: towards a method of reading hybrid surface inscriptions - by Sabina Andron, reading methods, hybrid surface inscriptions, unsanctioned and sanctioned (as advertising). Gathered readings via semiotics between G&SA advertising and street signs.

Chapter 5 - Graffiti, street art and the democratic city - by Kurt Iveson, not only about G&SA confrontations with authority, but alternative forms of authority; challenges the notions of public space and urban belonging, introducing relations with policy advocacy, permission, participation and publication.

Part 2, according to the editors' short description, focuses on the form as process, aesthetic, styles, language, setting but also materiality and the problem of writing about G&SA.

Chapter 6 - Street art is a period, PERIOD: or, classificatory confusion and intermural art - by Rafael Shacter, that addresses issues as Street Art being a term that is no longer capable of grasping the works that are being produced in the streets or galleries, proposes intramural art and declares street art as a period.

Chapter 7 - Expressive measures: an ecology of the public domain - by Andrea Brighenti, contests the trend of street art and graffiti as conveyors for economic growth. Declares

a distinction between the words expression and creativity. Creativity declared as creation without expressive intent is opposed to human expression and/or expression of something.

Chapter 8 - Dead ends and urban insignias: writing graffiti and street art (hi)stories along the UN buffer zone in Nicosia, 2010 - 2014 - by Panos Leventis, using a map develops a narrative text about the UN buffer zone, that splits Cyprus, Nicosia and its old city center in two. Street Art is discussed as a critique, a reflection, and is indissociable from the current and future urban process.

Chapter 9 - The December 2008 uprising's stencil images in Athens: writing or inventing traces of the future? - by Stavros Stavrides deals with traces of 2008 revolt in Athens. Having 2 editors from Greece and Athens, this chapter finally consummates the capital Greek city as case study. A very well referenced chapter and reflection upon December 2008 stencils that were generated in the turning point of the crisis aftermath street struggle. Exploring image value and tension between stencil art and "stencil act".

Chapter 10 - Respective repertoires: how writing about Cairene graffiti as turned into a serial monotony - by Mona Abaza, addresses the Cairo revolution and post revolution. An observation on the effect of the so called "arabic spring" on the Cairene graffiti, and how this transformed the very nature of its perception and practice.

Part 3 - Representing, How, why and with what impact G&SA are represented in media, by fans, promoters, journalists and politicians.

Chapter 11 - São Paulo pixação and street art: representations of or responses to Brazilian modernism? - by Alexander Lamazares

São Paulo - cultural cannibalism, national ID and modernism. Examines well the relation of Brazilian ID and modernism, in culture in general and also specifically about the architectural characteristics, the good and the bad. Overviews pixação and focus on why it is a dystopian reply to modernism.

Chapter 12 - Defensive aesthetics: creative resistance to urban policies in Ottawa - by Deborah Landry, eradication of

graffiti and street art from Ottawa. Tale of the 2 existent legal walls in Ottawa, development in time, from the first times, to zero tolerance and to mural calls and commissions, creating a bigger gap between graffiti writing and other expressions such as murals.

Chapter 13 - #Instafame: aesthetics, audiences, data - Lachlan Macdowall, having presented this topic at the SAUC conference 2016, here deals with industrial decay to post industrial context, using references and questions such as “where is the street in street art?”, analyses local to global, Europe situationism vs Saskia Sassen “global street” considering this last one as more helpful. Also using the geopolitical aesthetic of Fredric Jameson (Sharrett 1993) problematic of local perception of a global movement.

Chapter 14 - Representations of graffiti and the city in the novel *El franco atirador paciente: readings of the emergent urban body in Madrid* - by Stephen Luis Vilaseca, Madrid. Humanities driven approach to urban environments, combining textual criticism with a social analysis of how we engage with the city. To contribute to the discussion of how we can think and practice urbanism in different ways, this chapter compares the actions of sniper (fictional main character of the novel best seller) with the non fictional life of street artists.

Chapter 15 - Long live the tag: representing the foundations of graffiti - by Gregory Snyder, examines contradictions of graffiti challenging the conceptual dualisms of legal vs illegal, art vs vandalism, focusing on “one of the most enduring and less understood aspects of graffiti writing, namely the Tag”. Starting from personal reading of graffiti tags and concluding with a discussion of Twist and Amaze (Barry McGee and John Lazcand respectively).

4. Conclusion

From the 15 authors, there is a more than 2/3 dominance of Anglo Saxon “world” authors (and 11 native english speakers). Also, scientific backgrounds SOCIOLOGY/ URBAN STUDIES/ VISUAL STUDIES appear (from the publishing perspective) as the areas where this book would fit by order of relevance. The attempts of producing an international book, and to break down disciplinary barriers are apparent, but the difficulties regarding language and overcoming the social sciences/ sociology as the main

source of knowledge are visible too.

The knowledge production around G&SA is described as “waves.” Although this opens an interesting discussion and offers a structure for the better understanding of the development of (academic) knowledge about G&SA, it is an exercise that has risks. I personally see knowledge production in G&SA as something more cumulative and distributed, without “peaks” that pull the rest of the authors behind. This is an empirical perception, but here is not the place and moment for this exercise, maybe in another opportunity. In the remainder of this review, I will make some remarks about specific chapters from various perspectives. In regard to Chapter 7 - Expressive measures: an ecology of the public domain - by Andrea Brighenti, and from the Urban Creativity organisation perspective, I guess a discussion could be developed here regarding the “creativity” and in particular Urban Creativity expression that is criticised as vehicle for the trend of street art and graffiti as conveyors for economic growth. Declares a distinction between the meaning of the words: expression and creativity.

It is understandable to want to escape arguments made by Richard Florida, especially those that concern creative industries and associated gentrification logic, but “expression” as a substitute word pushes even further G&SA into the art market, high art logic and more far away from the infrastructural and functional driven approach of urbanism, inclusive of the pervasive low culture that city production is made of.

In any case it is a good moment for assuming that Urban Creativity (UC) leading to gentrification is something that needs to be shifted from inside, and that is one of the reasons for the adoption of UC as expression for a research based network. The origin of UC comes also from the developing process for graffiti expression renewal, starting from graffiti strongly connoted and defined in its essence (manly NY 70s interpretation and not so much the Pompei 19 century meaning) to street art and urban art. Creativity comes from the removal of art word, in a democratization path as in “everyone is creative” and “not everyone is an artist” (at least in high art frame of work) although everyone can be an artist. Urban expressionism or even only expressionism would have totally distinct connotations, mainly connected to the early 20th century German funded art movement.

Chapter 15 - Long live the tag: representing the foundations of graffiti - by Gregory Snyder, is a good example for discussing the duty of research to be neutral. Personally, I fully agree with the article, good writing and relevant statements. But, declarations such as "When tag's are done skilfully they can be as beautiful as any mural" is a fact that is well known to the members of the subculture, and most who study it, but arguable, for instance the beauty concept is something unstable, thus although recognizing and agreeing personally with the approach, it lacks neutrality. I

In any case, don't take me wrong in mentioning these specific chapters. This book arose as an idea from the conference Disrespectful Creativity, hosted by the Onassis Cultural Center in June 2014, and it is a good reference and certainly worth reading.

The book has well defined sections, conceptually speaking. In terms of content, it is also quite rich and makes for comfortable reading. As Peter Bengtsen puts it in his short review paragraph, this volume constitutes (one more) important step towards establishing street art studies as a multifaceted academic discipline in its own right.

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Marketing with graffiti: Crime as symbolic capital

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Abstract:

Graffiti is extensively used within marketing. Products such as cars, sodas, and clothes are fueled with the symbolic capital of illegal graffiti. Graffiti artists transform settings such as hotels, bars and boutiques into daring experiences. Building on ethnographic observations and interviews in Sweden, this article shows that graffiti artists and commercial companies cooperate in maintaining a narrative where graffiti is presented as essentially illegal. This narrative enables graffiti writers to exchange symbolic capital for economic capital and preserve their identity as authentic graffiti writers. The idea that subcultures are distinct from, and thus compromised, when appropriated by the mainstream is questioned. Instead it is established that graffiti artists adopt a pragmatic perspective towards commercial work.

Keywords: Graffiti, Marketing, Commodification, Crime, Symbolic capital, Subcultures

1. Introduction: Contested meaning

Graffiti is a phenomenon of contested meaning. Some regard graffiti as a costly social problem while others appreciate it as a vital art form. While the debate on how to control graffiti in public space proceeds, graffiti is abundantly used in marketing to generate profit (Waclawek, 2008; Lombard, 2013). Graffiti artists are regularly hired to transform products and commercial spaces into interesting and exciting objects and milieus. At the same time – beyond restaurants, offices, malls and hotels decorated with graffiti – municipalities spend considerable sums each year to eradicate what is perceived as vandalism.

Building on an ethnographic study, utilizing participant observations and interviews with graffiti artists in Sweden, I examine how graffiti artists navigate between the social worlds of subculture and commerce.

In previous research, the discussion of graffiti's position between the poles of art and crime is a central theme (Ferrell, 1996; Kramer, 2010; Kimvall, 2014; Macdonald, 2001; Snyder, 2009; Young, 2012). By framing this article on marketing I address an understudied practice, where graffiti is used to create value instead of being treated as costly

vandalism. Commissioned graffiti done for commercial companies has often been perceived as something that "sell out" the subculture to the mainstream and make the graffiti writers lose control over their culture (Macdonald, 2001; Ferrell, 1996). Painting illegally would thus be a way to maintain ownership over the subculture. This article instead finds that graffiti writers are pragmatic when it comes to working with commercial companies. The narrative of graffiti as something essentially illegal is crucial when utilizing graffiti within marketing. Paradoxically it is the idea that graffiti is destructive that makes it productive.

This article discusses how professional graffiti artists construct, preserve and utilize tensions between subculture and mainstream rather than resolving them. The question this article investigates is: How is the narrative of illegal graffiti used to manage authenticity and identity when graffiti artists sell their art and competence within marketing?

First I will consider that the literature on graffiti has begun to question what Young (2012) calls the dichotomy between art and crime. Then I will briefly describe how I pursued the study. In the analysis, I will show how the idea that graffiti is essentially illegal is used to construct symbolic capital

that is traded into the general economy. In the concluding remarks, I will discuss the relevance of this article for integration of subcultures into the economy, and suggest more research on career opportunities produced by behavior labeled deviant.

2. Literature review: The taboo of being commercial

The meaning, use, and value of graffiti, has always been under contest (Kimvall, 2014). While graffiti often is perceived of as essentially illegal it is simultaneously demanded within marketing. Bourdieu & Delsaut (1993) distinguish between two ways to raise demand for a product: technical and symbolic. The label, or signature, of a designer or artist will almost magically transform the status of an item by communicating symbolic value from the originator to the item. This “marking” of the product make it scarce and desirable, as well as “holy” and “legitimate” (Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1993: 120).¹

According to Bourdieu (1984: 93-94) there prevails an illusion that taste is something natural and direct. Instead he points out that taste is socially structured, and structuring. According to a social constructionism perspective value is the result of a negotiation of symbolic meaning. The meaning and value of graffiti, is not something graffitiists, or marketers, decide by themselves. Becker (1963) discusses how people in artistic service occupations such as musicians identify themselves as superior to the “squares” they serve. Individuals who share interests may develop common practices distinct from others that make them constitute a separate culture. Contemporary society can thus be conceptualized as consisting of several subcultures. Becker (1963) is known for the labeling theory according to which those who are perceived as “deviant” are labeled so by the dominant group. But in Becker’s analysis of jazz musicians we can also read about how the “outsiders” construct the “squares” in the mainstream as dull and boring. Hence, the construction of subculture and mainstream is a dialectical process. None of these concepts are stable, instead they are being socially constructed through constant *boundary work* (Hannerz, 2015).

1. The vocabulary of Bourdieu & Delsaut imply affinity with Walter Benjamin’s ([1936] 2012) concept of aura which I will not be able to develop here. Noteworthy is that Benjamin follow Marx in that human perception is a historical, and thus social construct.

Building on Becker (1963), Lachmann (1988) argues that the meaning of graffiti as well as what is perceived as crime is dependent on labeling by others than the practitioners. This perspective does not acknowledge the agency with which subculture members do boundary work (Hannerz, 2015). According to Lachmann much of the previous work on graffiti has ignored the differences within graffiti and has championed all graffitiists as either artists or vandals. Lachmann (1988: 229-230) states: “writers are involved simultaneously in an art world and a deviant subculture. In my study, I have investigated how writers simultaneously are involved in the marketing industry and in a subculture; many of my informants are involved in an art world as well. Halsey and Young (2002) question the possibility to even treat graffiti as a unified culture. They depict the general discourse on graffiti as characterized by unchallenged assumptions about age, gender, social stratification and crime.² In this article I will challenge the assumption that legal and illegal practices of graffiti are in conflict with each other. I will especially address how graffiti writers who do illegal as well as commercial work manage the boundaries between these practices.

Kimvall (2014) investigates how different contexts can make the same graffiti images be understood as either art or vandalism. Kimvall (2014: 156) points out that his study does not include graffiti in advertising, a kind of material that “very well may contain other statements and relations”. My focus on marketing is to be understood in a broad sense, as practices with the purpose to valorize a product, brand, company or city. In many cases this is not done with traditional marketing such as advertisement and posters. It is more common to utilize commissioned walls and art shows in cooperation with sponsors. This article study the co-operation between graffiti artists and companies from the perspective of graffiti artists. I do not investigate when commercial companies use graffiti images without consent

2. Since my space is limited I will not develop the most relevant theme of gender. As Macdonald (2002) has showed Graffiti is conjoint with qualities that connote masculinity. I suggest that the frequent use of graffiti in marketing of cars should be understood as connecting shared symbolism of cars and graffiti, i.e. masculinity, freedom and velocity, this would also fit to the connection to crime analysed here.

from the artist. Guerilla marketing is also beyond what I will address here.

According to Wright and Larsen (2012:125-126) "graffiti have received little attention from marketing researchers". Within sociology, the major studies on graffiti touch upon marketing, but none of them have it as their main focus (Ferrell, 1996; Macdonald, 2001; Snyder, 2009). According to Macdonald (2001: 151) subcultures are perceived as the sources of future trends within marketing. But she, as well as other scholars describes the use of graffiti outside of its perceived authentic setting as a "sell out" (Lachmann, 1988; Macdonald, 2001). According to this perspective, writers risk losing control over *their* culture, which would result in it being "tame[d]" (Macdonald, 2001:176). According to this interpretation subcultures are distinct from, and consequently compromised, when commodified and appropriated by the "mainstream" (Lachmann, 1988; 246; Macdonald, 2001: 174).

Halsey and Young (2002: 170) state that the image of graffitiists as teenage boys is persistent but not adequate. According to Kramer (2010) previous scholars have neglected to distinguish between writers who paint with and without permission. Macdonald (2001) finds that upon becoming adults writers discard illegal activity and enter a more mature masculine identity of responsibility and rationality. Lombard (2013:102) on the other hand finds that graffiti writers often will "compromise in one area to obtain rewards in another". This is quite in line with how Becker (1963) describes Jazz musicians who adopt to the demands of the audience. They are pragmatic and compromise to be able to put food on the table. Lombard (2013) does not find that this is a big concern for graffiti artists. It is a give and take between artist and companies that is accepted. The idea that commercial work would be exploitative and degenerative for the subculture is dismissed (Lombard, 2013).

Waclawek (2008) as well as Lombard (2013) do investigate marketing with graffiti and find that the criminal status of graffiti persists even if increasingly used within legit contexts such as advertising. Lombard (2013) states that similar to the art market in general, the taboo of commercial work has faded. Waclawek (2008) finds that there is still a debate within the graffiti culture whether commissioned graffiti compromise authenticity. This article investigates how graffiti

artists manage these tensions.

3. Methodology

– analyzing the symbolic meaning of graffiti

The study behind this article includes participant observations in 30 settings in Sweden where graffiti artists exhibited or executed their art. The majority of these settings were arranged in cooperation with commercial companies. The observations took place at parties and events, in restaurants, bars, hotels, galleries and the streets of three cities. In addition to informal interviews held during observations, formal interviews with graffiti artist who sell their art for purposes of marketing resulted in 13 hours of recorded conversation. The latter were performed as in-depth interviews with open-ended questions in conversations around the topic of graffiti and marketing (Johnson, 2001). There are plenty of examples of marketing in print and film where graffiti is utilized that are well worth examining. However, the observations in this study primarily focuses on events where graffiti on canvas is exhibited in commercial spaces in cooperation with sponsors. This enabled me to study the interaction between graffiti artists and their customers in marketing, as well as interaction with the shared audience of graffiti art and marketing.

During the study I analyzed the symbolic meaning of graffiti from four perspectives: *who* is the graffiti writer or artist, *where*, *how*, and *what* does the graffiti writer paint. In my data these categories are crucial for the social construction of graffiti. They can also be labeled: *agent*, *space*, *execution*, and *result*. These dimensions are themselves symbolic constructions that influence each other. For example, a physical *space* where graffiti is *executed* will be interpreted in juridical terms according to which *agents* have the authority to apply colors to its surfaces. Further, whether the *result* (i.e. the way colors are combined) will be perceived as graffiti or not depends on a combination of all the other categories. The way these dimensions are interpreted determines whether the executed result is perceived as street art, marketing, graffiti, etc. Following Bourdieu (1984), agents will make different distinctions of all these dimensions, and typically struggle over them. This will produce value in the form of symbolic capital that can be converted into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Since these categories are not stable I do not depart in a pre-formulated definition of graffiti. Instead I study how graffiti is socially constructed through boundary work (Hannerz, 2015).

The study was performed in Sweden according to the code of conduct in social sciences as formulated by Vetenskapsrådet (2014) where the requirements for individual protection are the point of departure. Hereby *The Code of Ethics of the World Medical Association (Declaration of Helsinki) for experiments involving human subjects* (2013) has also been met.

In my analysis I will first address the *execution* of graffiti for marketing purposes and *what* symbolic meaning the *resulting* graffiti has in marketing spaces. Then I will investigate *who* the graffiti artist is according to the narrative that are used to construct boundaries between graffiti and practices perceived of as distinct from graffiti, such as marketing. The third part of the analysis will further discuss how transgressing constructed boundaries between graffiti and marketing facilitates the construction of symbolic capital.

4. The practice of marketing with graffiti

4.1. Executing symbolic crime

Graffiti artists offer both material knowledge and symbolic value to practices of marketing. This reflects a distinction between technical and symbolic items (Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1993). When a graffitiist is hired to transform the façade of a building or the lobby of a hotel, the technical *execution* consists of the know-how and of rapidly transforming the appearance of a large surface. Among my informants, speed and ability to work on a large format are emphasized as qualities characteristic for graffiti artists. However, my data shows that the symbolic qualities are even more important than the technical skills. The meaning of the *resulting* graffiti piece is intertwined with the symbolic image of the graffiti artist. This is how a graffiti artists in my study reflects over valorization of graffiti:

If someone that doesn't know who Nug is has bought a canvas for loads of cash and are told from a graffiti writer that Nug is dope, you know because he has painted so many trains (...), that only boosts the piece of art for them. (---) It is his reputation, much more than the visual that sells.

This can also explain the common practice of graffiti artists being asked to execute their art in front of a public, then the performance as well as the artist themselves are commodified. This is also the case at art shows when visitors can meet the graffitiists. At a party I visit the guests are presented with the possibility of acquiring "raw" paintings

embodied with graffiti. Sponsors simultaneously infuse their brands and products with the symbolic capital brought to the event by the graffiti artists. My field notes read:

Two cars covered with graffiti and corporate logos are parked on the street outside the venue. Inside some thirty dressed up visitors mingle with graffiti artists in premises temporarily decorated with canvases executed by the same artists. One participating artist says to me that real graffiti is done illegally. According to this artist the paintings exhibited are not graffiti, but: "tell the story of graffiti". A present photographer is working on a documentary film on this graffiti artist. I ask the filmmaker if it will be problematic for the artist to appear in a documentary at one time painting a train in balaclava and in the next scene appearing without disguise at an art show. The filmmaker states that it is up to the artist to decide, and that he thinks that the illegal aspect will benefit the artist's career.

According to these arguments real graffiti is illegal. Thus, *executing* images with spray paint in a *space* where it is not allowed is graffiti proper. But at another exhibition, I meet a graffiti writer who joyfully concluded that there are graffiti events in Stockholm every week now. I find that in contrast to the previous statement this writer also considers canvases to be part of graffiti culture. This argument implies that it is enough if the *resulting* aesthetics and the *agents* belong to the field of graffiti to justify the label "graffiti". From this, I abstract two different uses of the label graffiti: the first is narrow and based on execution; the other is broad and based on reference. In the canvases that "tell the story of graffiti" (i.e. refers to illegal graffiti), we often see letters, subway cars and characters inspired by cartoons. Sprayed and dripping paint are crucial parts of this aesthetic. The spray can materializes graffiti's symbolism as something illegal, which this quote by a graffiti artist exemplifies:

Yes, very strong symbolic value. It is such a classic thing, that if you are in the city and produce a spray can, people call the cops. If you instead put up posters that might include a tag, no one cares.

To paraphrase Bourdieu's (1986) observation that cultural capital of society's upper strata is embodied in cultural items such as books – spray paint is instead objectified *criminal* capital. The perception of an authentic *space* for graffiti

joined with the idea that real graffiti is *executed* with spray paint (or marker) are trends in the narrative of *what* graffiti is. During interviews, respondent validation was a natural and integrated part of my study. I presented my interpretation of statements, inviting informants to comment. An example of utilizing this practice is when an adult graffiti artist and I discussed the perception that graffiti is something juvenile:

Interviewer: Since you were touching on that the spray can is symbolically infused and that graffiti is perceived as something youthful, I wonder if this is connected to something you said that I interpreted as that people still paint illegally maintains the image of graffiti as something juvenile.

Informant: Well, it is probably so, then I guess that is a benefit, I believe so.

This is one example of how I was able to validate analysis during interviews. The symbolism of art done with spray paint is infused with the symbolism of youth and crime. The use of graffiti in marketing builds on this symbolism. Both graffiti writers and commercial companies benefit from the idea that graffiti is illegal even in the cases when graffiti is done on commission and with permission. Consequently, neither part is particularly interested in challenging the idea that graffiti is in essence illegal. The commissioned graffiti work is allowed to be graffiti and at the same time its authenticity is questioned. But as we will see it is important for the graffiti artists that their identity as authentic graffiti writers is intact.

4.2. Iterating the narrative of the outsider

The dominating narrative of graffiti as something essentially illegal makes it possible to, year after year, present graffiti as something young and rebellious. One graffiti artist states:

Now [graffiti] has survived, well it is almost 40 years (...) but it is still perceived as youthful. I think it is because it is still illegal that it still has an underground stamp and never really gets housebroke. If it hadn't been illegal I believe it would have died out earlier.

Grffiti in galleries, marketing, and on commission has been a part of graffiti culture since the 1970s (Kimvall, 2014; Lombard, 2013; Snyder, 2009). Despite this, as the quote shows, legit graffiti is still presented as a novelty or exception. This is especially the case when graffiti is executed in spaces perceived as alien to graffiti, such as in commercial settings. This narrative is exercised when

lifestyle and fashion magazine Perfect Guide (2014) writes:

Grffiti has looked away from the street and into the fine galleries – and now it wants to take over our wardrobes as well. The just enough rebellious Zara-dress is an artistic bargain at budget price.

In to this narrative illegal activity is an explicit or implicit reference also when graffiti is executed with permission. As an informant states the illegal aspect is always present:

It is quite obvious if I meet a journalist or someone that shall write about me and my exhibition, then it is always that [criminal aspect] they stress. It has happened that I had an exhibition with textiles, and in the newspaper headline it says that: "the convicted former vandal exhibits".

Grffiti artists often express annoyance over this obsession with crime, something that we can read behind the lines in the above quote. But they also benefit from and participate in maintaining this narrative. I encounter another formulation of the criminal and rebellious narrative when a commercial space invites me to witness "the last untouched form of art – protected by the strong culture of freedom and nonconformity". Here one of the graffiti artists is presented as coming from "the urban reality" of a rough suburb. According to this narrative graffiti is something alien to the commercial setting, even if we constantly are exposed to graffiti in these settings. This is a narrative that enables marketers to bring in writers from "the street", a mythic place outside of society, to vitalize the petrified establishment.

Since the principal aim for the participants in my study is to practice art on their own terms, they find ways to both get paid and stay true to themselves and their subculture. To be true to the subculture's ideals with which they identify is associated with autonomy and self respect, something my informants do not want to compromise. This does not mean that graffiti used in marketing is necessarily seen as compromising autonomy in the way previous research has suggested (See Lachmann, 1988 and Macdonald, 2001). My informants are pragmatic and willing to compromise. One of the interviewed graffiti artists reflects over inviting a member of his graffiti crew to paint at an art show for a company:

It feels like it is sort of forbidden to do such things within art. There were also reactions from our crew that he would stand there painting live on an event. It was like: "it gonna be a lot of hipsters". But he will

not do anything different, he will just do his piece. It doesn't matter whom he does it for, I guess it is just to share what you love, and he has love for graffiti. (...) But some are like: "graff shouldn't be connected to that, or whatever". But if he is out bombing and then one evening he is drinking for free and does ONE piece, I don't see the problem.

To "just do his piece" and "share what you love" expresses how graffiti writers can rationalize about preserving authenticity simultaneously with painting on commission. This authenticity is obviously fragile, it is guarded by an parallel illegal practice. The graffitiist who arranged this event argues for a balance to be preserved between commerce and subculture. One commercial painting is OK, since the artist is true to authentic graffiti. To paint illegally is a way to show your loyalty to the subculture. But it is not in conflict with selling your art. Instead the illegal activity is precisely what makes it possible to sell graffiti. The illegal reference is what produces symbolic capital.

Some artists say that they would never change their artistic expression upon company request, others are willing to compromise but instead keep their authenticity in another sphere by continuing to paint in the subcultural context parallel to their assignments:

I think you only need to keep them separate in your mind. One thing doesn't need to exclude the other. The illegal part usually backs up the gallery part. (...) It is not the same thing (...) but they are not in conflict with each other, I don't believe it is wrong. (...) We got to drink some alcohol together and laugh, and he did a painting, that doesn't make it less real, on the other hand it wasn't a piece along the line or on a train.

Here we can see how a graffiti artist argue that illegal painting is something that contribute to the value of legit painting. The commissioned piece was not less authentic or "less real". But at the same time it was not "a piece along the line or on a train". Like we have seen before it is possible for a graffiti paintings to be authentic and not authentic at the same time, or as this writer says: "One thing doesn't need to exclude the other". The pragmatic statement about the different social spheres of marketing and graffiti formulated as: "they are not in conflict with each other", contradicts conclusions about "selling out" in previous research. These

statements are examples of boundary work (Hannerz, 2015). The graffiti artist constructs a difference between illegal and commissioned graffiti. But the artist also negotiates ways to remain in both these social worlds without selling out.

The majority of my informants execute illicit graffiti more or less frequently. When they do art shows or work with companies, they sometimes use their birth name and sometimes use artist name connected to graffiti. Many of them also have one or several additional aliases or tags used when painting without permission. The different aliases are used to control the information and presentation of their work. It is also a way to manage risks of legal proceedings. It is a play with roles and narratives that can result in a split identity:

To paint graffiti and at the same time be a person with your position within society, that is quite a conflict of identities. I experienced that for several years, am I my alias? And why can't I possess the same rights [as others] because I crossed a line far outside of the norm?

Accordingly, the distinction between subculture and mainstream that produces symbolic capital is not easy to manage. However, I do not find these borders as solid as previous research has suggested.

4.3. Conflicting space

A type of space where several of my informants have executed work is hotel lobbies. One graffitiist said that the hotel used his competence to distinguish themselves from their competitors in the same, upper-price sector. They wanted the atmosphere in their lobby to attract a certain type of clientele that appreciate creativity, cool drinks, DJing and interesting happenings. Another artist says:

I have painted several hotels (...) the latest year and you really notice a difference that these hotels demand street art now. (...) You notice that their thought is that they will make the environment cool, that it should be new and daring. And then they bring in graffiti artists. (...) They want to show that they know what time it is, that it isn't an old tired [hotel]. (...) Graffiti is hot at the moment, you can see this both in marketing, in hotels and in the art world.³

3. In this quote we see that it is hard to make a distinction between graffiti and street art, the informant uses both labels. This distinction is even vaguer in commissioned work than in unsanctioned.

This is one example of how graffiti's symbolic capital is built around youth and transgression of norms, here described as "young, energetic and daring". Placing visuals perceived as illicit within the legitimate space of an exclusive hotel is perceived as daring because they are perceived as, in essence, belonging to another space.

Following Lachmann (1988) and Becker (1963), it is the meaning others apply to agents and their practices that will decide whether graffitiists can convert their symbolic capital into economic capital. This puts graffiti writers who make a living out of graffiti in a precarious position. Graffiti artists are offering their art and culture to agents who want to apply value to cities, businesses and products. In this process the symbolic meaning of graffiti is transferred to products. Consequently the products are transformed from dull and boring into urban and interesting. This infusing of symbolic capital is often executed at events in restaurants, bars, hotels and boutiques. An informant I frequently met in these spaces stated: "The art gets more dignified when you get champagne and exclusive canapés." At these events, hosts with plenty of social capital facilitate exchange of different forms of capital. Hosts with a social network that includes agents who have economic capital as well as agents who have desirable symbolic capital, such as that of graffiti, have an opportunity to collapse or clash social fields that are constructed as distinct and distant. A successful host can bridge, mix and play with the tension between spaces and agents perceived as in essence distinct. Perceived discrepancy is not a disadvantage, instead this conflict is cardinal when constructing graffiti as something valuable. Hence, to settle the debate on whether graffiti is art or crime is not in the interest of graffiti artists, nor for marketers and others who commodify graffiti. Commissioned work is made interesting by reference to illegal work, as an informant observes:

graffiti culture runs together in different groups. Within the cultural world I have always felt they love it and think it is very fascinating. There it is absolutely no problem if you have painted illegally, contrary, it is almost an asset.

This is an illustration on how illegal painting constructs the symbolic value of legit graffiti. I witnessed a similar opinion during an artist talk, when a 60-year old graffiti artist revealed

recently having put a tag in the restroom of a local café. This statement was by far the most appreciated and the audience delightfully erupted in applause.

My findings do not confirm that it is perceived as "sell out" for graffiti artists to work with marketing. My informants do not express concerns about losing control over their culture either (Macdonald, 2001). I have found that graffiti writers participate in constructing borders between social spheres. This does not mean that they refuse to participate in several spheres. One of my informants distinguishes between the "corporate" sphere on the one side and the "street level" on the other side.

I got irritated with the people I arranged [the event] with, which I always get when I work with people that are corporate or companies in some way. They don't really know the street level. (...) They don't get how the world functions, but they understand that you have to report statistics upwardly in the company. (...) But when you rock a party, and create art it isn't much statistics involved. Instead it is more a feeling, like: "was it a great night? Did people laugh and have a good time?"

The way the graffiti artist in this quote dismisses the corporate people echoes how jazz musicians in Becker's (1963) study scorned everybody who was not musicians since they were "squares" that did not understand the artistic expression. This informant expresses a tension when marketers use the symbolic capital of graffiti. This does not mean that graffitiists does not want to sell their competence. Instead this graffitiist expressed that the client did not understand how to make proper use of the symbolic capital offered. According to this graffitiist, companies risk to destroy the symbolic capital of graffiti that they want to invest in. The artist simultaneously performs boundary work, making a clear distinction between street and commerce. This doesn't mean that graffiti artists refrain from doing business with the corporate people. Among my informants I do not hear univocal support for Macdonald's (2001) conclusion that writers want to retain control over their culture by painting illegally and not letting outsiders understand it. Many informants also strive for acceptance and inclusion. Several of them state that they feel a calling to educate the general public about graffiti and art in general and graffiti in particular.

5. Concluding remarks: productive crime

It has been obvious during my study is that graffiti is a social phenomenon that is perceived as both creative and destructive. The debate on this is central throughout the history of graffiti (Kimvall, 2014). Graffiti writers join in a social community formed around creativity and excitement, most commonly referred to as art *and* crime (Lachmann, 1988: 231).

My conclusions are not compatible with the idea that subcultures are distinct from, and thus compromised, when included into the “mainstream” and being commodified (Lachmann, 1988: 246; Macdonald, 2001: 174). Like Hannerz (2015), I instead find that agents within the subculture use the idea of mainstream to construct subcultural authenticity, which in this article is conceptualized as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Adding to this perspective I find that graffiti artists invite the marketing industry as well as the art market to participate in the construction of authentic graffiti as illegal. This cooperation between social spheres constructed as distinct allow graffiti writers to construct value and retain the image of outsiders that this value is based on.

It is the narrative of crime as well as the conflicting spaces of “street” and “mainstream” that engenders symbolic capital.⁴ In marketing this symbolic capital is applied to commodities such as sodas, hotels, and cities. Then it is transformed into economic capital. This is in line with Waclawek’s (2008) argument that graffiti’s illegal status connotes danger and rebellious youths, something that is used by marketers.

I find that the perspective of compromised authenticity when performing commissioned graffiti either has faded substantially or is more complex than much of the previous research has concluded. This is consistent with Lombard (2013) who finds that the commercialization of graffiti increasingly is a collaborative process between companies and graffitiists. I do not find that graffitiists are typically in opposition with society (see for example Lachmann, 1988 and Macdonald, 2001). My informants do not express a strong concern about “ownership” over their culture when they sell their art and competence. Still, conflict is crucial for the meaning and value of graffiti. Graffitiists embrace norms as well as challenge them. Several adopt an entrepreneurial perspective on the economy and towards themselves.

4. I find a continuum between different constructions of graffiti, what Kimvall (2014) calls discursive formations.

Simultaneously, they challenge by whom, and how, public property can be used for communication. Their actions have political implications but most graffiti artists are not political activist. They do not practice civil disobedience for purposes of resolving the conflict between graffiti writers and property owners. Graffiti is not essentially illegal. Even if many definitions of graffiti depart in the unsanctioned character of this expression there are plenty of examples of activities we call graffiti that are not illegal. But the connection to illegal activity is important also for legit practices.

Like Halsey and Young (2002: 170) I find that the image of graffitiists as teenage boys is persistent but not adequate. My informants have a pragmatic relation to responsibility and law, many of them have professional careers, some are parents, but they continue to write illegal graffiti. This is not in line with Macdonald’s (2001) findings that when becoming adult graffiti writers refrain from illegal activity and adopt a mature masculine identity of responsibility and rationality. My findings are more in line with Lombard (2013:102) who argues that graffiti writers “compromise in one area to obtain rewards in another”.

This is not perceived as selling out the subculture. Contrary to Kramer’s (2010) statement that previous scholars have neglected to distinguish between writers who paint with and without permission I find that the literature on graffiti has not acknowledged that many writers do both.

My informants typically do not want to choose between these sides of graffiti, but the practices are different and place specific. Graffitiists are creative in managing their public image and they invest what capital they have to acquire a position within the society in which they are situated.

They play with and make use of the stereotypes of “their culture” rather than seeing these constructs as obstacles.⁵

My analysis shows that graffitiists split their identity into different roles when they make a living off their art. In previous research, graffiti writers are typically quoted by their tags, these aliases make many of them possible to identify (see Macdonald, 2001; Snyder, 2009; Kramer, 2010; Ferrell, 1996; and several others). This may restrain writers from

5. This does not mean that writers have the same influence over labeling as their customers, or that they might not be exploited.

speaking freely about illegal activity and commissioned work at the same time. This might explain why these studies do not discuss the use of different tags for different contexts. This was common among my informants and enabled them to, depending on context, control knowledge about their activities as well as the perception they gave. This is a way to influence what Becker (1963) and Lachmann (1988) calls labeling. This might explain why I did not hear the univocal rejection of “selling out” that Macdonald (2001: 173-175) and others describe. An additional explanation may be that the taboo of “selling out” has eroded over time within graffiti as well as other subcultures. I suggest that this can be because of diminishing critical attitudes towards consumerism, coming of age of subcultural agents, and faster and easier access to subcultures because of developed media technology (Jacobson, 2015).

Previous studies indicate that the artistic practice (technical know-how) may benefit writers’ school results and careers in creative professions (Kramer, 2010; Lachmann, 1988; Macdonald, 2001; Snyder, 2009, Young, 2012). In addition to this, graffiti engender value in the form of symbolic capital. Against the intuitive perspective that crime is something that ruins future life chances, I find that careers are built on actions that are labeled deviant. I suggest that future research investigates how life chances develop with reference to activities labeled deviant. This may also be relevant to other cultural practices.

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Curating street art

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Abstract

After being largely ignored for decades, street art has in the last ten years been increasingly assimilated by society and the art system. Numerous artists who started their careers producing street work on their own initiative and without seeking permission are now being commissioned to create official public art – mostly murals – and pieces for galleries, museums and collections. This paper looks at the differences between producing art in public space without permission and producing art for the gallery, and at the possible approaches to the commission of gallery artworks related to the street practice of an artist. It ends with an analysis of the problems and possibilities of commissioning pieces to be produced in the street without permission.

The meaning of the term “curating” has widened over the last two decades. While it originally designated a very specific task within the environment of museums and art galleries, it is now used in many other fields as a better-sounding substitute for “selecting”.¹ In the context of this paper the term refers to the act of selecting and arranging artworks in order to give shape to a particular way of understanding them, a process that is completed by writing theoretical texts to help shed light on this vision and on the artworks themselves.

The term “street art” has never had a fixed meaning, and in the last ten years it has become even more ambiguous. It is now regularly used to refer to institutional murals, as well as to artworks created for the white cube of galleries and museums. Within the context of this paper, though, we will use it to refer to pieces produced in public space without permission, as it was predominantly used in the first years of the last decade.

1. Where, when, how and why

Producing a piece of street art is mostly about playing with its context, and the same can be said about graffiti², a direct precedent of street art. From the smallest tag or sticker to the biggest roller piece, the artwork is not so much about what is being written, painted or pasted, but about where, when, how and why this appears. The visual element added to the context can be understood as an excuse to trigger a

game of choosing spots and working with them – playing with existing forms, colors, textures, meanings, connotations and history, playing with scale, distance, visibility, intimacy, surprise and risk, among other factors. The core of the artistic process deals with exploring the landscape, discovering and adapting to different contexts, and thus giving shape to a particular understanding of the built environment.³

This adaptation to contexts is often achieved through the finding, customisation and design of tools and materials. In order to access surfaces and writing on them in fast and safe ways, reaching farther and leaving more permanent marks, graffiti writers had to come up with ways to customise the aerosol – not originally conceived as an art tool, they had to come up with the shoe polish applicator filled with homemade ink, the marker filled with glass etching liquid, the combination of pole and roller or the fire extinguisher filled with paint. Street artists have adopted these resources and created their own long list, including the stencil, the wheatpasted cut-out paper, and project-based approaches such as Invader’s tiles or MOMO’s bike-mounted tool set for pasting posters on high surfaces.⁴

Street art pieces are better understood not as objects but as events.⁵ They are not static, they evolve and degrade together with their viewers, as genuine parts of their environment. The practice of street art involves the modulation of time, artists take creative decisions in that dimension. For example, pieces that appear occasionally throughout a long

period of time deliver a very different message than those which accumulate suddenly. Also, an artist with an intimate knowledge of her working environment can choose surfaces that will allow works to last longer.

An additional and even more crucial quality of street art has to do with the idea of propagation. A street artwork rarely exists in isolation, it usually functions as part of a series of related pieces scattered through space and time, forming networks and paths. For the viewer, enjoying street art involves repeated encounters through space and time. This allows an excuse to explore, to visit places one would have unlikely visited otherwise, to experience the environment with new eyes.

2. The white cube versus public space

The white cube of galleries and museums is purposefully empty and inert. This is of course a very loud and clear message in itself, meaning the viewer has left the ordinary world and entered the hierarchical space where art is supposed to exist. But if we forget about that and agree to play the aesthetic game of the white cube, it is as inert as a space can be. Its purpose is to let the artwork display its values without any forms or meanings interfering. The artist is expected to fill a void with forms and meanings, all of them detached from life by virtue of the inertness of their setting.

In the white cube there is little chance for working with a context, with existing forms or textures, meanings or history. There is far less chance to play with scale or distance than there is in public space. The artist is not forced to come up with tools. There is no exploring, no reinventing a whole environment. There is no modulation of time, nor any witnessing how a piece naturally evolves. It is not about where, when or how – it is mostly about what. In the white cube the artist is expected to create self-contained messages frozen in time. Public space, on the other hand, is far from being inert – it is a chaotic amalgam, as different from the white cube as it can be as a setting for art making. When intervening in public space the artist faces a whole scenario full of superimposed shapes, messages and connotations, and tries to take these into account while adding a new element that plays with them. Therefore, to simply reproduce the images of graffiti or street art on a canvas and in a white cube has never

been a successful approach to art making. The problem is that graffiti and street art images are not self-contained messages, they rely on their contexts to fully work. When observed as detached elements they typically fall short and feel obvious. By virtue of the same logic, many complex and nuanced artworks conceived for the white cube depend so much on an inert environment to be appreciated that they would all but disappear if placed in the street.

The import of street art images into the white cube can, nevertheless, be done in more successful ways. A good example of this can be found in the work of Californian artist Barry McGee, who has produced gallery artworks using the black and white rendered faces he typically painted in the streets in the early 1990s. These images are fairly straightforward, probably not interesting enough to function by themselves. The artist's approach has then been to paint them on multiple small, framed supports, and then use these elements to compose the kind of complex installations expected in a white cube.

The result of this tactic, though, is artworks with no direct relation to the artist's street practice. Like McGee, many graffiti and street artists nowadays have become more or less fluent in the language of contemporary art and developed a studio-based line of work with no explicit links to their street practice. This activity would plainly fall within the scope of contemporary art-making, and curating this kind of pieces could not be accurately described as "curating street art".

There are approaches, though, that can allow a curator to select objects intimately and meaningfully related to the street practice of an artist. However, most of these approaches are not in the hands of curators but of the artists.

3. Importing street artworks

Some strategies allow to import into the white cube not the images used in an artist's street art output, but the street artworks themselves. These would include, of course, the increasingly common method of tearing pieces from buildings, wall and all. This procedure has nevertheless the same flaws described in the preceding section, since the piece becomes frozen in time, detached from the series it belongs to and from the contextual experience that gives it meaning.

A common method is to photograph a street piece and exhibit the resulting image. In the decade of 1960 land art, performance art and other artistic approaches that aimed to flee the white cube were brought back into it through photography, and this has been the case too with street art. But photography has a very limited ability to capture a context-based piece, as pioneering street artist Daniel Buren discussed in depth decades ago.⁶

A photograph records an artwork from only one arbitrary point of view. It captures only one arbitrary part of the visual context, and frames out the rest. It captures only one arbitrary moment in time – one particular circumstance around the piece, one particular weather, light, one particular state of the piece. Also, a picture cannot capture smell, it does not allow the viewer to touch or hear. Curating street art through photographs thus reduces a multidimensional artwork into something far detached from the original experience.⁷

4. Importing tools and materials

As we have seen, an essential aspect of street art is how the artist gets to produce the artwork. Therefore, importing into the white cube the tools used in this production process can be an effectual way to get the viewer closer to the street piece. A good example of this approach would be North American curator J. R. Rushmore's exhibition *All big letters*,⁸ which aimed to portray the methodologies of graffiti by displaying tools used for that practice together with photographs of artists engaged in different techniques.

A related tactic would be to bring materials from the street into the white cube. North American artist Brad Downey has often made use of this approach, for example in *House of Cards* (2009), where he exhibits a sculpture built with pavement tiles taken from the street, or in *CCTV Takedown* (2007), where he exhibits a CCTV camera he stole from a building's facade. In both cases the collectable artwork is completed with a photograph that gives proof of where the objects displayed at the gallery were originally located, thus portraying their relation with the artist's street practice.⁹ This approach was explored by land artists in the 1960s, among them Richard Long, who became known for sculptures produced in the countryside using materials found on-site. Apart from photographing these pieces and exhibiting the resulting images, the British artist has produced analogous

sculptures as gallery artworks by importing the materials into the white cube.¹⁰ Even the coupling of an object taken from the street with a photograph that proves the relation of this object with the artist's street practice was part of experiments in the 1970s. This was the case, for example, of the piece *Office Baroque* (1977) by North American artist Gordon Matta-Clark, resulting from his homonymous intervention produced in Antwerp in the same year.

5. The white cube as archive

A particularly successful formula makes simultaneous use of various tactics described above and uses the white cube as an archive of objects and documentation related to a street project. Swedish artist Adam's exhibition *Slussen*, produced at Berlin's art space Urban Art Info in 2009, is a good example.

The homonymous street intervention project portrayed in the exhibition consisted in locating and entering a forgotten maintenance shed in the middle of the city, fitting its door with an ingenious locking system anyone could open by following some simple instructions, furnishing it as a living space, then installing a trap door and a folding ladder that gave access to a network of tunnels existing underneath. The exhibition included photographs of the inside and outside of the shed, a life-size floor plan of the shed painted on the floor of the gallery to give an idea of scale, and some objects used in the intervention, such as the folding ladder.

6. Hybrid projects

One last approach to the problem of importing street pieces into the white cube are experiments that could be described as "hybrid". These are art projects produced specifically for the art space which simultaneously function as street artworks. An example can be found in Spanish artist E1000's exhibition *Tras la superficie*,¹¹ for which he produced a series of small and simple sculptures he then hid in various nooks and crannies around the city. What visitors to the exhibition could see and purchase were photographs of the sculptures displayed together with envelopes. Enclosed in each envelope the collector would find directions to follow in order to gain access to the object, and in some cases the key needed to open the small maintenance hatch in which the piece hid.

But if there is one artist who has worked steadily and successfully in devising this kind of hybrid tactic, it is French artist Eltono. The earliest example of this line of work is his project *Pubblico*.¹² For this project Eltono produced several runs of posters featuring one of his characteristic geometric designs, using a different color combination in each run. He then shuffled the posters into stacks and pasted these in the streets, leaving the corners of the posters unpasted. After allowing some days for passers-by to naturally and gradually tear the posters off, unveiling random parts of the different coloured layers, the artist chose a particular moment in this evolution and took the stacks down to be exhibited at the gallery.

Eltono knows his outdoor pieces are interesting in part because they are living things that evolve due to forces he cannot control, and in this project he found a way to harness these forces and make them work for him. A way to capture the dynamic nature of street art pieces, and of public space in general, and making it crystallise into an artwork conceived for the white cube.

After this first experiment Eltono has produced several others that follow analogous mechanisms. I have been lucky enough to curate two of them for two Spanish museums, respectively *Branco de España* in 2010 and *Deambular* in 2012. In this last exhibition Eltono expanded the formula, conceiving a diverse series of mechanisms which gave shape to indoor artworks based not only on actions of passers-by but also on street activities of the artist himself.¹³ This essentially similar but more multifaceted line of work has been developed since then by the artist in several exhibitions.

7. Curating street art outdoors

Large scale, institutional murals have little to do with street art. Although they are nowadays usually advertised under the term street art, institutional murals would be more accurately described as a form of public art. Public art and street art are two fundamentally different approaches to making art in public space, and they result in contrasting experiences for both the artist and the viewer. A detailed account of the differences between these two practices can be found in my contribution to the preceding volume of this journal.¹⁴ These differences have to do with the where, when, how and why

– with the contextual, temporal, and geographic dimensions discussed above, and with the contrast between the monumental scale of murals and the human scale of street art. Nevertheless, some alternative approaches exist that can actually allow the curation of street art outdoors.

The first approach involves curating after-the-fact, that is, developing a curatorial project around pieces that already exist and have been produced outside of it. One example of this can be found in the New York-based Street Museum of Art, who describes its activities with the term “guerrilla curating”. For each project the team behind the Street Museum of Art selects a series of street art pieces existing in a given city and writes short texts about them, then prints these texts on labels mimicking those found next to canvases in galleries and museums. The labels are installed on street walls close to the pieces they comment upon, and the interventions are located on an online map.

A much more common form of curating after-the-fact is the street art guided tour, in which a person guides a group of people around the city showing them street art pieces and speaking about them. The street art tour could be considered a form of curating in that it involves selecting a series of pieces, proposing a particular order, and using words to give background on the pieces, and conceivably also on the selection. One usual criticism of this formula, though, is how it involves a loss of the elements of exploration and surprise in the experience of the viewer.

This would lead us to the final subject of analysis of this text, that is, creating a curatorial project by commissioning an artist to produce a street art project. It could be argued that the model of street art project described above, composed of a series of smaller, site-specific pieces, could be produced with permission. But seeking permissions for numerous locations can become a long and difficult process, which would fatally hinder the flexible, even improvised nature characteristic of the work of many street artists. Also, street artists tend to favor neglected surfaces, whose owners can be difficult to find.

Is it possible then to create a curatorial project by commissioning an artist to produce a series of pieces in public space without seeking explicit permissions? It is indeed, and such projects have taken place many times. Most curatorial

projects of this kind, though, come not from the street art scene but from the world of contemporary art. A good example would be the event Art in Odd Places, produced yearly since 2005 in New York City, as well as in other cities. For each edition, a group of curators commission artists to produce site-specific performances and interventions – typically of a small scale– without permission and under a certain topic, then publish information and texts about pieces, artists and topic.

Only a handful of events within the street art scene have developed projects involving the commission of street pieces to be produced without permission. Among the few festivals known for doing this systematically are Nuart from Stavanger, Norway, and Bien Urbain from Besançon, France. Both events organise the production of big murals, as is the case of the numerous festivals linked to the street art scene, but also invite artists to freely roam the city to produce series of human-scale, site-specific pieces without seeking explicit permissions. Nevertheless, a lack of in-depth texts examining the commissioned artworks, and in some cases also the ideas behind the commission, would distance these projects from the understanding of curation described above.

One artist to mention here would be Escif from Spain, who in the last few years has often tried to follow this methodology when invited by events or institutions. I was privileged to commission him to produce a project of this kind for an event in Spain in 2015¹⁵ and the results were nothing short of fantastic – proving that curating street art outdoors is not only possible, but necessary in these times of institutional murals, monetised exhibitions and overall denaturalisation of the practice.

8. Conclusions

What could the differences be, then, between curated street art and street art that takes place on its own? What can curators and arts managers contribute? A curated project can cover an artist's travel, accommodation and expenses so she can work in different environments. It can provide her with tools, materials, and a studio from which to work. But, most importantly, it can contribute three things: it can get documenters to thoroughly capture the process and results of the artist's work, it can add a critical dimension to the

project in the form of texts, and it can put all these results together in a publication that can give the project a much larger reach.

As described above, photography has a very limited ability to capture the multidimensionality of a piece of street art. This can be circumvented to some extent by taking not one but multiple photographs – by capturing the pieces from different points of view, with different framings, in different moments of the day or the year, under different lights and weather conditions, with different circumstances around them, and at different stages in their life as they gradually disappear. Such thorough documentation work can rarely be undertaken by the artist, but it could conceivably be done as part of a curated project.

It is in texts, though, where a curated project can really make a difference. Texts can convey many aspects photographs may not be able to portray – they can describe aspects of the context, of the process of creation of the piece, of the relation between piece and context, of the life of the piece, or of the experience of the viewer. And, more crucially, theoretical texts can help understand the artwork by offering a critical view on it and situating it in its historic and artistic context.

A concluding question would be, why so very few of the numerous existing street art-related festivals work in this direction? A first, obvious reason are the potential fines, a problem that can be largely avoided by hiring artists known for a tactful approach to selecting locations, scale, content and working materials. A second reason has to do with money. Getting an artist to study an area in order to produce a series of contextually meaningful pieces requires inviting her for an extended period of time, which would be significantly more expensive than the short stay typically allocated for the production of a mural. A third reason is related to ease of production. Securing one permission instead of many involves of course less work, and owners of prominent walls are usually easy to find. But, maybe more importantly, a mural is a more obviously valuable addition to a piece of real estate than a small intervention, therefore getting the permission for it can be easier.

A fourth reason has to do with how attractive the resulting documentation is for the fast online consumption

characteristic of today's culture in general, and of the street art audience in particular. While a photograph falls short in the capture of a street art piece, it can easily portray a work's spectacular large scale, which tends to be the main value in today's murals. As a result of this, a mural can be much more profitable in terms of online virality, which is how the success of a street art-related festival is often gauged.

A fifth, final reason is related to the fact that fully appreciating a street art project involves coming across it repeatedly and being familiar with its context. It is therefore unlikely that viewers whose relation with an area is only superficial will perceive its values, or even notice it. Consequently, tourists and customers of bars and restaurants, who visit areas to quickly consume them rather than to live them, will be more attracted to a conspicuous and easily-digested mural. This can explain why street art-related festivals favor murals, since facilitating gentrification and other forms of commercialisation of an area is often among the goals of either their organisers or of the city officials who allow the events to take place.

Notes

1 See Williams (2009).

2 With the term graffiti we refer here to the name writing culture that originated in New York city in the decade of 1970 and was later exported to the whole world.

3 For a detailed analysis of all these factors see Abarca (2016).

4 See Abarca (forthcoming).

5 The idea of street artworks as events instead of objects was mentioned by North American artist Swoon in Sudbanthad (2004).

6 See for example Buren (1988), p. 5.

7 Some artists have found strategies that allow them to give

photographs a closer link to the street artworks they capture. Among them is French artist Ernest Pignon-Ernest, who in the early 1970s pioneered the wheatpaste technique. The litographic prints he typically pastes in the streets are based on charcoal sketches, and he has created studio artworks that couple a sketch with a photograph of the resulting print installed on a wall. See for example *Etude Johannesburg* (2002).

8 The exhibition took place in 2017 at the Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, Haverford.

9 French artist Invader came up with a related formula in the studio pieces he calls *alias*. An *alias* is one of his trademark mosaics encased inside a block of plexiglass. Each of Invader's street mosaics is different from all others and is identified with a code name. Each *alias* is a unique and exact replica of one particular street piece, and it includes information of where and when the original was installed.

10 See for example *Cornish Slate Ellipse* (2009).

11 The exhibition took place in 2015 at the Antonia Puyó gallery in Zaragoza.

12 The exhibition took place in 2009 at Rojo Art Space in Milano.

13 For a full description of the projects see Abarca (2012). The publication includes an in-depth essay about the projects, and about the problems of working with street art in the white cube.

14 Abarca (2016).

15 *Escif en Font de la Pólvora* for Milestone Festival in Girona, Spain, 2015.

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The SAUC 2017 conference bridged scholarly and practice-based approaches to urban creativity. This year we included a range of diversified activities that included practical interventions, round-table discussions, exhibitions, a book launch, and guided visits to sites of urban creativity around the city of Lisbon.

The impact of the practice-oriented activities was particularly positive, and generated a strong connection between theory and practice – effects that also had an impact on the conference and the development of the two issues of this 3rd Volume of SAUC Scientific Journal.

The rhythm of the debates during the conference was inspiring and constructive. The intangible dimensions of the conservation of graffiti and street art were regarded by most to have a broader capacity for dealing with graffiti and street art as heritage, albeit mainly through documentation. Practice-based approaches from the professional fields of public art and urbanism augmented the academic debate.

Texts from both scholarly and professional/practice-based approaches may be found in this publication. This volume of the SAUC Scientific Journal takes these debates conversations forward in presenting a series of papers tightly focused on the issues of intangible heritage and knowledge transfer, and the range of strategic responses to these challenges that could be adopted. We hope that this volume is both a timely resource and a reminder of the positive and productive debates and conversations held at the SAUC 2017 conference.

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