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From call for papers

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Since 2015, six issues of the journal *Street Art and Urban Creativity* have been published, with a total of 84 research articles and numerous essays, working papers and book reviews.

The journal, along with the annual Urban Creativity conference in Lisbon and a number of other publications and activities – including the research network Urban Creativity Lund – are indications that the field of urban creativity studies has become increasingly established.

The field of urban creativity studies has a broad range of interests including, but not limited to, street art, graffiti, urban foraging, parkour, skateboarding and guerrilla gardening. However, as with any field, once it starts to settle, a dominant paradigm tends to emerge. This will to some degree influence what is considered the core of the field, not only in terms of objects of study, but also in terms of method and theoretical approaches.

As a part of this year's call for submissions to the journal, in addition to our general call (see below), we invite contributions that reflect on the current status and the future of the transdisciplinary academic field of urban creativity studies that has emerged over the last two decades. Questions of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

Which topics related to urban creativity and urban creativity studies are currently overlooked?

Which/whose perspectives remain at the margins of the fields of urban creativity and urban creativity studies?

How can we work to include a broader group of people and a wider range of perspectives in urban creativity and urban creativity studies?

What methodological experiments are you undertaking and what methods are being developed?

Which novel theoretical insights can we draw upon to bring the field of urban creativity studies forward?

And, since this call for papers is arguably written from the center of the field, what questions are we overlooking that should be asked here?

In addition to this specific themed call for submissions, which invites contributors to reflect on our own academic field, we also welcome contributions that deal in a more general way with issues pertaining to urban creativity.

ThaSala Street Art: Restoring the Colors to the City in the Time of Pandemic

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Abstract

Thailand's street art circle is now gaining popularity. As a tourism country, Thailand has a policy to promote tourism in a number of ways. Therefore, street art has been used to promote tourism in various locations. In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, this article reveals a story of a street art initiative in an overlooked district in southern Thailand to establish a new tourist attraction. The article covers the story since the beginning of the idea, specifies concepts and processes behind the showcase, interviews various stakeholders for insights and provides additional thoughts on street art creation. It also summarizes the lessons learned from the project that has been done through interviews with stakeholders from different perspectives to use as a guideline for further street art project development.

1. Introduction

Just two weeks after Chinese authorities announced a group of severe lung infections of unknown cause, which was later found to be caused by the new coronavirus or COVID-19, the World Health Organization (WHO) office in Thailand announced the finding of the same infection outside China for the first time. It was from a Chinese tourist arriving from Wuhan to Thailand on January 13, 2020. This was followed by the discovery of the same infection in 5 different countries on that week, 25 countries by the end of January, and more than 200 countries by March. Finally, COVID-19 has become a major global crisis as we know it.

Following the lockdown and travel restrictions in April 2020, Thai government prohibited oversea travelers from entering the country to control the outbreak. As a result, Thailand tourism industry, that generated US\$58 billion

in revenues from 39.9 million foreign tourists in 2019, had shrunk to US\$10 billion from 6.7 million foreign tourists in 2020¹. Hotels and hospitality services in the tourism industry gradually closed the business. Laborers in the tourism sectors were forced to return to their hometowns.

When the COVID-19 situation relieved in the second half of 2020, Thai government issued economic measures to stimulate domestic tourism to compensate for the missing income from international travelers. It was during this short period that domestic tourism began to recover. Entrepreneurs in tourism, both locals and those who returned from major tourist destinations, came up with different strategies to attract Thai tourists to their area.

1 - Thailand Tourism Statistics [source: Ministry of Tourism & Sports] (https://www.mots.go.th/more_news_new.php?cid=592)

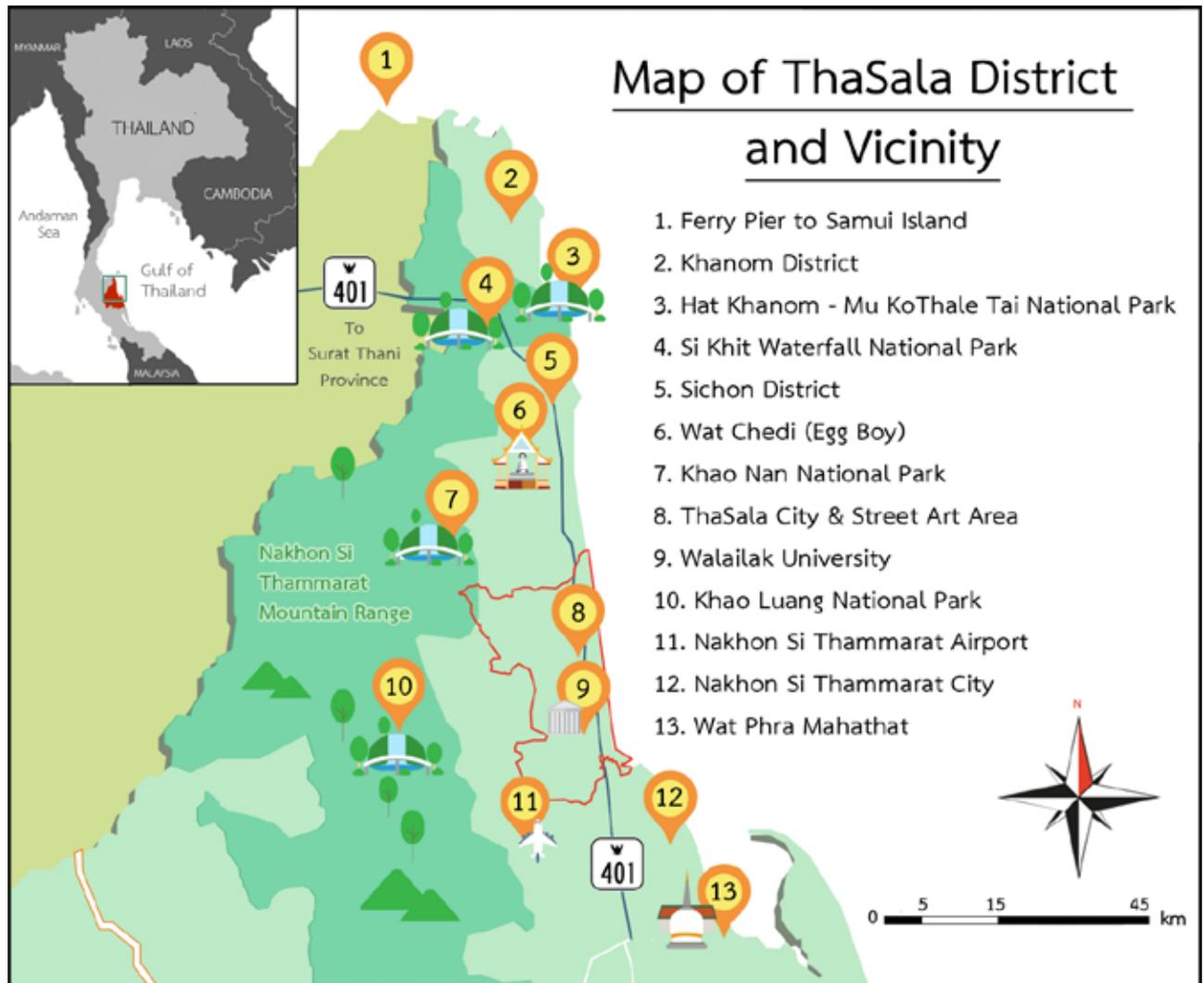


Figure 1. Map of ThaSala District and its vicinity. The boundary of ThaSala District is bordered in red. [source: Patibut Preeyawongsakul]

As contributors to a tourism promotion activity in ThaSala District, we revealed a story of street art creation in this overlooked district in southern Thailand. It was an effort to create wall paintings on public spaces in a place that most people had never known it before. This article tells the story, specifies concepts and processes behind the showcase, presents interviews various stakeholders for insights and discusses additional thoughts concerning the street art. This in an attempt to look back at the event and learn from the collaborative works we experienced in ThaSala community in the time of COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Background

ThaSala District is one of the 23 districts in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. This region has a long civilization since the prehistoric era and once was a large kingdom, called Tambralinga, in the Malay Peninsula (Noonsuk, 2013). Phra Borommathat Chedi, or great noble relics stupa, has been a sacred Buddhist site since the early-13th century. Nakhon Si Thammarat is one of the recommended provinces by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in the “secondary cities” campaign that wants to diversify and expand the tourist destinations from major cities (TAT, 2018).

The Highway 401 connects Nakhon Si Thammarat Province and Surat Thani Province with three districts in Nakhon Si Thammarat along the way, namely ThaSala, Sichon, and Khanom District (see Figure 1). This area is a long coastal plain between Nakhon Si Thammarat Mountain Range in the west and Gulf of Thailand in the east. There are three national parks in this area, ranging from mountains and waterfalls to islands and white sand beaches. ThaSala District is 20 kilometers away from the Nakhon Si Thammarat Airport and is often overlooked as a route to Sichon and Khanom, where there are many beautiful beaches and resorts. Furthermore, Sichon District is famous for a sacred boy statue, called Ai Khai or Egg Boy, in Wat Chedi (Bush, 2021). It is believed that the Egg Boy brings good fortune to worshipers. People from all over the country visited Wat Chedi to make a votive offering with firecrackers, asking for their fortune in a tough time, especially in 2020—the year of pandemic crisis.

In addition to the natural and cultural attractions in its vicinity, ThaSala is also a home to Walailak University (WU). Founded in 1992, WU is a comprehensive university under the supervision of the government. It has several public attractions on the campus, for instance Walailak Park, Botanical Gardens, and Sports Center. Moreover, the university supports many social engagement projects in ThaSala area (Amaek, 2019), such as improving the landscape at a beach and initiating the founding of ThaSala Tourism Club (TTC) as the driving force to transform ThaSala into a tourism city in the future.

ThaSala Tourism Club (TTC) is a non-profit gathering of entrepreneurs in tourism-related business in ThaSala District. Its main objectives are to create a cooperation among all sectors relating to tourism industry, including government agencies, administrative organizations, and local communities, to develop, support, promote and provide tourism activities in ThaSala area. All TTC members agree on the fact that ThaSala District does not have enough interesting attractions to draw visitors. Therefore, the club introduced the slogan “ThaSala, Not just a passing by” and tried to find the selling point for the district. TTC committees, then, proposed the idea of street art to attract tourists for a visit. Furthermore its tohow s

3. Literature Review

3.1. A Very Brief History of Graffiti and Street Art in Thailand

Graffiti and street art in Thailand have evolved continuously over the past four decades with increasing acceptance, from the offensive graffiti by teenage gangsters in the 1980s and Hip-Hoppers in the 1990s to the well-received street art in demand as tourist attractions in 2010s until now. Although Thai people are familiar with mural paintings, depicting the Buddha’s biography or Thai ancient literatures, on walls of the main hall in Buddhist temples and regard them as revering works, they initially considered painting on public walls more as nuisance pieces rather than a work of art. Later, when Thai society is more open to Western culture, street art on public walls began to gain more acceptance gradually. In the nowadays social media era where people enjoy posting selfies with picturesque walls as their backdrop, street art can be seen everywhere throughout the country as tourist attractions, especially in the form of mural paintings ranging from public rejuvenation of old town areas to private decoration of hotels and restaurants (Sereamongkonpol, 2014).

In the 1980s, Thai graffiti on public walls were created by vocational students sprayed on the wall announcing their institution’s name to intimidate other institutions and expand their territory over the rival’s (Tengya, 2015). The main characteristics of these graffiti consist of two major components: the use of Thai characters and the use of their institution’s logo or symbol (see Figure 2 left). These works were often negatively linked to news of inter-institutional gang violence.

Unlike original works in US where graffiti writers expressed their artistic skills as individualism, Thai graffiti borrowed a form of working in public spaces to express the group identity and occupying territory to which the student gangs belong (Tengya, 2015). In addition, there is no such artistic rankings or guidelines between writers on graffiti style quality, i.e., tags, throw-ups, and pieces developed in New York City during 1970s (Whitehead, 2004). When existing works were overpainted by rival gangsters, no matter what its ranks or styles, the real attack between gangs



Figure 2. Thai graffiti in various styles. [source: (left) Thanachart Siripatrachai, (middle) FB: Aong Love, (right) Sakballang Charoenkijtara]

might occur, without any graffiti battle for better artistic expression, to determine the real winner. Challenging tags like “XXX, Daddy for ALL” was a common phrase often seen in public buses and bus stops locating in the gang’s own territory. However, regarding to graffiti paintings that is also illegal in Thailand, there is no formal confrontation between graffiti writers and state authorities, like the case of New York City Transit Authority in the mid-1980s (Young, 2013).

Another category of Thai graffiti is a painting decoration on sightseeing coaches (see Figure 2 middle). These coaches were typically painted with decorated texts and motifs in vivid colors on all sides, including the roof top. This is to please children and prevent from being stolen. The motifs are usually from famous Japanese manga characters, comic characters, and fierce creatures (Tangpondparsert, 2015). However, in 2012, the Department of Land Transport issued a law banning these decorations to legally identify a vehicle color and to ensure the safety of other vehicles.²

Under the worldwide globalization that accelerated interaction among countries including cultural exchange, Thai Graffiti or Street Art in hip-hop style were spread to Thailand in the 1990s (Novak, 2017; Singh, 2020). Most of them are imitations of western graffiti using English characters, instead of Thai. However, the Asian financial crisis in 1997 caused the real estate sector to go bankrupt and over 300 large buildings under construction had been abandoned (Pohl, 2021). These abandoned structures became playgrounds for street artists and graffiti enthusiasts (see Figure 2 right) as well as skateboarding and

B-Boy. Gathering and practicing in these places gave artists more opportunities to develop their craft and share their skills (Sawangchot, 2003). In the 2000s, television programs featuring hip-hop culture and several graffiti competitions made public aware of these talented teenagers and made Thai graffiti more acceptable. This is the time that hip-hop became more popular and turned into a major subculture among Thai teenagers.

Thailand Street Art in its present form started with the influence of internet media and Western tourists who brought this culture in the mid-2000s. It was initially utilized as beautification techniques to quickly upgrade community environment in Bangkok and rebuild the community image from deteriorating look to welcome international tourists. Subsequently, it was heavily influenced by the concept of cultural tourism under the tourism industry until it became more popular as new tourist attractions (Soraprasert, 2019). Thai street art in current era is a favorite to Thai people of all ages and genders. Its popularity began with an exhibition *FOR: Wall Painting Showcase* held in the Bangkok Art and Culture Center (BACC) in 2009. BACC, a contemporary arts center established by Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, was the main driving force in presenting street art to the public awareness. This exhibition had aided in bringing street art to numerous sites throughout Bangkok, allowing artists to work freely and their work to be more appreciated (Tengya, 2015). At the same time, in the major tourist destinations such as Pattaya, Phuket and Samui, 3D Art Museums were built to attract tourists to take selfies with illusion paintings and share on social media.³ Another important milestone was an international

2 - Similar style of vehicle decoration with graffiti art can also be seen in India as truck art (Bhasin, 2018).

3 - Note that similar phenomenon of private museums with illusion paintings built specifically for tourists also appeared in Georgetown, Malaysia when Penang Street Art became popular

festival called *BukRuk Urban Arts Festival*⁴ in Bangkok, under the support of the European Union in 2016. Well-known street art artists from Europe and Asia were invited to create their works in the heart of Bangkok, along with art exhibitions, artist talks, projection mapping showcase and open-air music stage (Soraprasert, 2019). Afterward, street art was created across the country for benefits of area development and tourism promotion in various provinces. Currently, street art is usually done through an organized project and the working space is requested in advance. There is no need to work secretly, giving artists more time to perfect their works (Tengya, 2015).

After the 2014 military coup in Thailand, protests against the junta have been erupted by both the pro-democratic and the oppressed. By 2020, high school and university students were in a great political awakening. The demands for democracy and reform of the Thai monarchy have led to several peaceful demonstrations, with symbols from various pop cultures (Hui, 2020; Singh, 2020). Many street artists in Thailand turned into anti-state rebellion using their skills to express the mob's demands. During this period, anti-government artists became more creative and diverse. For instance, graffiti on a paved road and a covering of Democracy Monument with cloth in "Mob Fest" on 14 November 2020 (The Hindu, 2020), or street art painting on shipping containers that brought by soldiers as barricades between the protester site and the offices of the Prime Minister in March 2021 (The Nation, 2021). These events result to graffiti and street art in the form of political statements with a sense of humor, that provides fearlessness and more energy for the protesters to continue their resistance (Panlee, 2021).

turned in anti-governmentists creative and their expression into many art forms

Nowadays, Thai street artists often come from varied backgrounds such as painters, graphic designers, interior designers or even architects. Therefore, street art circle in Thailand is diversified and open to creativity. Their works are unique because of the artist's past professional

(Liang C. M., 2017).

4 - <https://bukruk.com/festival/> (Bukruk literally means invasion in Thai.)

experience. Thai street artists in current period prefer to work with their original character. The cuteness and the attractive colors of the characters make them more accessible and recognizable to the audience. The artists usually compile their works on social media, mainly Facebook and Instagram, to form their followers and communicate to the fan club with their new paintings and collectibles (MacDowall & de Souza, 2018).

Examples of popular Thai artists and their characters are:

- P7 and his various hybrid creatures and mutant babies.⁵
- Alex Face and Mardi, a 3-eyes child in a rabbit costume.⁶
- Mamafaka and MR.HELLYEAH!, an one-eyed monster with hairy body and curly moustache.⁷

3.2. Street Art in Tourism

Street art is not only a tourist attraction, but also a publicized space. It invites people to take photos and share the images on social media (Yan et al., 2019). This helps to promote the area and attract more tourists, at no additional cost. Furthermore, residents of local community, particularly youngsters, benefit from the presence of street art in their surroundings. They get a good opportunity to view art pieces at various locations across their neighborhood, comparable to having an art exhibition at home (Cooper & Sandlin, 2020). For art enthusiasts, this is a great source of inspiration. Street art encourages the residents to engage with art in their daily lives, to pay great attention to its details, to devote more time thinking about the artwork, and eventually to learn how to create ones. In terms of placemaking, street art not only helps to beautify and revitalize the neglected areas of the city, but also to restore local pride and sense of place in that area (Insch & Walters, 2017).

One of the most distinguishing street art scenes in Southeast Asia is in George Town, the capital of Penang, Malaysia. George Town has been listed as a UNESCO World

5 - <https://www.instagram.com/p7/>

6 - <https://www.instagram.com/alexfacebkk/>

7 - <https://www.facebook.com/MMFKstudio>

Heritage Site since 2008. Penang Street Art outstandingly depicts the town's unique local culture and daily lives of its inhabitants (Liang C. M., 2017). This helped to create dynamics and attract more tourists for street art tour, leading to economic expansion due to creative economy (Fun, 2014). Penang Street Art is considered a model of street art tourism in many places throughout the region, including Ipoh and Alor Setar in Malaysia and Songkhla Old Town in Thailand. Street art on the old walls of the shophouses in George Town create a visual and cognitive effect and become a city memorial for visitors. Most of the tourists queuing to take photos of street art are Asians. This could be "a result of the manifestation of the 'cutie-look' or 'I've Been There' socio-cultural behaviors commonly found among Asian tourists" (Liang C. M., 2017).

One of the key features in Penang Street Art is the juxtaposition of relevant objects alongside the wall paintings, e.g., a picture of local children playing a swing with real swings hanging nearby. This arrangement allows visitors to interact with real swings in their own way, whether sitting, hanging, swinging, or showing other gestures while taking photos (Soraprasert, 2019). The role of a tourist is transformed from a passive viewer into an active co-creator that conveys emotions in response to the street art context (Thonglert, 2017). This process constructs location identity and promotes the place through emotional engagement, encouraging new media viewer to respond and share the image and, ultimately, increasing the number of views in return.

According to visual analysis on Penang Street Art and Songkhla Street Art from both the mural paintings and Instagram posts, there are mainly two groups of top-ranked social media contents: 1) Stories about the traditional culture in the community; including ethnic groups, folk arts and culture, and home cuisine that signifies local identity and 2) Stories that display the cuteness of children or pets that often conveys innocence, growth, and hope (Thonglert, 2017). Nonetheless, caution must be taken in the use of logos or emblems. Be aware that audiences may not belong to the same culture as the creator, and they are difficult to get the intended message (Soraprasert, 2019).

3.3. Management Models for Street Art in Tourism

As street art is easily accessible and creates better interaction with audiences, many cities around the world use street art as a tool to attract tourists. Street art is a quick and simple device for small towns to gain attention from visitors and compete well with big cities on the art and cultural fronts (Insch & Walters, 2017).

There are several models to develop and manage street art in a city. On the one hand, it emphasizes the participation of communities and artists, as in a case of Staro Zhelezare village in Bulgaria (Piriankov, 2018). On the other hand, it focuses on the full management of street art by government agencies, like in Singapore (Chang, 2020), while many cities implemented a mixture approach between both ends (Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miró, 2021; Hazelton, 2015; Zhang & Chan, 2021).

Staro Zhelezare Street Art Festival in Bulgaria initiated by Ventsislav Piriankov under the management of the Piriankov Art Center, the local art academy (Piriankov, 2018). Every summer, Polish art students from the Ventzi School of Drawing visit the village and reside at the art center. They have been a staple of the annual street art festival since 2013. The festival has helped revitalize the village, full of the elderly, from deterioration to a bright and cheerful reputation today. The project is partially funded by many institutions in Poland and Bulgaria and by the artists themselves with their own expense. Along with help and kindness from people in the village, they mutually create this fascinating street art festival happen. Based on the cultural diversity between two countries and people of two different generations, they collectively reinvent their own traditions out of rural creativity that is totally different from the big cities. This appeals tourists to visit Staro Zhelezare for its creativity and exceptionality.

As a nation state, the sturdy Singapore government wants to enhance its world branding with effective infrastructure. In the early 2010s, as the chief supporter in arts and culture, the federal government shifted its focus to public art under a concept that "Legality is thus at the very core of how (public) art forms are defined, perceived and responded to." (Chang, 2020). Some artists resisted the incorporation while others took this opportunity to be embraced by the policy. At present, Singapore's public art is restricted to

sanctioned spaces and compliance within guidelines while defiant artwork is quickly eliminated.

Meanwhile many cities opt to on mixture managing approach, like the case of Barcelona, Macao, and Dunedin. City of Barcelona has more than 30 years of experience as the world's leading tourist destination. For Pinacoteca a Cel Obert (Open-Air Art Gallery) project in Barcelona, Spain, this project aims to regulate and redistribute tourism within the city, from popular tourism areas to the outsides, hoping to reduce the negative impact on the tourist-congested communities (Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miró, 2021). Although such policies are from Barcelona City Council, the project was planned and designed in a bottom-up approach, concerning with the economic, social, and cultural revival of the area. It took a lot collaboration from all stakeholders to create a sustainable tourism development. In Macao, a separation of sanctioned and unsanctioned street art area is clear. As pointed out by (Zhang & Chan, 2021), "Graffiti Park showed people's free expression of artistic, social or personal ideas and represented the creative and cultural face of Macao under tacit approval. In contrast, Nam Van Lake Underground features sanctioned murals." Thus, both management models are implemented in different place, allowing both artists and audiences to choose deliberately according to their preferences. In New Zealand, although Dunedin Street Art Charitable Trust is responsible for overall management, it includes some mechanism that allows different stakeholders to participate in each process (Hazelton, 2015). For example, the matching process that allows a wall owner and an artist worked together on the painting design until both parties reached a mutual agreement, the resource consent process that requires approvals from "affected persons" on the sketches of the proposed artworks, including the hosting system for international artists and the volunteering system to assist the painting.

4. ThaSala Street Art

4.1. Reviving the Community with ThaSala Street Art

TTC Club held an event called "Restoring the Colors to ThaSala" to launch graffiti project and creative market in the evening of 9th September 2020, on which Thai people considered an auspicious date according to the homonym of number 9 and progression—pronounced as K^๙๗.

The ceremony included parades, musical performances, Manora folk dance (see Figure 6 top left), and a trade fair with local products from many areas in ThaSala District. Due to the relief of COVID-19 situation at that time as Thailand reached zero new case since July 2020, a lot of people came out to celebrate the event both for the street art that they saw for the first time and for the improved COVID-19 situation.

The opening ceremony started at the courtyard in front of the government center, where the first street art wall is located (wall no. 1 in Figure 3). TTC plans to spread more street art throughout this 800-meters section on SriThaSala Road, starting from the government center toward the waterfront pavilion, which is the origin of the name ThaSala (Tha = pier / Sala = pavilion). SriThaSala Road was the main street of the city in the past. Nowadays, the area is inactive due to the city expansion to support the highway 401 and the construction of Walailak University in the late 1990s. With the street art project, TTC hopes to gain more attention from travelers to visit this inner area of the city. Accordance with the success of street art project in the first phase, TTC continued to add more wall paintings instantly. Table 1 shows major periods of the street art project as of July 2021.

In this article, we mainly focus on *The Wall of Colorful ThaSala* (wall no. 5 in Figure 3) because it well represents a contemporary situation of Thai street art as described in section 2.3. It is a wall that is created by professional street artists with their own original characters to promote the location as a new tourist attraction. This wall is now a new landmark of ThaSala District and a check-in point on social media for visitors.

4.2. The Wall of Colorful ThaSala

In ThaSala Street Art phase 2, TTC contacted Mr.Jitviwat Klomklao, a nationally-renowned artist who was born and raised in ThaSala City. In 2011, Jitviwat became the first champion of the television program *Ton Silpa* which is Thailand's first reality show in painting. From the initial concept of "Restoring the Colors to ThaSala", Jitviwat invited 7 volunteer artists from *HoW* group to help restore colors in ThaSala with the artists' characters. TTC selected the most outstanding wall on SriThaSala Road for this

| Phase | Main Theme | Created Time | Painting No. (see Figure 3) | Number of Artists |
|-------|--|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | ThaSala Identity: presents local identities of ThaSala to visitors through visual storytelling. The images mainly focus on fishery and its sea products because the area has long been fishing villages. | August – September 2020 | 1, 2, 3, 6 | 3 locals |
| 2 | Colorful ThaSala: restore the colors to ThaSala community with the concept of <i>Under the ThaSala Sea</i> with crabs, fish, shrimps, shells, and original characters from 8 Street Artists. | October – November 2020 | 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 | 2 locals & 7 guests |
| 3 | Memorable ThaSala: portrays the common memories of people in ThaSala community with memorable scenes of ThaSala residents, both in the past and present. | undecided (postponed since April 2021) | – | 3 locals |

Table 1. Schedule of ThaSala Street Art Project, as of July 2021.



Figure 3. Map of street art area in ThaSala City. [source: Pachara Thongnok in November 2020]

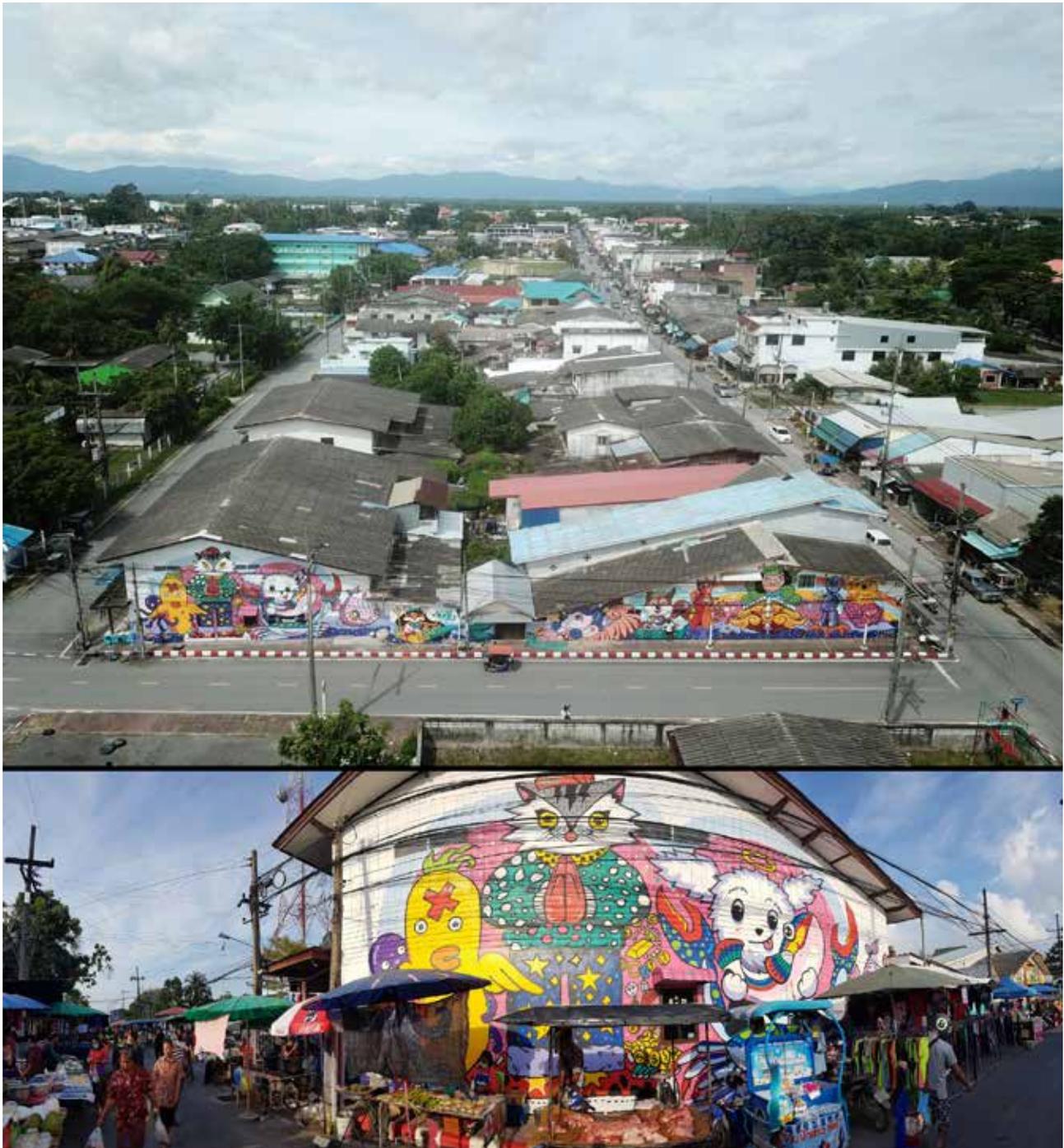


Figure 4. *The Wall of Colorful ThaSala* on an ordinary day (top) compared to on a market day (bottom). [source: (top) Suchaow Kaewprasert on 27 October 2020, (bottom) Varunyu Vorachart on 11 March 2021]

collaboration. It is a 50-meters long wall formed by two double-storey buildings against each other back-to-back. Two sloping roofs from each building produce a fascinating wall area, totally different from a typical rectangular wall. The area opposite to the wall is an open space, making this wall clearly visible from the distance. This provides enough viewing distance to watch a panoramic view of the entire wall area. Additionally, this wall is located within ThaSala Municipal Market. Vendors of food and various consumer products along with their customers gather here every Thursdays for the market, making a vivid scene in front to the colorful wall painting (see Figure 4 bottom).

Heart of Wall or *HoW* is a group of volunteer artists led by Mr.Pairoj Pichetmetakul and Mr.Chaisak Seeradang. Pairoj is a Thai artist who made his name in New York City by charity-drawing homeless people throughout the city, while Chaisak is an artist who lost his right arm since childhood but always strive to work for art and volunteering. Within *HoW* group, member artists are flexible to take turn in painting street art at various places throughout the country. For *The Wall of Colorful ThaSala*, the *HoW* group assigned Ms.Supaluk Praphasiri to manage all working schedule from start to finish. She was a former landscape architect who is now an independent artist focusing on social work. Supaluk brought in the concept of ThaSala Sea that was so prolific that it is named as the Golden Bay. The painting tells the story of ThaSala Sea with many marine creatures, such as squid, shellfish, starfish, stingrays, and the famous blue crab of ThaSala District. A variety of tiny animals and objects appear at various locations on the wall to interest audiences. The characters are arranged carefully to balance between sizes, colors, positions and poses as well as to avoid obscuring by electric poles. The artist uses the sea waves to connect all characters together. According to our survey with the artists, every character and its background information are shown in Table 2.

To accommodate the creation of a large wall painting, Jitviwat asked Dr.Witthaya Hosap, a lecturer at the Multimedia Technology and Animation (MTA) Program, Walailak University to help as a coordinator between the artists and TTC. In addition, Dr.Wittaya also led a team of MTA students and academic staffs to participate in the

street art creation, both in painting the wall primer in the pre-work day and in helping artists paint the walls in the painting day, between 22 - 25 October 2020 (see Figure 5 left). Moreover, MTA program organized a special seminar session for the artists to share their experiences with students. This is a true learning experience outside the classroom. In this occasion, Mr.Phanaran Janprung, an MTA supporting staff, was honored to launch his own characters along with other guest artists' characters. It is his debut as a character designer in street art painting.

Hearing about the new wall painting, ThaSala residents, both children and adults, gathered to see the painting site on Sunday October 25, 2020, the last day of the painting. Some residents brought beverages and refreshments to congratulate the artists and painting crews for creating such beautiful street art in their neighborhood. At the end of the day, the crew members asked the artists to paint on their clothes as a farewell gift before returning home (see Figure 5 right). It is a fun and exciting moment for people in ThaSala community amid the relaxation of the COVID-19 situation that tends to be improved in the second half of 2020.

5. Interview Results

To record the story behind the 2020 wall paintings, we conducted in-depth interviews with various stakeholders involved in the creation of street art project. This is to investigate both positive and negative impacts of street art on ThaSala communities, particularly in the neighborhood along SriThaSala Road, which is home to all of 2020 street art works. It is also a retrospective of previous activities to uncover some key insights that may be useful to the street art project in the future. The interviews consist of five persons as listed in Table 3. The interview results are analyzed and categorized into the following subsections.

5.1. The Relationship Between Operating Organizations.

In the street art project, there are various organizations working all together, namely TTC, WU, ThaSala Community, Local Administrative and professional street artists. The key idea is to understand the strong points and the weak points of each organization. A strong point of one organization complements a weak point of another. For example, as Sunthorn pointed out, TTC initially formed mainly by

| | Artist Name (Alias) | Character Design | Created Year | Social Media Channels |
|----------|---|---|-------------------------|--|
| A | Mr.Chaisak Seeradang (Soul Crazy) | Name: Soul Design: I like ducks because they have a variety of abilities. That's like me. Then, I development the character by blending duck and my mind (spirit) through contemporary forms under the name Nong Soul. | 2018 | Soul crazy |
| B | Mr.Utit Prokhum (JAYOTO) | Name: jayoto Design: Fresh & Fun. | 2004 | @jayoto |
| C | Mr.Pairoj Pichetmetakul (Pairojpichet) | Name: Frango (my dog's name) Design: ThaSala is a vibrant city full of people, culture, entertainment, and plenty of seafood. These served as inspiration for my design. | 2018 | FB: Pairoj Pichetmetakul |
| D | Ms.Supaluk Praphasiri (Praewpraphasiri) | Name: Fairyfox Design: A female fox who can transform according to the changing environment. That came from the designer's fondness for wildlife. especially the fox with a cute face and fluffy fur. | 2019 | IG: praew_prapha FB: praew.prapha FB: Ppraewprapha |
| E | Ms.Nutcharee Pumpayom (Cartair Rattie) | Name: Nicorn Design: Being a woman in her own way that sometimes looks like a man. Unicorn is my most favorite animal. | 2020 | IG: Cartairrattie FB: Rattie Cartair FB Page:l'mpaints |
| F | Ms.Wanchanok (CHIP) | Name: ECHIP Design: a unique character. | 2020 | Instagram |
| G | Mr.Jitviwat Klomklao (Noom Jitviwat) Local artist | Name: Noomnoom (from my nickname.) Design: I grew up in ThaSala. Therefore, I design a character riding a boat, which was a typical vehicle in the past. I draw this for people to see my journey, from growing up in this city and returning to benefit the homeland. | 2019 | FB: Artist Jitviwat Klomklao |
| H | Mr.Phanaran Janprung (Tang) Local artist | Name: Kodjahiem collections Design: Inspired by turtles and masked warriors | 2019 | IG: luffylucifer FB: SM Project toys Twitter:@kodhiem |
| I | Mr.Chatchai Phojjanaporn (Chat) | Name: ROBERTO Design: Inspired by the phoenix. Personally, I often dream that we are like big birds. Whenever in danger, we will use a strong flapping to fly up to the sky and feel at ease and safe. | 2019 | Facebook & Instagram |

Table 2. The list of street artists with their character design information, in order of appearance from left to right, on *The Wall of Colorful ThaSala* (see Figure 3).

businesspersons. At first, the members didn't trust each other. Therefore, WU stepped in as a coordinator between TTC members because WU, as a higher educational institute, has more resources and credibility. When TTC members became more acquaintance, they collaborated very well and worked faster than WU due to the quicker decision making.

Another example came from Sutham, the president of TTC. He told that at first it was very difficult to obtain walls from the community to join the street art project because the elderly had no idea what street art is and considered not to join the project. That means the community has all the resources of walls, but very limited understanding. Sutham had to launch the project with very few walls to demonstrate the idea of street art to the community. When SriThaSala Road residents realized the potential of street art, many residents donate their wall to TTC without hesitation.

Mutual goal is very important when working across multi-organizations. TTC propose the slogan "ThaSala, Not just a passing by" as the common goal between the operating organizations. Therefore, every person sees the same target and be able to work all together toward the goal. needs

5.2. The Main Concept of ThaSala Street Art.

Sutham said that using art to connect through people with street art is effective. People in ThaSala community attended the event and it was well received. As for attracting tourists, it is also considered effective. Many visitors came to take pictures. Many people who have never entered ThaSala City before came inside because they saw the picture of street art from social media. However, if noticed carefully, tourists came here to take pictures and left. They did not spend as much time in ThaSala as expected. TTC must find a way to hold visitors to stay longer with more spending as well.



Figure 5. Group photo of street artists, painting crews and members of ThaSala Tourism Club at the painting site. [source: ThaSala Tourism Club on 24 - 25 October 2020]

| | Name | Position | Interview Dates |
|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Mr.Sunthorn Boonkaew | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecturer at Walailak Management School, Walailak University. Adviser to ThaSala Tourism Club. | 25 Feb 2021 |
| 2 | Mr.Sutham Noiheed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owner of Baan Don Tea House. 2021 President, ThaSala Tourism Club. 2020 Head of Public Relations, ThaSala Tourism Club. | 31 Mar 2021 |
| 3 | Mr.Khantee Chanyayian | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owner of One Day Café on SriThaSala Road. | 9 Mar 2021 |
| 4 | Mr.Jitviwat Klomklao | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional artist born & lives in ThaSala district. Director of ThaSala Street Art, Phase 2. | 29 Mar 2021 |
| 1 | Mr.Phanaran Janprung | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MTA academic staff, School of Informatics, Walailak University. Amateur local artist. | 4 May 2021 |

Table 3. List of interviewees on 2020 ThaSala Street Art Project. The number on each interviewee is for referencing in **Figure 7**.

Sutham also added that most visitors drove into street art area and parked their cars at each painting spot without surveying around. This caused them to miss some walls in a small passage or overlook some in a hurry. In this respect, the solution is to make an area map notifying each painting spot. The map must be easy for tourists to access, either in a printed material or an online image. TTC can ask shop members on SriThaSala Road to be a map distribution point. Hence, amenities for tourists traveling on their own such as a map or a guide are needed.

TCC plans to continue developing the street art area in the region next to SriThaSala Road. Unfortunately, owing to a worsening COVID-19 scenario, the plan has been temporarily halted.

5.3. Wall Painting Development.

To create more street art, Jitviwat suggested that we encourage local artists and collaborate with professional street painters, at the same time. This will give ThaSala artists the opportunity to learn from the experts. In the long run, this will assist local artists in creating better works. Professional street artists are well-managed, and their contributions provide diversity to the project's overall environment.

In terms of new painting subjects, Sutham stated that TTC disallows pictures of revered social institution to avoid inappropriate postures from street art audiences that would be considered insulting to the institution. This issue may create a negative image on the ThaSala community, which owns the street art properties.

Furthermore, as a precaution to avoid any issues with the painting on the walls, TTC made a contract between the club and the wall owner to prevent destruction or abuse of the painting, according to Sutham. This gives TTC more confident to create new wall paintings.

Another issue that TTC is not yet fully understood is the copyright of the work. There are more details that need to be discussed rather than neglected, particularly in the copyright of the characters from professional street artists. In this regard, Jitviwat made an interesting comment that the artists who painted the wall have their own followers in social media which also help spread the characters' images in ThaSala Street Art. When the artist reputation grows, the value of souvenirs made from their characters may increase. Therefore, there should be a reasonable profit sharing between the artist and the club.

When it comes to the goals of ThaSala Street Art, Jitviwat wants ThaSala to be well-known throughout the country. He added that this requires many factors such as artist reputation, media communication, harmony of ThaSala community and tastes of the audience.

5.4. Negative Impact on the Residents in Street Art Area.

Sunthorn said that the street art area was originally a gray zone, where teenagers gang gathered around. When the region was established as a street art area, the residents frequently encountered difficulties with loud noises, making the homeowners unable to rest. Most of the issues caused by locals rather than visitors, added Khantee. To solve this problem, administrative organization installed CCTVs in the area. However, when requesting to inspect the recordings, there is always an issue with a damaged camera or no recording, revealed Khantee.

Khantee, as the owner of the largest wall, has an unfavorable attitude toward the street art since he was facing the issues by himself, whereas other residents may not as severely invaded. Regarding the extension of the street art area, Khantee prefers to do it gradually and carefully before expanding the project area. Furthermore, the community should find a means to educate people about the need of respecting the privacy of the residents in the street art area. Khantee observed that, despite having the direct impact, the community was not active in resolving the issues. This may be because most of the residents in this community are senior citizens, causing the community to address problems slowly.

5.5. Supporting Activities are Important.

Jitviwat wants to see a wider range of activities, such as music, sports, or art events. He wants to see more events in the street art area than there currently are, especially involving children in the community. Despite some students attended field trips (see Figure 6 top right), there were fewer than expected. He wanted the school to hold an art contest related to street art in the area. It may be a color book format in which children color wall figures based on their own ideas. To give the firsthand experience of street art to the community on a few weekends, Jitviwat gathered children who were playing around and asked them to color his character, Noomnoom, on a real wall (see Figure 6 bottom left).

Khantee considers these supporting activities to be more significant than the pictures on the wall. It is not difficult to paint a wall in any location. The essential concept, however, is the continuing activities in the area that influence the community and tourists. This should be a significant consideration when the COVID-19 problem is resolved, as it is the key to the project's long-term sustainability.

TTC covers most of the cost of the street art project through donations from club members and other supporters. In reality, TTC offers a variety of souvenirs, like ThaSala T-shirts, badges, and can openers, featuring the figures from the wall (see Figure 6 bottom right). The profit from these sales is insignificant when compared to the actual expenses of the painting. The sale difficulty is likely due to the lack of a selling point in the street art area. Although tourists learned via social media that souvenirs are available, they were unable to find a store to purchase the souvenirs. As a result, current sales are extremely low.

6. Discussions

TTC has an excellent management team, which is regarded as a significant element in the success of ThaSala Street Art. Consisting of tourism entrepreneurs, TTC committee made quick decisions and acted fast, with personal connections to both communities and local administrators as supports. TTC, who had no prior experience with street art, opted to contract a few groups of local artists to speed up the process and create different painting styles. To achieve the unity of wall content, TTC set up a broad theme and gave artists the opportunity to express their own characteristics, which is crucial for the attractiveness of each wall.

Following the success of ThaSala Street Art initiatives, restaurants and cafes in the area joined the trend by having their own wall painted in the similar theme. While TTC's initial project provided organized artworks to ignite the street art movement, these independent paintings added more organic attributes to the project. The combination of both organized and organic artworks enhances the appealing of the overall mural paintings (Insch & Walters, 2017). However, without TTC approval in painting content, some restaurant owners may paint the sensitive contents which TTC hopes to avoid in the first place. Nevertheless, as these walls are private properties, the likelihood of a conflict with viewers is low. In the future, TTC may add



Figure 6. Various activities from ThaSala Tourism Club on the street art project. [source: ThaSala Tourism Club]

more street art pieces to connect these separated works and create a street art walking tour in the neighborhood. This will contribute to a remarkable tourist experiences and strengthen ThaSala District's reputation as a creative city (Andron, 2018).

TTC has policies to prevent possible conflicts, such as obtaining contracts from building owners for the use of walls and prohibiting artworks that deal with sensitive topics like politics, religions, or monarchy. However, no contract for the copyright of the artist's characters has been signed yet. Because it's a novel issue that hasn't been addressed previously. There was simply a conversation with artists about granting TTC the rights to use their characters

that appears on the wall without modification, but no details about usage or benefit sharing as written evidence. In this regard, if the club wishes to expand its souvenir line-ups for real sales, there may be issues in the future. The issues about property rights and copyrights on both sanctioned and unsanctioned works are legal protections that all stakeholders should consider more seriously (Bonadio, 2018; Insch & Walters, 2017).

In the 2nd phase of ThaSala Street Art, there was a project restructuring, as shown in Figure 7, to tackle more demanding tasks. Both TTC and Jitviwat, a professional artist from ThaSala, are key players in this phase; from communicating with the community to select a suitable

wall space, contacting government agencies to solve legal issues, appointing professional street artists to design and paint the wall, and collaborating with Walailak University for advices and students to assist on the work. Each organization has a clear division of duties according to their skills and resources. Walailak University provided with both labor and expertise. The community donated their wall spaces. Artists designed the painting space and created the artwork within the specified scope. Government authorities aided in the resolution of all legal and security concerns, including the installation of CCTV cameras to ensure security in the wall area. TTC members, both resorts and restaurants owners, welcomed and looked after the artists from the moment they arrived at the airport. The artists visited several locations in ThaSala District and participated in tourism activities. This exposed ThaSala identities through their firsthand experiences that would be portrayed in the mural painting.

However, if TTC wants to take street art project more seriously in a larger scale with international streetartists, it needs to adjust its organization to be more efficient to support the expansion of street art area in the city. One approach may be to adopt the model of Dunedin City in New Zealand. Dunedin established a dedicated street art fund known as the Dunedin Street Art Charitable Trust (Hazelton, 2015), which is responsible for funding all street art activities and pairing artists with building owners to initiate the work. After a mutual agreement between a street artist and a building owner on the wall design, the artist come to work on the commissioned project while staying with the locals. This will enhance a strong bond between the artist and the community. Likewise, through a deep connection with Walailak University that could provide and organize international contacts, TCC should construct an international network of street art artists and offer a solid support to local talented. This highly organized management ensures high efficiency. However, at the same time, TTC must maintain a balance between organized and organic structure to give importance to all stakeholders, without limiting any party's participation (Quinn, 2005). To promote ThaSala Street Art, TTC and Walailak University used online channels mainly on social media to reach the potential visitors. In addition to the existing communication channels from the partners, a new Facebook page, titled

ThaSala District⁸, has been established to share news and tourist information and encourage people to visit ThaSala. Furthermore, the inviting street artists used their own social media accounts to publicize the event and location. Due to the crisis of COVID-19 pandemic, when most people stayed home, digital marketing via social media has a greater capacity to distribute information, particularly visual messaging, to larger audiences and prospective visitors (Radisich, 2020), at least until the COVID-19 situation improves enough for tourists to resume traveling.

Meanwhile, to compete with street art in other cities, TTC may need to continue developing the initiative. For example, we may utilize extended reality technology (XR) to produce digital items for user interaction in addition to actual objects that a visitor can engage with physically. Furthermore, in the XR world, digital models can be modified to any possible notion that the visitors find more engaging. Ultimately, both real things on the street art wall and digital objects on a smartphone screen may interact with visitors to provide a more engaging experience. In the same manner that graffiti was invented along with rapping, DJing, and breakdancing, street art may be intended to include an audio component. This will help extend the viewer's experience to the same expected feeling in the environment context of the visiting location (Geroimenko, 2018).

Although there are not many tourists due to COVID-19 situation, but the interest from the local people is very high, both in ThaSala and nearby communities. There were teachers taking students on field trips, the newlyweds taking pre-wedding photos with street art walls, and the teenagers in the neighborhood riding motorcycles to take photos at night and making noise at the venue. Based on the concept of public art, street art is considered an open-air gallery that opens 24/7. It gives equality in viewing to people of all groups or ages. Its open environment lessens the rules and enhances interaction to audiences, in a way that any art museum cannot provide. Without any restrictions, the audience can touch or pose with artworks freely. This is an important characteristic of street art in tourism. However, some people in the community and neighboring areas still

8 - <https://www.facebook.com/ThaSala-District-108046387355846>

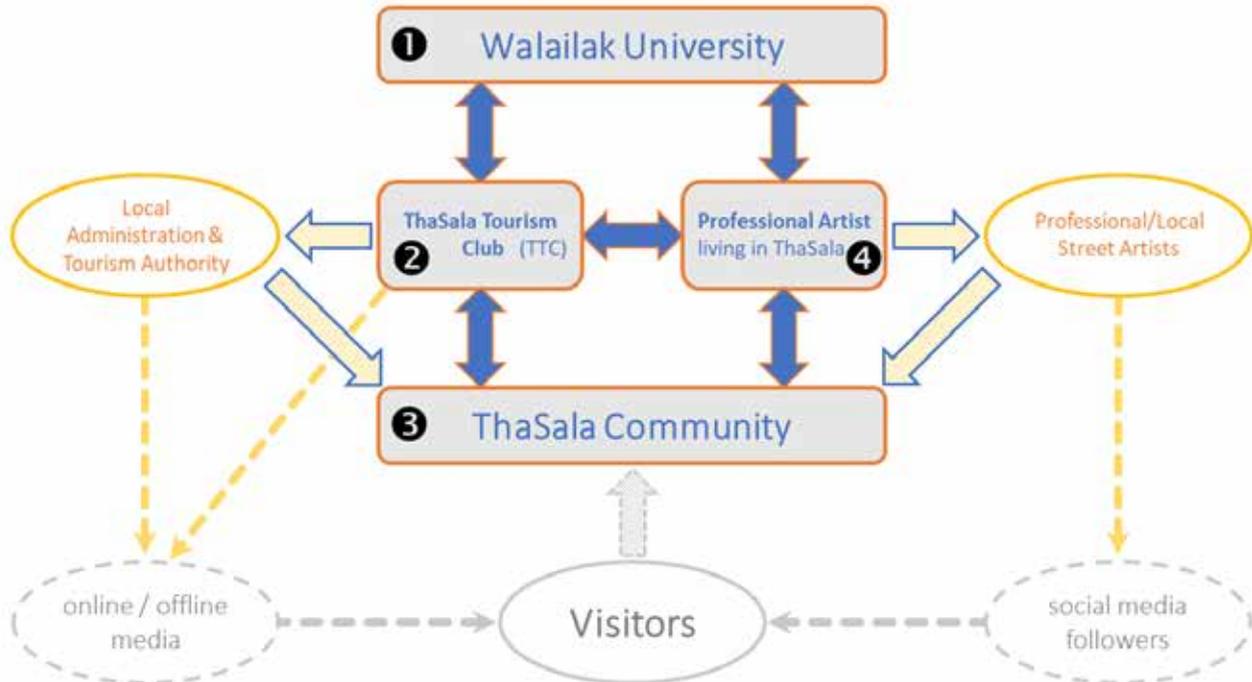


Figure 7. Diagram shows various stakeholders and their relationship in the creation of ThaSala Street Art. The number on each stakeholder is for referencing in **Table 3**.

lack etiquette and respect for the rights of others, especially of the homeowners. In fact, this is a basic problem in Thai society, not just in ThaSala community. Many aspects of vandalism prevention in tourism context share similar causes and preventions to this problem. As (Bhati & Pearce, 2016) suggested, ““Visitor behavior at tourism attractions is a complex phenomenon influenced by several factors such as the motivation for any action, the intention of the person, and perception of opportunity in the physical setting”. Several intervention approaches concerning social, environmental, psychological, and economic aspects are proposed in (Bhati & Pearce, 2016), ranging from short term practices, like an environment design to send visitors reminder of the viewing etiquette, to long term solutions, such as an effective campaign for respect the rights of others in both school system and public media. These negative impacts should be quickly resolved under the cooperation among stakeholders to limit problem expansion into new street art area.

7. Conclusions

ThaSala Street Art is an attempt to establish a new tourist destination for ThaSala City in the midst of COVID-19 crisis, which traveling is restricted. This project initiated from the collaboration of many parties involved in the development of tourism in ThaSala, a district that most tourists consider as a passing-by city. The project provides alternative attractions for tourists to visit ThaSala and presents an opportunity to turn ThaSala into a new tourism city. Even though still in the early stages, the project has already had an influence on the city with contemporary street art that stands out in scale and character design, along with local identities.

While the situation with COVID-19 pandemic has not been resolved yet and tourists are still worried about the situation, ThaSala Street Art has already begun. It is a good experience for stakeholders to learn from previous difficulties, a great inspiration for ThaSala residents and local entrepreneurs to join the street art movement, and an

excellent opportunity for working companions to continue and improve the project until ThaSala becomes a new tourist destination, not a passing-by city anymore when tourists return to travel again.

Although street art seems like a magic tool that made a city famous overnight, developing sustainable street art project with long-term benefits to all stakeholder is not easy. The management of street art spaces, from creation with outstanding identity to preservation and beneficitation, is of importance. Each city must choose an approach that is suitable for its context, which varies from place to place. A collaborative approach that allows all parties to participate in the process is likely to reduce conflict and eventually achieve sustainability.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Lisbon vs Porto: Contrasts in Urban Art Public Management

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Abstract

As a worldwide growing trend, graffiti and urban or street art are now part of many cities' action programs. Lisbon and Porto local governments are investing their efforts into managing these practices — clearly separating graffiti from different art forms — creating cleaning brigades to erase graffiti and other spontaneous interventions and at the same time promoting urban art by legalizing murals and supporting street artists. As a way to promote themselves as creative and artistic cities, Lisbon and Porto created two programs that support street art: Urban Art Gallery¹ in Lisbon and Urban Art Program² in Porto.

In this article two PHD students collaborate to analyze the development of urban art in both Lisbon and Porto, mainly focusing on the last decade; to analyze the contrasts on the public management of urban art; and to observe the influence it may have on the artistic landscape of both cities.

Keywords

graffiti; urban art; street art; murals; visuality; cultural management

1 Galeria de Arte Urbana, also known as GAU

2 Programa de Arte Urbana

1. Introduction

Urban Art is considered one of the most important artistic movements of the 21st century and Portugal is not behind on this trend. Many of its cities are real open air galleries or museums and Portuguese artists — like Vhils, Bordallo II and Mr. Dheo — are acknowledged all over the world. The two major cities of Portugal — Lisbon and Porto — have invested a lot of their efforts fighting graffiti and other spontaneous interventions, legitimizing urban art,

legalizing murals and supporting street artists. In the past decade urban art is also being used by cities to self-promote as creative and artistic.

In Lisbon, Urban Art Gallery (GAU) has supported dozens of legal murals and allowed for the painting of several others by private agents. Porto's Urban Art Program started a few years later but has since funded several murals and authorized artistic events by private businesses.

This analysis starts from the assumption that there is a difference between graffiti and other practices considered more communicative and aesthetically consensual. We consider on the one hand street art or urban art as pictorial interventions with communicative intentions and on the other graffiti as mostly calligraphic interventions: tags, throwies and pieces. We start out from this rough separation considering these artifacts regardless of the context in which they were produced, following authors like Bengtson (2020) and Schacter (2014), and focusing on the aura of spontaneity and illegality, the perception that these images are accessible and ephemeral, created in the urban public space without complying with a certain set of rules and regulations.

As for the public official discourse, the preferred concept is clearly Urban Art usually used in the context of art world and cultural heritage, whereas graffiti is associated with vandalism, dirt and crime.

The line that separates graffiti from urban art or street art, is reinforced by the cities' urban management strategies, whether they apply to a building or façade, to a neighborhood or to the whole municipality. The same organizations that erase tags or other forms of graffiti promote the execution of murals on a smaller or larger scale and organize events and festivals programmed and based on this cultural axis.

This article presents a timeline of the various initiatives related to urban art developed by both municipalities in the last decade. Thus, seeking to analyze and question the relationship between the strategies of urban visual space promoted by street art or urban art and the local policies that regulate the territories in which they intervene and with which they dialogue.

2. 2010—2020: Urban Art management in Lisbon

The city of Lisbon is an obvious case of the dual strategy that takes different steps towards graffiti — especially the illegal interventions — and street art or urban art. This was assumed right from the creation of the Urban Art Gallery (Galeria de Arte Urbana — GAU), a structure to support and promote urban art, part of the City Council's Cultural Heritage Department. This is clear in the presentation of the project that claims to have as its main mission

the promotion of graffiti and street art in Lisbon, within an authorized framework and according to a perspective of respect for heritage and landscape values, as opposed to illegal acts of vandalism that attack the City¹

Urban Art Gallery (or GAU) was founded in 2008 as a result of a graffiti and other illegal interventions removal campaign, especially in the Bairro Alto area, which, being a nightlife district frequented by many young people and close to the Fine Arts Faculty, tends to be the object of multiple spontaneous interventions, since the origins of graffiti in Portugal, between the 80s and 90s. GAU was created in the structure of the Cultural Heritage Department, initially based on a negotiation between this erasure operation and the creation of a set of panels where it would be allowed to paint freely.

GAU's action becomes more visible in the city after its collaboration with CRONO festival, which, between 2010 and 2011, brought to Lisbon artists such as Os Gêmeos (BR) and Blu (IT) for initiatives like the creation of large-scale artworks in vacant buildings in the center of the city, on a high-circulation avenue. These works undoubtedly mark a key moment in the visibility of urban art in the city and in its international characterization as an 'urban art friendly' city.

In the following years, a set of relevant initiatives in the field of urban art in Lisbon can be highlighted, such as *Às 5 no mercado* [At 5 in the market], which transformed a car park into an art gallery, turning a normally dehumanized and gray space into a place of life and color²; the *Rostos do Muro Azul* [Blue Wall Faces] project, which has the merit of bringing together a wide range of artists and addressing mental health issues, bringing out the usually restricted reality of a psychiatric hospital, which thus becomes visible to the public through the artists' interventions; the inclusion of a set of urban art works in Lisbon in the Google Art

1 - Translated from Portuguese, from GAUs official website: <http://gau.cm-lisboa.pt/muro.html>

2 - Following the popular argument used by artists and institutions, supported by theories like the non-places from anthropologist Marc Augé (2012) that defines spaces such as parking lots, highways, malls, refugee camps or airports as non-places.



Rostos do Muro Azul, 2012: artist EIME (PT). Source: GAU



Às 5 no Mercado, 2014: artist MAR (PT). Source: GAU

project.

In 2016, the first edition of the MURO Festival, organized by GAU, took place. This festival aims not only to promote urban art in Lisbon but also to involve the communities and transform some peripheral territories, namely city housing projects whose external perception is generally negative. The festival has already had 4 editions: 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2021. It maintains the same type of programming based on large-scale painting, especially in buildings blind walls, workshops, concerts³, exhibitions and guided tours. According to the organization itself, one of the main objectives of the festival is:

*to promote Urban Art in Lisbon, through creation and production of new works in public space, promoting its authors, national and foreign. With each edition, MURO_LX intervenes in a single parish of the city, providing the discovery of a new territory through art, revealing its material and intangible heritage, in close cooperation with artists and also with communities, institutions and local agents.*⁴

Between 2012 and 2018 GAU also published *GAU*, a free distribution magazine that featured stories about these initiatives and similar others, a calendar of related events, interviews with artists and other useful information on urban art in Lisbon and nearby cities. The Gallery has also been promoting competitions for the decoration of equipment in the city for some time (glass recycling containers, garbage collection trucks, etc.) and more recently has started to make available on its website a repository of collected and catalogued images of urban art in the city of Lisbon, many of them already missing on site. The constant participation

3 - In 2021s edition there were no concerts due to the pandemic crisis imposed restrictions.

4 - Festivals official website:
<https://www.festivalmuro.pt/festival/>

of this team in national and international academic events must also be highlighted.

In addition to GAU's own initiatives, the structure establishes regular partnerships with other organizations, among which we can highlight Gebalis — Municipal company that manages the Councils' housing projects, parish councils, festivals and events⁵, artists' collectives, other city councils, especially in the metropolitan area of Lisbon and, perhaps most importantly, with the Underdogs Gallery. This gallery, founded in 2010 by artist Vhils, has also played a very important role in Lisbon's visual landscape, promoting the creation of large murals through a program that the organization itself defines as a public art program in close coordination with GAU, namely regarding legal and logistical issues, where the institutional support of the City Council is crucial.

If anyone wants to make an intervention legally, the requirements requested by GAU to authorize it are an immense list available on their website, which comprehends location and address, photographs, all the details of the work like motives, palette, materials, even the artist's portfolio and a mockup of the final result. Then all this is supposed to be evaluated by "all municipal services and entities with competence in the matter [...] and if all opinions are positive, the Cultural Heritage Department of the City Council will issue an authorization that legitimizes the intervention". Apart from the discouraging bureaucracy there is also previous censorship regarding the contents, the works themselves. However, Hugo Cardoso, from GAU, stated that the website is out of date⁶, namely the page about the authorization processes. In addition, he shared an artistic intervention plan for Lisbon designed for the years 2019—2022, which presupposes the creation of free walls throughout the city, with the aim of covering all

5 - Some examples of events that promoted urban art initiatives: Festival Todos, Festival Iminente, Dias do Desassossego, Festival Silêncio.

6 - Hugo Cardoso stated this during the Urban Creativity 2021 conference in 8 July 2021. We accessed the website again in 6 October 2021 and the information is still the same: <http://gau.cm-lisboa.pt/onde-pintar.html>

the current 24 parishes. This plan is intended to reduce the bureaucratic burden on authorized intervention processes and, at the same time, reduce illegal interventions⁷. So the institutional discourse maintains the constant underlining of the difference between ‘art’ and ‘vandalism’, the association of spontaneous and unauthorized interventions to a context of dirt, deviant behavior, and unsafety, to the extent that this plan mentions the concern to install free painting walls in places that should be at “a certain distance” from “residential buildings, public and collective facilities, spaces for pedestrian and automobile circulation and parking, heritage and symbolic elements and values, monuments, heritage and architecturally relevant buildings, churches, cemeteries and others.”⁸ The “out-of-sightness” length of these criteria, apart from revealing the underlying strategy for these practices, makes it virtually impossible to take shape in a city with an urban fabric as old and dense as Lisbon’s.

Returning to the period under analysis in our research, which corresponds approximately to the decade 2010—2020, regarding the interventions that the City Council removes, the responsible structure has been, until today, the Municipal Directorate of Urban Hygiene, whose task is “daily removal and cleaning of graffiti and paste-ups”⁹.

An internet search for news¹⁰ using the terms ‘urban art’ and ‘Lisbon’ as well as ‘graffiti’ and ‘Lisbon’ returns different types of content. The news from the ‘urban art’ search are essentially about cultural promotion of events, new works by artists or the supposed positive impacts of

7 - This plan is not public and not open to scrutiny. By October 2021, from the 24 planned walls there are only 4 parishes with free walls and no information about the dedicated walls.

8 - Our translation

9 - City Hall website: <https://www.lisboa.pt/cidade/ambiente/limpeza-e-manutencao>.

10 - Search made on Google news in July 2021 from a Lisbon IP. Examples of news retrieved: <https://observador.pt/2021/02/22/metro-de-lisboa-limpou-mais-de-2-000-metros-quadrados-de-graffiti-das-estacoes/>; <https://sol.sapo.pt/artigo/693430/c-mara-remove-graffittis-em-lisboa>;

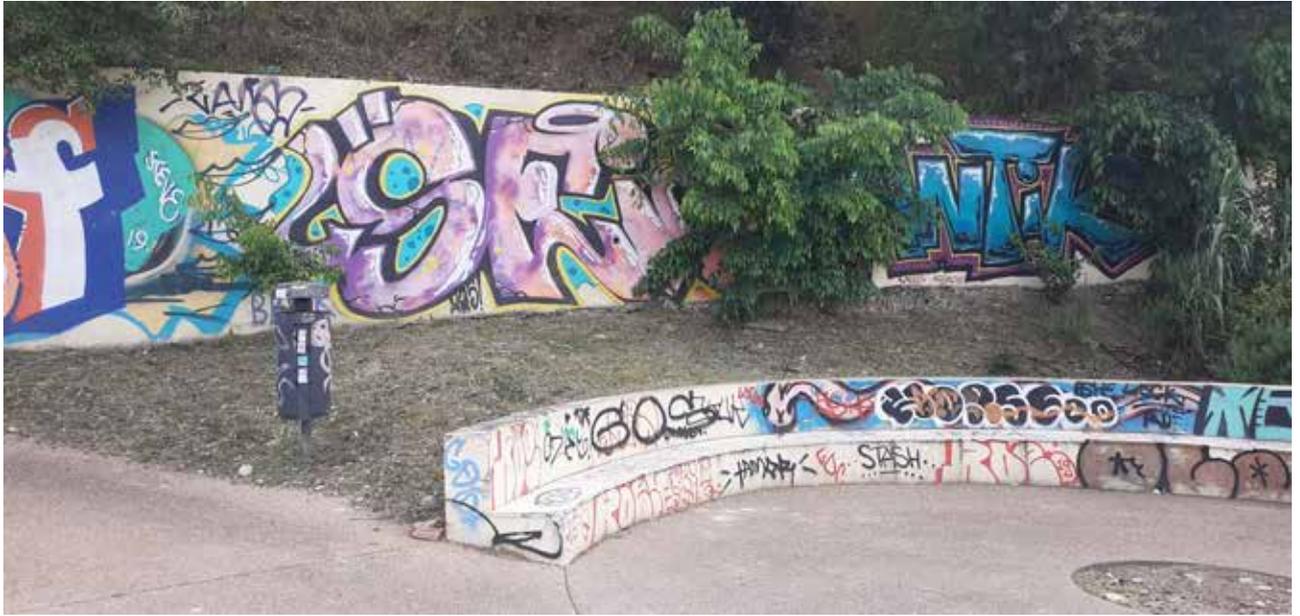
<https://www.publico.pt/2021/07/01/p3/noticia/muro-regres-sa-lisboa-forca-transformadora-arte-urbana-1968664>

social and community art projects, with no results in which the content of the news is negative. On the other hand, a search with the term ‘graffiti’ returns news of the same genre — curiously almost all with titles mentioning ‘urban art’ and not ‘graffiti’ — but it also returns a set of news with negative content. These mostly address the costs incurred by public entities to ‘erase’, ‘remove’ or ‘clean’ interventions considered to be vandalism from the walls or train and metro carriages. The term that comes up most frequently is precisely that of ‘cleaning’.

This characterization of graffiti as dirt implies that the urban space is regulated by a system that defines beforehand what is or is not allowed, classifying practices according to a set of rules. Cresswell (1992) underlines the critical “whereness” of graffiti exposing how it is seen as dirt, disorder and vandalism if done in spaces that symbolize the order and authority that regulate urban space. We see this in statements made by city councils’ officials quoted in these news, underlining the difference between graffiti and urban art and reinforcing the idea that the latter is a practice supported and promoted in specific places as an alternative to spontaneous, illegal interventions. These statements aim at legitimizing the role of GAU and promoting creative practices that support the idea of a city with a young, creative, dynamic and even rebellious ethos (Bannet-Weiser, 2011) without acknowledging the potential of spontaneity, creativity and improvisation that arise from all the diversity of illegal interventions.

In the city council’s social media, namely Facebook and Instagram, urban hygiene graffiti removal operations are sometimes shared using before and after photos and hashtags such as #higieneurbana [urban hygiene] or #artesimandalismonao [yes to art no to vandalism], which reinforce this idea of the separation between art and vandalism, as if the line that separates them was clear and objective.

The strategy adopted in Lisbon is not very different from what we can find in most urban public spaces, at least in European and American cities. There is an attempt to regulate the production of graffiti and other gestures of illegal intervention in public space and a growing promotion of so-called urban art as public art. Public art programs, notably, seem to vary a lot according to the administration



Illegal interventions in Lisbon, 2021. (authors' photographs).

of a certain city in a given period. It is possible to identify clear differences, from the outset between local mandates, or between cities in the same country, as is the case presented here, where we compare Lisbon and Porto. The balance between promoting, regulating, prohibiting and erasing is managed differently in each city, with each administration, and varies according to other aspects of public management such as the organization of large events, the influx of tourists, inscription as heritage of certain buildings or areas of cities, the social and economic situation, among others.

In general, these contrasts arise from the need that public space management agents feel to regulate what is produced and where, to protect buildings from certain materials, to convey an image of order and safety while simultaneously promoting the work of artists whose roots are often linked to the graffiti movement and subculture. Despite the clear negativity that is associated mainly with illegal graffiti, such as tags or throw ups, there is a clear concern to promote urban art, to give space to national artists and to bring international artists of recognized quality in this area, to create an image of a city associated with creativity and cultural dynamism, cosmopolitanism and openness to dialogue between different forms of expression.

City branding strategies promote cities as brands who compete not only for tourists, but for investors, establishing of multinational companies, migration of highly qualified workers, events that generate positive externalities. Urban Art is also used as a promotional strategy and creating large murals makes its impact clearer, allowing to create the sensation of monumentality that smaller-scale works do not create, making the strategy of promoting Urban Art and the city more easily evident.

In this sense, the work of both GAU and Underdogs has firmly contributed in recent years to affirm Lisbon as a creative city, Urban Art welcoming, meeting point for artists from all over the world with a dynamic and diversified urban landscape.

However, we should not ignore the possible homogenizing effect that all these initiatives may produce, particularly in the long term, and also the gentrification processes they

may promote or help promoting (Schacter, 2014). There are already areas of the city gentrified or undergoing gentrification processes, with house prices getting very high, causing many low and medium wage inhabitants to move, and thus amplifying this homogenization dynamics.

3. 2010—2020: Urban Art management in Porto

Porto is nowadays considered by many a mandatory visit for all the street art lovers visiting Portugal, but it hasn't been like that for long. This movement started in the city of Porto later than in the capital and went through many changes in the last 30 years, from its total prohibition and criminalization by the city council to the creation of a public urban art program that supports and finances this art form. In Portugal a legislation was created on August 23rd 2013 that considers a crime to carry out

*graffiti, postings, perforating and other forms of alteration, even if temporary, of the original characteristics of exterior surfaces of buildings (...) when such alterations are not authorized by the respective owners and licensed by the competent authorities*¹¹

Anyone that doesn't abide by this rule will be punished with fines that go from 100€ up to 25.000€. This legislation outraged many artists, because from then on, all unauthorized graffiti and street art began to be treated as a crime, denying freedom of speech and creation. The artist Nomen says that "only approved projects can be painted and not ideas of revolution"¹².

This national legislation allows the municipal councils to

11 - Legislation nº 61/2013 of August 23rd in Diário da República. Available in: <<https://dre.pt/pdf1s-dip/2013/08/16200/0509005092.pdf>>

12 - In Jornal Público, June 2013. Available at: <<http://bit.ly/1k-cUP8W>>



"Utopia das Artes", mural by Mots, Mesk and Fedor, part of RU+A event in 2013. Photo by João Garcia.

create their own rules so, the then city mayor, Rui Rio¹³ (2001-2013), decided to create, in September 2013, a city tax imposing a minimum 40€ pay for anyone who would like to legalize graffiti or street art. According to the *Público*, this document makes it mandatory for

the payment of 40 euros for the issuance of the license to paint graffiti up to eight square meters, plus five euros for each additional square meter and as much for each period of 30 days or fraction. In the Municipal Taxes Table of

13 - President of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), a center-right liberal-conservative political party in Portugal.

the Municipality Regulatory Code, can now be found the issuance of licenses for 'registration of graffiti, postings, perforating and other forms of alteration, even if temporary, of the original characteristics of exterior surfaces of buildings, pavements, sidewalks, is now foreseen, walls and other infrastructure'¹⁴

This city tax, that still exists in Porto, treats urban art

14 - in Jornal Público of September 13th 2013, available at: <<https://www.publico.pt/2013/09/13/p3/noticia/camara-do-porto-quer-cobrar-pelo-menos-40-euros-para-licenciar-graffiti-1818122>>

as publicity, making it mandatory to pay every month for the license for a specific period of time. Therefore, to paint legally, artists need to get a written permission from the building owner, then submit a sketch (that has to be approved by the council) and afterwards pay these municipal taxes. In September 2013 Circus Network and IS CET - Cedofeita Viva managed to legalize the first uncommissioned big mural in Porto, paying these taxes to the city hall. The necessary money for the taxes and expenses was raised through a crowdfunding. The artists — Mots, Mesk and Fedor — painted a 150sqm in Rua Miguel Bombarda without getting any payment.

Besides the creation of this tax, Porto's council, still during Rui Rio's term, created a graffiti removing program called Brigada Anti Grafitos [Anti Graffiti Brigade]. This program was heavily criticized by artists and urban art lovers, because it erased indiscriminately all tags, throw ups, halls of fame, posters, and all the existing street art in the city of Porto.

An article on the online newspaper *P3*¹⁵ states that, as a consequence of these erasings, local street artists announced a war against the city council. As a form of protest against the Brigada Anti Grafitos these artists started painting a line throughout all the walls that had just been cleaned by the brigade. What cost 3€ to the artists (price of a spray can), cost a lot more to the city. In an interview¹⁶, the mayor Rui Rio declared that the annual budget for this brigade exceeded 150.000€. Considering that most of the people who painted the walls were university freshmen or people in community service it shows that not much of this budget was spent on labor.

Evidently the council's idea was to combat — what they
15 - in Jornal Público of March 21st 2013, available at: <<https://www.publico.pt/2013/03/21/local/noticia/nao-sera-por-falta-de-verba-que-camara-do-porto-deixa-de-limpar-graffiti-1588671>>

16 - in Jornal Público of March 21st 2013, available at: <<https://www.publico.pt/2013/03/21/local/noticia/nao-sera-por-falta-de-verba-que-camara-do-porto-deixa-de-limpar-graffiti-1588671>>

considered to be — vandalism and visual pollution, but, doing it without dialoguing with street writers and artists, it ended up having the opposite effect. While before there was a mix of small-scale graffiti writings and large masterpieces, by the end of the year 2013 all that could be seen in Porto were tags and fast throw ups.

In that same year, there's a big shift in perspective with the change of the council president. The new mayor, Rui Moreira (2013-present)¹⁷, showed his interest in urban art from the start, having used photos of a mural by the artist Mr. Dheo in his candidacy for mayor. It can be read, in a text published by *RTP*,

(...) Hazul, 32, Mr. Dheo, 28, and Fedor, 27, three of the *graffiters* from Porto who agreed to speak about the street paintings that during the municipal administration of Rui Rio aroused controversy and to which they expect greater openness from the new president of the municipality, Rui Moreira.¹⁸

In fact, it is possible to verify the acknowledgment of urban art by this mayor in several interviews, like in *Público* newspaper, for example:

Rui Moreira was asked during the last municipal campaign: "If you found Hazul or Mr. Dheo painting graffiti next to your house, would you call the Municipal Police or the anti-graffiti brigade?", to which Rui Moreira surprisingly answered: "Possibly, I would get my iPhone and take a photo for Instagram."

This support was verified after this candidate won the elections and began his term as mayor of Porto, creating the urban art department of the city of Porto, within

17 - Independent candidate representing "o nosso Porto"

18 - in RTP, November 2nd 2013, available at: <https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/cultura/ate-o-turismo-do-porto-tem-a-ganhar-com-graffitis-legais-defendem-artistas_n692715>



“Ribeira Negra”, mural by Colectivo Rua and Breakone, part of Push Porto Festival 2014. Author’s photo.

Porto Lazer¹⁹. This department was responsible for the organization of a huge exhibition, featuring 19 national and 3 international artists, called Street Art Axa.

Big names of Porto street art and renowned international artists of street art are invading the building AXA. The result can be seen for a whole month, at the largest Street Art exhibition that ever took place in Porto. An event that promises to put the centre of Porto, and its most respected artists, at the centre of national and international street art!²⁰

Fast forward to September 2014, Circus Network²¹, with

19 - A public-private company that administers sports and leisure events in the city.

20 - Available at <<https://streetartaxaporto.wixsite.com/streetart>>

21 - More info in <www.circusnetwork.net>

the approval of the city’s Culture Department, held the first and only urban art festival in the city, called Push Porto, having painted 5 murals of different dimensions and themes, all over the city²². In the same month, the Porto City Council commissioned the first mural of the city’s Urban Art Program²³, with two of the most controversial artists in Porto at the time: Hazel and Mr. Dheo. Thus, in a single month, there were more legal murals painted in Porto than in the entire previous decade, stating a clear investment by the municipality, private entities and the artists themselves.

In 2015, as an initiative of the Urban Art Program, street art tours started and two contests were held: one for the

22 - *Island of Death* by German artists Vidam and Look; *Ribeira Negra* by Colectivo Rua and Breakone; *No Justice no Peace* by the english artist Malarko; and two untitled murals by the artists Mesk and Third, and Pedro Podre.

23 - More info at: <<https://www.agoraporto.pt/animacao/programa-de-arte-urbana-do-porto>>



“Quem és Porto?”, tile mural by ±Maismenos±, part of Locomotiva Project in 2015. Author’s photo.

painting of electricity boxes on Rua das Flores and the other for the Collective Mural in Rua da Restauração. The Locomotiva event is also held, designed to revitalize the surroundings of the São Bento station, which, among other initiatives, made possible the big murals *Quem és Porto* by Maismenos, and *Clouds* by Sten&Lex, both in Rua da Madeira. Moreover, in the same year, three large murals were painted in Porto: passing the D. Luís bridge, we can find *An.fi.tri.ão*, by Frederico Draw; in Rua Nova de Alfândega, the mural *Mira*, by Daniel Eime; and in Virtudes square *Virtus*, by the artist Hazul, commissioned by the artistic school Árvore.

It’s obvious to see that, at the beginning of the Porto Urban Art Program, created during Rui Moreira’s term, a great effort was made by Porto Lazer (now called Ágora), private cultural entities and artists, for the promotion and commercialization of urban art in the city.

In the following years, the Urban Art Program slowed down (or practically stopped), regaining its action in the year of 2017, a year of municipal elections. Rui Moreira once again demonstrates his support for urban art, inviting Mr. Dheo to paint his headquarters on Avenida dos Aliados. It can be read, in the campaign website:

“Porto’s *graffiter* Mr. Dheo, one of the most renowned in Europe, recently painted the profiles of two children on the façade of the building where Rui Moreira’s candidacy centralizes his signature collection operation.”²⁴ Just like it happened in 2013, Porto’s mayor Rui Moreira, then candidate for a new term, is once again using urban art to promote himself as a modern and creative president, supporting this young practices.

24 - In the Porto, o nosso movimento website, July 1st 2017, available at: <<https://portoouosso movimento.pt/mr-dheo-pintou-mural-no-centro-de-recolha-de-assinaturas-de-rui-moreira/>>

In addition to this headquarters mural, the Urban Art Program returns to action, painting two large walls in the city — *Continuidade*, by Mots, at Mercado Ferreira Borges and *El Gato de Cobalto*, by Liquen, at Rua das Flores. At the same time, Porto Domus Social commissions the painting of two huge walls at social housings — *Mater*, by Hazul, in Bairro do Carvalhido and *Modern Religion*, by Mr. Dheo in Bairro de Francos. In addition, a contest for the painting of the façade of the Carlos Alberto Theater was won by Martinha Maia. In the same year, the tile mural by the famous contemporary artist Joana Vasconcelos emerged on the side façade of Steak&Shake restaurant in Porto's downtown. The opening of this mural was attended by several public figures from the city, including Rui Moreira. The mayor praised the work of Joana Vasconcelos, emphasizing that “public art does not have to be exclusively financed by the City Council, it can and should also be financed by private entities”²⁵

After Rui Moreira's reelection to the presidency, similar to the years 2015 and 2016, there is again an extreme slowdown in Porto's Urban Art Program. From 2017 to 2020, zero murals were painted under this program. Only two large murals in the city are legalized, which were initiatives of private entities: *Sonha* by Add Fuel, promoted by the Portuguese Football Federation and *Homage to Health Professionals* by Vhils, promoted by the artist himself at São João Hospital.

In December of 2020, Porto's Urban Art Program opened, once again, a contest to paint in Rua da Restauração, this time choosing a base color for the drawings and paying €500 to each of the winning artists. In 2021, the year of new municipal elections, the reactivation of the Urban Art Program is again noted, and this time in great strength. In a few months, 6 initiatives are carried out by *Ágora (formerly Porto Lazer)*²⁶.

25 - “Maior obra pública de Joana Vasconcelos está desde ontem no Porto”, unknown author, January 24th 2017, available at: <<https://www.porto.pt/pt/noticia/maior-obra-publica-de-joana-vasconcelos-esta-desde-ontem-no-porto>>

26 - Aguadeiras, by Godmess, Juntos, by Oker, The Butterfly's Burden, by Rafi, Casa das Camélias, by Third, Water Cycle, by Padure and a mural that honors the St. John popular party painted by Mariana Malhão.

There are big changes happening to the Urban Art Program, and also *Ágora* company. The management of the program is handed over to Tiago Andrade, the Entertainment Director of *Ágora*, and the artist Hazul is invited to curate several projects. Tiago Andrade claims, in Street Art and Urban Creativity Conference in July 2021, that there are actions planned for 2021, including the creation of ‘free’ murals in the city; the establishment of a partnership with the Fine Arts Faculty of the University of Porto; and the development of urban art projects in public places and gardens. He also emphasizes that “our Urban Art Program has had a wider intervention than just the *Ágora*. Other municipal companies, such as *Águas do Porto* or even *GoPorto*, have developed projects in this area, previously articulated with us.”²⁷

Analyzing the various urban art projects of the last decade, promoted or approved by the municipality, it is easy to see a pattern. With the former mayor (Rui Rio) all and any graffiti and street art interventions were banned and erased, while with the new mayor (Rui Moreira) it is used as a tool of political promotion. In the first year of office and in the years of municipal elections (2014, 2017 and 2021) there was a big investment in urban art activities in Porto, which slowed down in subsequent years.

Alongside the municipal investments in urban art over the years, local artists and writers continue to paint illegally, with the City Council continuing to systematically clean these paintings. As far as this ‘cleaning’ is concerned, the difference between Rui Rio and Rui Moreira, is that the former indiscriminately erased all graffiti and street art, claiming to spend thousands of euros a year on these actions; while the second stands for a selection of what should or should not be erased, according to the cleaning department's own criteria, that is, lettering is erased and character illustrations are kept. Thus, in the eyes of those who manage these practices in the city of Porto, there is a clear distinction between urban or street art and graffiti, although the people who produce them are at times the same. It is also noted that these cleaning actions are reinforced during major events in the city and that all the

27 - From Tiago Andrade's presentation at Street Art and Urban Creativity Conference in July 2021. Available in <https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=839450373348254>



Illegal collective mural in Rua Miguel Bombarda, from 2015. Author's photo.

art that is critical and political is fastly erased.

It's obvious that there has been a significant evolution in the acceptance and promotion of graffiti and urban or street art by the municipality in the last decade, nevertheless there is still a long way to go in order to create a positive dialogue between artists, communities and the municipality.

4. Conclusions

From this detailed timeline of initiatives and events in both cities, it becomes clear that they both address urban art and illegal graffiti differently, whether it's applying distinctive legal framing, or simply by underlining the difference in official discourse about this subject. Public communication about these practices tends to reflect this partition and this can be seen both in official statements and in newspapers or social media, which means public institutions with political power to manage access to the public space regulate and control these forms of expression to a given extent. It is also symbolically relevant that both municipalities have the same cleaning teams dealing with clogged gutters, pests' control, collecting trash and removing unauthorized graffiti and paste-ups.

The discourse produced about urban art also displays similarities as we can see it being used by both Lisbon and Porto as a strategy of promoting the cities as brands, making it a useful tool to build an image of each city as creative, young, dynamic and attract tourists and new residents belonging to the recently praised creative class²⁸.

Despite these common aspects, there are also clear contrasts between the management of urban art between Lisbon and Porto and they can be summed up in GAUs consistent work that stands out in a positive way. In the past decade, GAU has consistently and regularly produced great walls, organized events, established fruitful partnerships and has always demonstrated being open to dialogue with different stakeholders like artists, communities and even academic institutions.

In Porto initiatives are sparser, tending to concentrate in municipal elections' years which makes the intention of public authorities feel more questionable, especially by artists and the public. Also there are fees charged monthly to keep art on a wall, much like with advertising, making it fall further from a public art program.

28 - This concept was made popular by american author Richard Florida in 2002 in his book *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

So why are these two managements so contrasting? The differences can emerge from the fact that GAU is part of the public structure of the City Council, whereas Ágora is a public-private company, but also from the fact that, politically, Lisbon has had left wing administrations and these tend to be more supportive of arts and culture, but even also because Lisbon has, historically, been more open to different communities and cultures. Or maybe all these aspects are interconnected and all contribute to explain these contrasts. As stated before, the balance between promoting, regulating, prohibiting and erasing is managed differently in each city and good practices should always be replicated but never without scrutiny of their activity. With this in mind, it will be interesting to update this preliminary work in the near future, by assessing how these plans designed for the two cities that have now been shared, will be put into practice.

5. References:

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Art and urban space: Reading the contemporary Latin American city

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Abstract

In the XXI century, the cultural sphere of urban expressions reflects the perception of life in the city, of the routines and figurations that tend to relate to the urban environment and that come to shake or shape the conditions of urban life. The practice of urban art marks a drastic change within artistic movements and offers recognition to urban expressions in the bigger scale affecting the city, its identity, and its social interaction.

The elaboration of this project consists of the analysis of urban art throughout the understanding of the urban system and its elements. As a case study were examined the murals produced inside the metropolitan area of the city of Monterrey, N.L., Mexico.

The purpose of the documentation is to examine the relationship that each of these murals has within the urban context where they are located. This is achieving it through the reading of its adjacent urban elements, the study of the space where it resides and also by analyzing how these works of arts had influenced the citizens by their presence in the metropolitan context. In this way it can be demonstrated the impact these murals can generate, seeking the revaluation of street art within the city.

Keywords

Urban art; Urbanism; Urban analysis; Mexico; Latin America; Muralism.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, one can think of a new relationship between the man and the city. "It would no longer be a magical, legal or commercial reconciliation, but a new complex reconciliation whose name can't be defined, this relationship will allow a new balance and a new mediation" (Santos, 1996)

There is no doubt that the quote from Santos represents a guideline that allows us to introduce the meaning and purpose of this article. As expressed, we must think about a reconciliation of the city with its inhabitants, and how this challenge can be addressed and reflected through an urban art approach.

From this perspective, both man and city must be recognized through an urban lens, this can be achieved by the study of the public space.

2. City

This present approach deals with the urban nature of public space related to the existence of tangible and intangible limits, those that have an inference on the level of quality of urban life of the inhabitants of any of Mexico's metropolitan areas. "The way we see our own city, our reality, is conditioned by what we know and how we live the urban space." (Petzold, A. 2017: 15)

From this perspective, the urban shape can be defined as the spatial pattern of human activities and their manifestation in the built environment of cities. Many of the practices, projects and aspirations of its inhabitants are evident in the urban landscape, scattered through the numerous buildings and public or private spaces in sight.

However, the city is more than a container of activities, due to the agglomeration of its geographical and constructive characteristics, it exerts as an important influence which defines the structure and social interaction of its individuals and social groups.

In recent years, efforts have been made to address both the design and planning of the Latin American city starting from the realm of public space, this motivation of change is generated due to the phenomena of urbanization and privatization of cities, observed through their continuous territorial growth. Demonstrating the importance that the study of public space has acquired in the role of shaping of the city and its society.

3. Public Space

According to Aramburu (2008) the term public space is not only conceived as an urban term, but it can be also a political term, which is constantly defined as everything that isn't private, which includes streets, parks and squares. What the public space requires to be labeled as such is that no one can be able to appropriate it, and everyone has the equal right to inhabit it.

Nowadays, the problem that these types of areas are experiencing in the Mexican urban context is that they less and less fulfill their sociability functions and the users that end up using them are only the people who don't have access to private spaces.

On the other hand, Valera (2008) states that the conflict can be approached through the new definitions of the urban, by applying new structures of urban sociability and diversity.

By taking these into account, a new conception of these spaces should be considered as a pertinent change, since it will become indispensable for the formation of social

interactions. These interactions can have a large effect on society: positive social dynamics promote the regulation of social interactions, coexistence, mediation between equals, and the development of negotiated civic norms.

Additionally, Valera (2008) touches on how public spaces, if not well implemented, can lead to a negative effect on the perception that inhabitants have about their society. Thus mentioning:

"The perception of citizen insecurity and the maliciously called intercultural 'shock' can be founded on the other plate marked by fear of the unknown other, prejudice, the exclusive territorialization of public space and the tension caused by the unilateral imposition of behavioral guidelines socio-environmental." (Valera. 2008: 1)

For this reason, he states that public spaces are becoming semi-public spaces, that is, private spaces for the masses, which can give citizens a feeling of security. However, the problem is that it now privatizes on what was once public.

Under this example, it can be inferred that the concept of public space is going through a transformation, where the term has become more complex. This is due to the fact that the concept is completely linked to the development and evolution of the city and its society, stating that this typology transformation is co-related to the needs and problems of its urban context, thus causing different dimensions of this space to be created, where each of them differs both in its morphology and in its role within the metropolis.

This project seeks to reflect on the role that urban art can acquire in the new typologies of public space and how this artistic practice can serve as a tool to adapt these spaces to the changing urban context.

4. Inhabiting the urban

Despite the fact that one of the roles of public space is to promote urban life in the city, there is a necessary criterion to ensure its effectiveness: the human scale.

Through the study of diverse cities around the world, Gehl (2012) manages to connect the term urban life with the scale in which a city operates. Jan Gehl highlights the



Figure 1. Urban art in a primary path, mural by SanezcraK (2020)

various ways in which the unbridled development of cities has led to their dehumanization. The prioritization of tall skyscrapers, large real estate developments and extensive roads has given the vehicle a leading role in the design of cities and with it the loss of its human scale.

Gehl points out that the only way to stimulate a livable and readable city is by positioning the inhabitants as protagonists. "The more space is left to people, the more public life there is" (Gehl, 2012)

Once the pedestrian is given its leading place in the design and development of cities, it will be possible to obtain an effective urban reading. It's hard to understand an urban

system if it is not possible to live within it. From this perspective, by recovering the human scale it will be possible to read and interpret the city.

Kevin Lynch (1960) offers a categorization and classification of the urban elements in order to understand their function and relevance within the city; managing to demonstrate that for an accurate reading of a urban system it is crucial to understand the parts that compose it.

Lynch affirms that every city combines diverse elements that allow the elaboration of an urban image which generates a visual frame for the inhabitants of the city.



Figure 2. Urban art in a primary path, mural by Pref (2016)

Under this understanding, the city can be recognized as an urban system consisting of five urban elements: paths, nodes, landmarks, neighborhoods and edges.

This work makes use of “The image of the city” (1960) by Lynch to study and understand urban art in the city. However, to understand that the city we should not only study the physical city but also the mental image that citizens extract from it.

Thus, it is evident that each citizen views their metropolis in a different way: depending on their origin, condition, and interests; However, in this case, these individualities are put aside so the common factors that define the mental image of the city can be sought.

It is from this position that urban art must be interpreted. For this reason, a methodology is implemented, starting from recognition of the five elements that make up, according to Lynch, the urban system and the relationship that each one of them has with the Street Art, thus, recognizing this practice not only as an artistic activity but as an urban strategy since it can cause positive changes in the public space.

4.1 Paths

The first element that Lynch mentions are the ‘paths’, which serve as the arteries of the urban system. These are in charge of connecting the different parts that make up the city. This element is classified in 3 dimensions, primary, secondary, and tertiary paths. This classification is linked to its scale and flows capacity, both vehicular and pedestrian.



Figure 3. Urban art in a primary path, mural by Pref (2016)



Figure 4. Urban art in a secondary path, mural by TFK Crew (2015)

One way to distinguish this element and its category within the urban context is through its handling of the human scale, the role of the pedestrian can be related to the path dimension, the safer and more comfortable a person feels within a path it is more likely that it is a tertiary path.

To prove the connection between the paths and the urban art that inhabits them, an analysis of murals was carried out in the different dimensions of paths in the city of Monterrey.

The murals located in the primary paths lacked connection with their urban context, because these areas were dominated by the car, provoking a feeling of insecurity to the pedestrian, causing no one to stop to appreciate the murals, likewise, to assertively appreciate the works it was necessary to be in the vehicular crossing which made it impossible to fully contemplate the artwork.

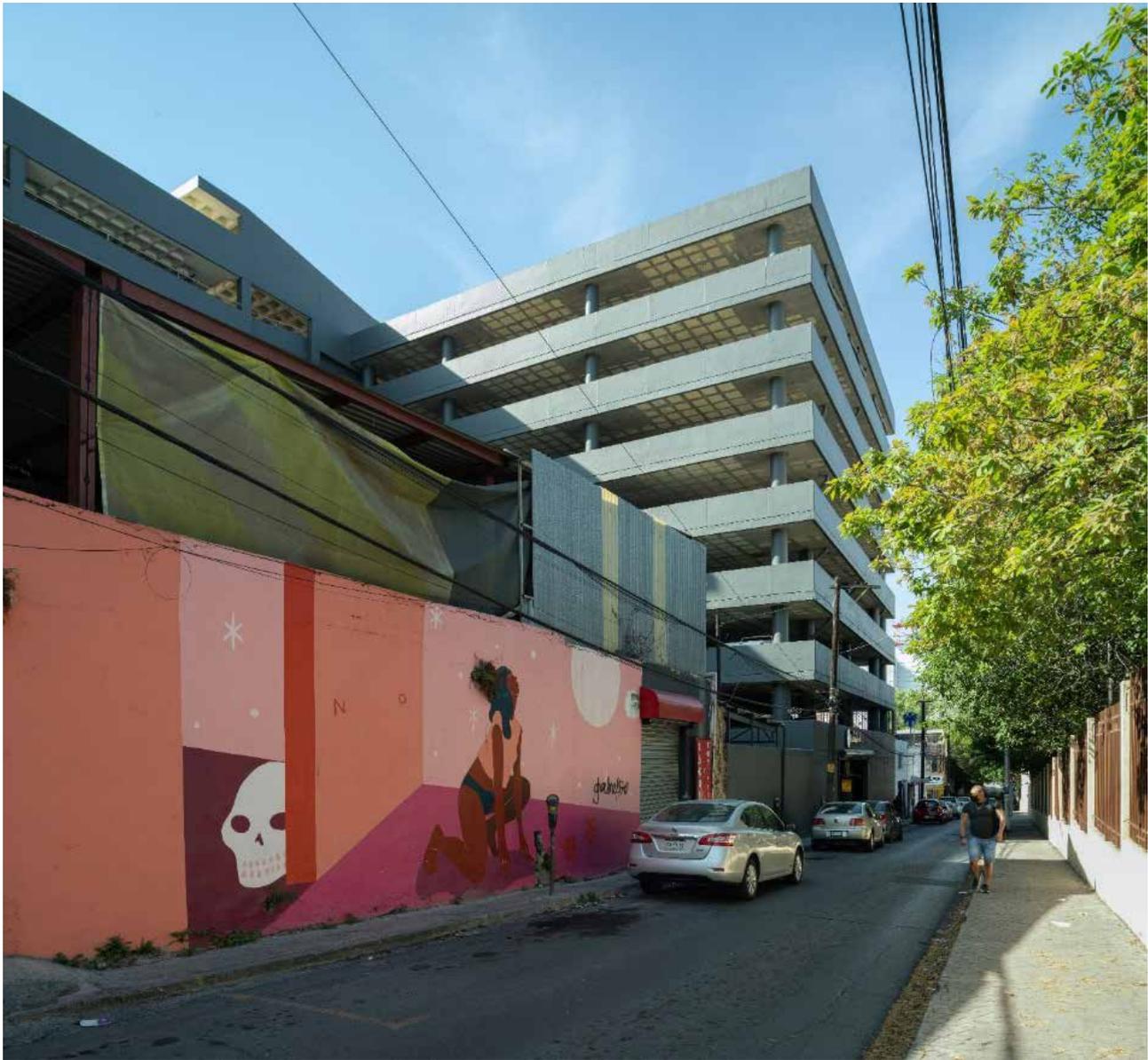


Figure 5. Urban art in a secondary path, Vera Primavera (2020)

Through the analysis of the murals on the secondary paths, it was possible to demonstrate that the more a human scale is implemented, the chances of a connection between the mural and the user increases. Since the pedestrian does not feel intimidated in the space, there is more possibility that it will stop to contemplate the artwork. However, because it

is still a secondary road, these paths have a medium vehicular flow, causing that sometimes the car to impose on these spaces making the mural-user connection more difficult.



Figure 6. Urban art in a tertiary path, mural by Saile (2015)

Out of the mural analysis in the tertiary paths, it was easy to conclude that the most optimal path to achieve a connection between the art and the user is the one in which the pedestrian has priority, this is because the user will be more willing to stay, and carry out activities, such as in this case the contemplation of street art, in the space where it feels comfortable.

In this way, from a convergence approach between urban art and the element of the paths, it is possible to understand that if Street Art is carried out within this urban element, it is necessary that it has an adequate human scale, it is easier for the viewer to contemplate art from a space where they do not feel insecure or intimidated. Therefore, if the intention of the mural is to generate a connection with the viewer, it will be necessary to study the city and its flows, in order to select the most favorable space for this interaction.



Figure 7. Urban art in a tertiary path, Carlos Robledo 2016

4.2 Edges

There is another linear element within the urban system, which unlike the paths, its purpose is to fragment; Lynch calls these 'edges'. The function of this element is to express the limits of a space within the urban context. These elements can be tangible as well as intangible and can vary in both morphology and scale.

In order to recognize these elements in the urban context, it is necessary to read the character of the city's spaces and observe at what point it is modified.

Today's cities are made up of a diverse number of borders, most of which end up alienating and fragmenting the city. It is possible to explore the possibility of using tangible borders for the practice of urban art, this with the purpose of converting blind walls that previously only limited the urban visual and transforming them into urban elements that can provide identity and personality to a certain area of the city.

From the analysis of the murals on the edges of the city, it was possible to observe how they manage to enhance the urban image of its context, giving more life and personality to the public road, by this it can be demonstrated how these urban elements should be considered as a canvas for art expression that can reflect the urban identity of the city.



Figure 8. Urban art in the edges of the city, mural by Farid Rueda (2015)



Figure 9. Urban art in the edges of the city, various artists (2020)



Figure 10. Urban art in a residential district, mural by NSU Crew (2015)

4.3 Districts

Lynch classifies the element of 'neighborhoods or districts' as urban areas of relatively large dimensions, these areas are distinguished by their character and their own identity; Due to this, it is possible to recognize these areas from the inside as well as from the outside. Thanks to their uniqueness, these areas manage to contrast and differentiate themselves from their neighboring urban context.

A good urban environment is one that allows diversity and coexistence between its neighborhoods, where the identity of each of them is valued and these differences are promoted. Due to the impact that urban art can achieve within its urban context, it is possible to use this artistic typology as a tool that encourages the personification of these areas, where through these murals the character of this element can be evoked and enhanced.

Once analyzing various murals in different districts of the city, it was observed how each one of them managed to reflect the identity of a certain district, the first (fig.10) was located in a residential district and through the mural it was possible to reflect the identity of the residents and their ancestral roots, the second (fig.11) was located in an industrial district and reflected the lifestyle and hardship of the industrial workers, finally the third (fig.12) was located in an art district and the mural managed to reflect the creativity and imagination of the artistic residents and businesses in the area. Thus, demonstrating how urban art is an assertive method to potentiate the visual identity and personality of the city's districts.



Figure 11. Urban art in an industrial district, mural by Libre Hem (2015)



Figure 12. Urban art in an art district, mural by Buytronick (2015)



Figure 13. Urban art in a metro station, mural by The Meeting of styles (2015)

4.4 Nodes

The next element Lynch mentions are 'nodes'; These are denoted as strategic spaces which function from the confluence of various paths or concentrations of vehicles or pedestrians. These elements serve as pause or meeting spaces, and it is where different types of users converge within the urban context. These spaces can vary in scale, ranging from small bus stops to large squares and blocks.

One way to identify this element in the city is from the reading of urban life, this is due to the nodes are spaces where many people converge, either by connecting paths or meeting spaces.

For the analysis of the Urban Art in this urban element, artworks within the spaces with the greatest confluence of users in the city were analyzed, these ended up being the subway stations and bus stops. These spaces handle a large number of people constantly, being important spaces for urban mobility. It was possible to observe how the more the space is visited, the art-user relationship grows.

The spaces in the city that have the greatest potential for creating urban art are the nodes. These can be considered as strategic points within the metropolis, since many people will visit it. Knowing that the objective of a work of urban art is to acquire value and relevance within the social context, it is necessary that the work will be accessible to as many people as possible.



Figure 14. Urban art in a metro station, mural by The Meeting of styles (2015)



Figure 15. Urban art in a bus station, mural by Musa 71 (2016)

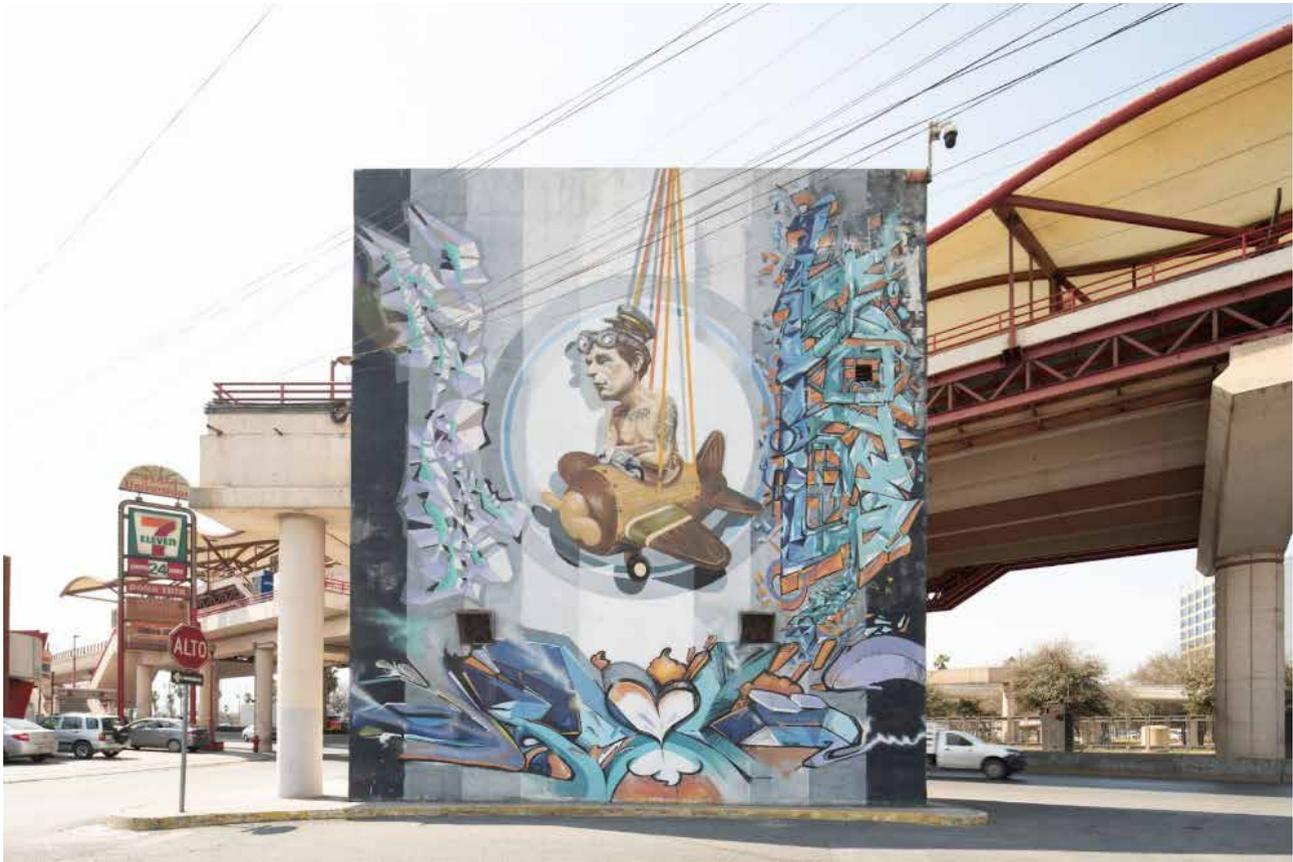


Figure 16. Urban art as a reference point within the urban context, mural by TFW Crew (2014)

4.5 Landmarks

Finally, Lynch calls the element of 'milestones or landmarks' as visual reference points which are considered external to the observer. These elements are key to facilitate the reading of cities, because they serve as remarkable visual elements, which help the user to locate and move within the urban context.

Lynch refers to the system of landmarks as a tool for easier urban reading. Where users prefer to use a system of singular and distinctive elements to understand their city more easily. There is the possibility of giving the landmark role to urban works of art, in this way not only improves urban

reading but also increases the value of these murals, because it gives the opportunity for more people to recognize and identify them. From this, it is possible to transform the concept of these murals, which, from being simple artistic elements, can become important points of reference that contribute to the reading and understanding of the city.

Through the analysis of several murals in the city, it was possible to observe how on certain occasions these works became an urban element that facilitated the urban reading of the city, either by creating a new visual reference (fig.16) Or by enhancing existing landmarks to make them more legible. (fig.17).



Figure 17. Urban art enhancing an existing node, mural by Falus Masta (2014)

Unlike other artistic typologies, urban art is made to relate to the city, and it is not possible to understand this relationship if it is not possible to read this urban context beforehand. From the understanding and recognition of these urban elements it is possible to acquire a new way of interpreting these murals. Where it is possible to understand in greater detail the role that a mural can acquire within the city based on the reading and recognition of its adjacent urban elements. In this way, it is possible to appreciate this artistic typology in a different way, where its value not only lies in its technique or plasticity, but also in the role that it may acquire within its spatial context.

5. The mural's relationship with public space

Urban art does not only belong to museums or galleries, this typology can also belong to the city and its public space. For this to be possible, the mural must coexist with its existing urban elements. This is due to the fact that this artistic typology does not inhabit the environment but rather becomes a part of it. In other words, when creating a urban art in a public space, the mural becomes part of that site.

This section of the research seeks to reveal the relationship that urban art can have with the public space. This achieved through the documentation of various works on the different dimensions of the public space within the urban context of Monterrey. Based on this, it seeks to demonstrate whether the impact of urban art is co-dependent on its spatial environment.

For this documentation, the three most predominant dimensions of public space in the city of Monterrey were taken into consideration. Each of them with its own identity and functionality. In this way, the aim is to analyze whether the way in which a public space works is linked to the possible potential and impact that a mural may acquire within it.

5.1 The semi-public space

The insecurity and crime that was generated within the city in the mid-2010's brought with it the creation of a dimension of public space in the city of Monterrey. This being the semi-public space, which consists of the combination of the

public space with the urban elements of edges and nodes.

Semi-public spaces are part of private capital, this can be observed by their fenced or walled peripheries, as well as their access fees and specific visit hours. It is easy to identify this dimension of public space because it is completely separated from its surrounding elements, so it is easy to notice when you enter or leave this space.

The semi-public space selected for the analysis was the Fundidora Park, which is located in the central area within the metropolitan area of Monterrey; This 144-hectare park has a diverse range of spaces that promote sports, recreational and cultural activities in the city. This site is considered one of the most recognized spaces in the city of Monterrey to carry out events that promote urban art.

This site has a great history and identity, because before becoming this great urban space, the foundry was one of the largest and most important iron and steel industries originally from the city of Monterrey. Currently the Fundidora Park is recognized as a Site Museum of Industrial Archeology because various industrial elements have been preserved within the facilities and now serve as part of the site's landscape, this not only makes the space much more interesting and diverse, but which also manages to show fragments of the history and origins of the ancient city.

The work 'Dismorfia' (Figure 11), made by Monica Loya in 2018, was selected as the main case study to analyze urban art through this dimension of public space.

Monica Loya, originally from Chihuahua, through her paintings, addresses contemporary problems of womanhood, this can be appreciated in her mural 'Dismorfia' which her intention is to reflect on the erroneous perceptions that a girl has of herself, and that lead to psychological disorders. "Dysmorphia consists of seeing yourself different from the way you really are, for reasons of self-esteem, or these canons of beauty that society has imposed very out of the realm. It is an important issue that is hardly talked about." (Loya, M., 2018)



Figure 18. Urban art activities performed inside the building Nave Generadores of Fundidora Park, photo taken by Omar in the festival of urban expressions (2011)

Selecting a semi-public space as the venue for the elaboration of urban art can have advantages, one of them being the importance of this space within the urban context which makes it much easier to spread the word and promote the location of the event.

Likewise, the selection of this space can have its disadvantages. Being a in high demand within the cultural and artistic field, where events, festivals and exhibitions are constantly held within it, all work that is produced within it is ephemeral and after its exposition time expires it has to be dismantled and removed. The mural of Loya being a clear

example, dismantled in 2018 after the festival ended, and currently there are no more traces of this mural other than in photographs and in the memory of the attendees.

Unlike other artistic typologies, such as performances, which are programmed to be temporary, the ephemerality of urban art is not programmed or controlled but rather time, the environment, and the city itself and its social activities consume it, this happens in a long span of time and for this phenomenon to occur the same metropolis will have already gone through different interactions with the artwork, thus becoming part of the memory of the city.



Figure 19. Urban art elaborated in a semipublic space, mural by Monica Loya (2018) Source Retrieved from the artist official page: <https://www.facebook.com/loya.monica/photos/dismorfia-mural-terminado-gracias-a-callegenera-y-conartenl-por-la-invita%C3%B3n-a-/1053213188188278/>



Figure 20. Aerial view of the entrance of Zaragoza station, photo taken by The Raws (2021)

Urban art, just because it is made in a public space, has greater potential than any other type of art, since it can become accessible to all audiences and its permanence ensures that more users have the opportunity to appreciate the work. The legacy that a mural can leave in society is linked to a collective memory, sociologist John Urry (1995) defines this term of collective memory as the main strategy to ensure that an urban element can acquire a value within its social context. Therefore, for urban art to have a true value in society, it must have passed through a large number of people, because at the end, society is the main determining factor that defines its value.

From the analysis of this case study, it is possible to conclude that the limitations in a public space directly affect the value of urban art. Because if a work of urban art, as amazing as it may be, is not connected to its adjacent urban context or its life span is truly short, the possibilities that the mural will acquire great social value are low.

5.2 The transitional public space

The development and expansion of urban transport networks brought a new dimension of public space to the city of Monterrey, this being the transitional public space. This space consists from the union of the public space and the urban elements of paths and nodes. The purpose of these public spaces is for their users to pass through them. They serve as connection points between various destinations.

Public transport is made up of an integral system of different modes of transportation for general and accessible use, this is one of the most essential parts of cities since it allows the commute of a large number of people within the urban area. Gómez (1998) makes a connection between the quality of life of users in a city and the urban mobility, where he points out the need for a good connection between the various parts of the urban context as one of the determining factors to ensure a better quality of life for its inhabitants.



Figure 21. Mural 'El amor es bailar' by Janin Nuz (2014)



Figure 22. Mural 'El amor es bailar' in Zaragoza station by Janin Nuz (2014)

For the study of this dimension of public space, the metropolitan area metro system was studied. Monterrey's metro system has three lines with a total of 38 stations in service, for this work one of the 38 stations of the Monterrey metro was selected, the Zaragoza station (Figure 12), as the type of transitional public space to study. The Zaragoza station is one of the main stations of the metro system of Monterrey because it is the terminal station of line 2 and line 3, also being located in one of the most touristic areas of Monterrey's downtown.

The work of urban art that is analyzed in this station is 'El amor es bailar' (Figure 13) made in 2014 by the artist Janin Nuz, from San Luis Potosí, who is recognized for her portraits, using the expression of the face until reaching the realism, as well as its recurring themes of the femininity of women and the innocence of childhood.

Nuz (2018) says that thanks to street art she has been able to get to know a large part of the country and considers that her greatest prize is leaving something on the street that can be seen and interpreted by all kinds of people. She achieved it in an effective way in her work 'El amor es bailar' where not only it evokes the themes of femininity, innocence and childhood of Mexican culture, but also from its elaboration in one of the busiest public spaces in the city it, managing to leave her artwork open to the interpretation of all users.

The Nuz's mural (Figure 14) is still in good condition, due to the morphology of the Zaragoza station, which is an underground station, ensuring that this work is not damaged by the weather. Likewise, this mural has gradually become part of the collective memory of the city, not only because it has been maintained over a prolonged period of years, also continuing to be relevant as it reflects current aspects of the city's culture.

Based on the findings obtained in this case study, it is very difficult to define whether the repercussions of urban art in this dimension of public space are completely positive or negative. The result ended up in a gray area due to several factors. Considering the accessibility factor, this space is very favorable, because there is a constant pedestrian flow in the site, However, on the mural-user interaction factor,

the setting is not very positive, since the space is transitional and not for permanence, very few users take their time to stop and appreciate the artwork, this is mainly due to the function of this public space, because people use it as a connection point and not as a destination, provoking the lack of awareness of the elements that are on their commute.

The team concluded that this space ends up being favorable but first it is necessary to generate proposals for the promotion of this type of works, this with the intention that users become more aware of the elements that are in their path and not only in their destination.

Finally, in terms of identity and personification, the impact that the mural has generated on the metro station was found to be very positive, because it gives life and its own identity to the place, as well as positively reflecting the cultural and social aspects from the city.

5.3 The Central Public space

The center of the urban area is the space that has the greatest potential for expressing the diversity, culture and identity of a city. Due to the fact that in the city's downtown everything converges: different cultures, different lifestyles and different users share the same space, in other words it is the place where the heterogeneity of a city emerges.

In the nucleus of the urban area is the public space with the greatest potential for artistic expression, cause is the place where all social groups can feel identified. There is a greater possibility of finding examples of urban art in the downtown of the city than in its peripheries because the user is more willing to express himself within a space where he feels invited.

For the analysis of the relationship between urban art and the central public space, the team selected a specific area of Monterrey's downtown. For this case study, the area of Isaac Garza (Figure 15) is selected. This zone is located few blocks from the Macroplaza (one of the most important public spaces in the city) and the museums of Mexican history. This area has a truly diverse urban context, and it can be observed by the contrast generated between old buildings with new businesses and residences.



Figure 23. Aerial view of Isaac Garza, photo taken by the Raws (2021)

The work of urban art selected for this case study is "El legado" (2020) by Anahid Hernandez (Figure 16), originated from Nuevo León, she originally worked on easel and in recent years has been involved in muralism. In her work "El legado" Hernandez alludes to the theme of life, one of her three most recurrent themes, the others being time and death.

Analyzing this case study, it was concluded very favorable for the artwork to be developed the central area of the city, since it is within a greater reach of the whole population, which increases the possibility to acquire greater value from the collective memory of the citizens. Likewise, its relationship with its neighboring context is positive, because the mural was located near different recognized establishments in the area (Figure 17). By this connection, the city transforms the mural into a visual node that is not only related to its adjoining urban context, but also to the social activities that take place nearby.

Based on these findings, it was possible to conclude that the central public space is the dimension that has the greatest potential for the practice of urban art, due to its strategic location, which is within the reach of all citizens, its various roles in the city, since these spaces have a leading role in the social activities of the city, and also the higher expectations of obtaining value by the collective memory of the citizens. By this it can be stated that there is a correlation between the accessibility that society has to an element in a space and the value that society can give to said element, the more interaction is promoted, the more value said mural could acquire.



Figure 24. Mural 'El legado' by Anahid Hernandez (2020)

6. The potential of urban art in public space

Once analyzing the relationship between urban art and the city, it is possible to find in the same way the benefits that the promotion and valorization of this artistic typology can bring to the city. There are diverse ways in which this artistic practice can be beneficial for the urban context.

Urban art can be considered as a tool to enrich the identity and personality of a city. This is possible cause this practice can foster a dynamic and diverse urban context, giving the possibility that previously null spaces of lacking identity, can come to stand out and distinguish themselves from their surrounding context. On a larger scale, the practice

of urban art can allow an area to distinguish itself from its peers, giving the possibility of creating spaces that are different and unrepeatable from those of other metropolises.

This practice gives the possibility of singling out spaces from their context, and consequently fosters greater urban readability, since it is easier to understand a city if it has a large number of identifiable spaces. Providing the opportunity that both a local and foreign users can more easily move within the city. This phenomenon manages to turn the murals into visual landmarks, which are emblematic, recognizable, and identifiable elements that serve as a point of reference for a greater ease of interpretation and reading of an urban context.



Figure 25 Aerial view of the mural 'El legado' by Anahid Hernandez (2020), photo taken by the Raws (2021)



Figure 26. Mural 'El legado' by Anahid Hernandez (2020)

Other authors not only refer to landmarks as urban reading tools, but also relate them to the visual diversity of a city. Jacobs (1961) denotes landmarks as an urban element that can end the monotony of cities, since by having distinctive and singular elements, it is possible that they can acquire a visual richness. In this sense, urban art can be used method to stop the monotony of new cities and turn a gray and uniform urban context into a complex interesting one.

7. Conclusions

From the findings acquired in this investigation, we were able to demonstrate that there is a big correlation between urban art and the space where it resides. This potential lies within the urban life of its surroundings, and that can be interpreted from the practice of urban reading, by doing this, an alternate way of appreciating urban art can be introduced, where its value also resides in its relationship with its spatial context.

Additionally, it was possible to conclude that the benefits are mutual. Urban art benefits from the city, since without the public realm these artworks could not achieve their full potential and relevance, just as the city benefits from urban art, because this practice encourages the singularization and personification of the city. Through this, it is possible to demonstrate from the lens of urban planning and design, the importance of this art typology and the relevance that the practice of urban art should have on the design of cities that seek to achieve an adequate human scale. Thus, confirming that urban art can be implemented as methodology to encourage the urban life in public spaces, creating a phenomenon in which the activities of artistic expression take a role in the transformation of the city and its society.

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Conventionality and Innovation: Détournement in 2011-2012 Protest Art

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Abstract

In this paper I look into the conventional side of protest street art in 2011–2012. I am particularly interested in the rules of formation of revolutionary and protest images, in large part consisting of the reproduction of existing images.

Using the iconographical and comparative method of image analysis, I present three case studies of reusing and recycling certain symbols and artifacts during protests of the Indignados movement in Spain, the Occupy movement in the United States, and the Egyptian revolution during the Arab Spring..

Thanks to supplementing my research with the situationist theory of détournement strategy, I was able to distinguish three modes of image and symbol reproduction: the historical, the external, and the internal. Reproducing in the historical mode consists of referring to certain symbols or images from the past—in the external mode—to symbols or images that are inherently neutral to the protest. The internal mode of reproduction works within the protest, producing its original symbols, images and mythology, specific to each social movement.

In conclusion, the historical and the external modes of reproduction are generally responsible for the conventional visual components of protest; the internal mode on the other hand, is generally responsible for more distinctive, innovative ones.

Keywords

Protest art; street art; détournement; Indignados; Arab Spring; Occupy

1. Introduction

Although revolts and protests supposedly aim towards a new order, their visual sphere seems to be mostly conventional, even repetitive. This paradox has its roots in propaganda purposes—images and symbols on protest posters, banners, flags, leaflets, pins, etc. have to be comprehensible, easy to identify, and quick to reproduce further. For this reason, the visual sphere of protest is founded on reproduction mechanisms.

The topic of both image reproduction and protest art were of particular interest to members of the Situationist International artistic revolutionary avant-garde group that was

prominent in 1957–1972 and was an active party during the events of May 1968 (see Viénet, 1992). One of the practices that the group adopted as a method of artistic creation was *détournement*. This French word can mean diversion, misappropriation, as well as hijacking (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.)—and so it reflects quite well the sense of situationist practice, consisting of reusing and recontextualizing any visual, artistic, linguistic, or ‘everyday-life’ elements to create new artwork. A full description of its meaning, ways of functioning, and types are given by Guy Debord and Gil Wolman in a text called *A User's Guide to Détournement*. In its crucial part the authors claim that even if the Situationist International was the first to conceptu-

alize and intentionally apply this method, the group didn't invent it, because *détournement* was commonly used long before the avant-garde was even born. The authors differentiate minor and deceptive *détournements*. The first are based on appropriation of an element that is of little or no importance to its source; the second—in contrast, consists of reusing the most important fragment of its previous setting. Apart from this, Debord and Wolman distinguished the so-called ultra-*détournement*, which operates in the social dimension—for example appropriation of gestures, customs, or the meanings of words (Debord and Wolman, 2006, p. 20–21).

It is important to stress that Debord and Wolman saw this practice as a means to achieve the cultural hegemony of the proletariat:

“*Détournement* not only leads to the discovery of new aspects of talent; in addition, clashing head-on with all social and legal conventions, it cannot fail to be a powerful cultural weapon in the service of a real class struggle. The cheapness of its products is the heavy artillery that breaks through all the Chinese walls of understanding. It is a real means of proletarian artistic education, the first step toward a literary communism.” (Debord and Wolman, 2006, p. 18)

Détournement was therefore not only an artistic, but also a revolutionary practice. By “*détourning*” images or symbols, it is possible to quickly produce lots of images that are new, powerful, and subversive. Because the main rule of *détournement* is appropriating and recycling any given, but most often symbolically saturated or “influential” material, it can also incorporate such practices as collage, assemblage, ready-made, subvertising, and culture jamming, as well as acts of iconoclasm, caricature, deforming, and paraphrasing. Almost all of the aforementioned forms occur in protest art. Thus, applying the theory of *détournement* to researching current protest art should make it possible to understand its discursive dynamics, as well as its formal diversity. This paper aims to answer the question of whether the mechanism of image reproduction during protest follows any rules, and if so, what are its most common strategies. Using the iconographical method I would like to analyze and

compare three case studies of *détournements* in the visual sphere of interconnected protests of the Arab Spring, the Indignados, and the Occupy movements, which took place in 2011–2012. I intend to take into account their formal and symbolical interconnections, as well as socio-geopolitical context. Although the course and character of each movement were very different—during the Arab Spring, the revolts were far more violent as the military was used in the fight against the protesters—its participants spoke of mutual inspirations and a kind of a kindred spirit between these protests (Ancelovici Dufour and Nez, 2016, pp. 30–31; Sitrin, 2012, p. 14). When writing about the protests of the Indignados and of Occupy Ancelovici, Dufour and Nez pointed out: “Their singularity (demonstrated by testimonies and published studies) should not prevent us from considering them together analytically” (Ancelovici, Dufour and Nez, 2016, p. 23). Even though they are generally interpreted as having failed to bring about the political change and social justice for which they fought (more literature on the subject is mentioned in Ancelovici, Dufour and Nez, 2016, p. 19), they transformed the discourse concerning the manner of protesting and pursuing modern democracy. They all have risen on a mass scale thanks to the usage of online channels of communication (Castells, 2012, pp. 57–62; 119; 174–181), which included innovative methods of organization, documentation, and promotion of protest ideas and events. Moreover, during the Indignados and the Occupy protests, sit-in strikes grew into full-time camps, supporting both the basic needs and activist initiatives of the community. In addition, the protests also had adventitious “side effects” in the arts—particularly Egyptian street art had its moment both on Cairo’s streets and in the global media (Awad and Wagoner, 2018, p. 2).

All of the seven artworks I will be referring to are posters and stencils. It is likely that most of them don't survive in their material form—they are accessible online in photos or in graphic format in case of posters. The chosen examples are, of course, just a small segment of protest art of 2011–2012, yet in each case study, the *détourned* image is used differently. Among these various methods of image reproduction during protests, I distinguished three crucial modes: historical, external, and internal. This typology is meant to expose the strategies of image formation and vi-

sual communication, that are most commonly used during protests.

2. Is Sol the new Bastille?

Historicization of the Indignados protest

Between May 15 and June 6, 2011, during the beginnings of the Indignados protests, various banners, leaflets, and stickers started to appear on Madrid walls. One of the posters depicts Marianne from *Liberty Leading the People* by Eugene Delacroix (see at Hadzelek, June 6, 2011). Her figure was extracted from the rest of the painting and put on a white background with altered attributes—in one hand she is holding a peach-colored rose, replacing the bayonet with the sign of peaceful protest, in the other the Spanish instead of the French flag. On the left side of the image, text with large black capital letters is written. It says “Sol es la Nueva Bastilla,” which means “Sol is the new Bastille.” “Sol” refers to the short name for Puerta del Sol, a public square in Madrid, which was occupied by the protesters, who camped there for several weeks, from June 12 to August 2, 2011.

Perhaps the usage of the figure of Marianne on the poster may seem an obvious choice. *Liberty Leading the People* is Delacroix’s most famous painting, exhibited at the Louvre, reproduced in history textbooks, and often appearing in the popular culture sphere. Yet the juxtaposition of the protest slogan, paralleling Puerta del Sol and the Bastille, and the illustrious, yet recontextualized, “updated” personification of liberty, is incoherent. Delacroix’s painting was referring to the revolution of 1830—and not 1789, when the Bastille was stormed. It seems that in this case, the historical truth and accuracy of the visual and rhetorical components turned out to be less important than revolutionary symbolic. Delacroix’s Liberty, associated with the symbol of revolution in general, was détourned and used to legitimate the protest of the Indignados by comparing them with the sans-culottes.

Of course, it is important to ask why the author of the poster did not choose to evoke the very rich Spanish revolutionary tradition. It seems that there were three reasons for this: firstly, the importance of the spatial connotations of both

events. The storming of the Bastille was an event of making the city space communal, egalitarian, and subordinate to the will of a new sovereign—the people. The rebellious gesture of appropriating this space by the citizens was later repeated in all mass revolts, but was especially important during the Indignados protests when the sit-in model was established that then spread to the Occupy revolts (Rovisco, 2017, p. 340). Perpetual camping and occupying one of the main squares of the city was not only a strategy of making the protest visible to both Madrid’s inhabitants and tourists, but also an attempt to build a new community, whose rules were inspired mainly by anarchism and direct democracy. The parallel from the poster emphasizes that Puerta del Sol, like the Bastille during French Revolution, is a place of both political struggle and play, a symbol of the escalation of violence, as well as of the formulation of a new collectivity (Lüsebrink and Reichardt, 1997, p. 4).

Secondly, the historical references to revolutions of 1789 and 1830 were perhaps more fitting because of their historical distance and, in consequence, political vagueness—as nowadays, the French revolution is generally perceived as a positive breakthrough and a milestone in pursuing social equality and modern European democracy, while a reference to, for example, the Spanish Civil War could be more polarizing. In this way, the propaganda purpose of the poster was achieved—it endorsed revolution, and yet—as with the Indignados movement itself—stayed clear of any definite political statements or affiliations (Castells, 2012, p. 125) in order to mobilize as many participants as possible. Lastly, evoking not only the rich symbolism of the Bastille and the French Revolution, but also the figure of Delacroix’s Marianne and therefore the victory of the third estate during the Three Glorious Days, the author of the poster strengthened its persuasion, by giving it a hopeful, triumphant tone—this time the People led by Liberty were the protesters of the Indignados movement.

The analyzed poster is in my opinion an example of the historical mode of reproduction of images and symbols, so acutely described by Karl Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

“Tradition from all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they appear to be revolutionizing themselves and their circumstances, in creating something unprecedented, in just such epochs of revolutionary crisis, that is when they nervously summon up the spirits of the past, borrowing from them their names, marching orders, uniforms, in order to enact new scenes in world history, but in this time-honoured guise and with this borrowed language.” (Marx, 2002, pp. 19–20).

Historicizing a social movement aims to situate it in relation to current political conditions, but also to build its identity. This strategy is most commonly used to legitimize—or discredit—a certain person, situation, tendency, or movement by collating it with its historical “analogy”, whether positive or negative. It serves as an interpretive tool, a cognitive shortcut, but also a way of assigning purpose and meaning to the enterprise. Most probably that was the case here, considering that the poster appeared on the streets in the first week of demonstrations, at the very early stage of the Indignados protest.

3. The Charging Bull of Wall Street versus the Occupy movement—the case of an external mode of image reproduction

Even before the actual beginning of the protests of Occupy Wall Street on September 17, 2011, the *Charging Bull*, a bronze sculpture by Arturo di Modica, became one of the symbols, or rather anti-idols of the movement, when it appeared in the *Adbusters* magazine in the September–October issue in 2011 (*Adbusters America*, 2011; Bierut, April 30, 2012). The poster is in black and white, the *Charging Bull* is depicted at its center. A ballerina, dressed in a black tricot, is standing on the bull's back in arabesque. The background is covered in fumes, from which protesters in gas masks emerge. At the bottom is written: “#Occupy Wall Street/ September 17th./ Bring tent./” in white capital letters, and at the top, in red capital letters: “What/ is our/ one/ demand?/”.

Apart from this example, the *Charging Bull* also appeared on many more protest prints and graphics, including the one by Alexandra Clotfelter, showing the Bull in chains with the

caption “The beginning is near” (see Striking Posters of Occupy Wall Street, November 23, 2011), or accompanied by the proverb “*Take the bull by the horns,*” by Randy Gentile (see MacGuill A., Noor, O., February 2, 2012). The statue itself was also an object of various modifications during the protests—such as parading with a handmade mini-version as a “false idol” (see Scharper, Oktober 11, 2011). Although it was never vandalized by the occupiers, for over a year from the beginning of protests it was guarded by the police and fenced with metal gates (Haberman, September 17, 2012, para. 7). At any rate, in all Occupy détournements of the *Charging Bull*, it is depicted as an object of contempt and ridicule or an enemy to fight against. *Why was the Charging Bull—literally—chosen for an anti-idol of the Occupy movement?*

Here again arises the matter of interconnection of a détourned object and protest's physical location. Since 1989, the sculpture has been located on Bowling Green in the Financial District of Manhattan, one of the most prominent financial centers of the world. Through the years it has become a well-known tourist attraction and a lucky charm for Wall Street businessmen. On its own website the Bull is introduced as “a symbol of courage and virility”, and “a way to celebrate the can-do spirit of America and especially New York, where people from all other the world could come regardless of their origin or circumstances, and through determination and hard work overcome every obstacle to become successful.” (History of the Charging Bull of Wall Street, n.d.). *The declared symbolism is in accordance with the general attributes assigned to the bull in Western cultures, such as strength, hard work and endurance.*

It is worth noting how during the Occupy protests interpretation of the meaning of the *Charging Bull* has not changed. The Bull was originally intended to symbolize the American dream and the success-driven capitalist economy. The Occupy movement, which questioned these ideals, started to use the statue as the visual representation of a broken system—what altered was a radicalization of the protesters' perception towards the statue's meaning. Perhaps the reason for this, apart from site-specific context of the *Charging Bull*, was the fact that in August 2011, just a month before the protests started, the first edition of the book “The Global Minotaur” by Yannis Varoufakis was published. It was an

analysis of the causes of the financial crash of 2008. The figure of a Minotaur, the bull-like monster from Greek mythology, was an analogy for the United States' financial system and its relation to the global economy. It is needless to add that the formation of Occupy movement was directly related to the economic crisis after 2008.

The statue had its fixed meaning, independent from the course of the revolt. As an object essentially unrelated to the protest, an artwork treated mainly as a city-beautifier, it was détourned, recontextualized and reproduced on banners, posters, pins, etc. as an anti-idol of the Occupy movement. In some examples – as on “The beginning is near” and “Take the bull by the horns” posters—the statue was put in a dynamic scene where it embodied the enemy that must be fought. In other cases, for example in the Adbusters poster, its exact appearance and spatial context was maintained in order to enhance the particularity of the area where it is found and to persuade protesters to physically occupy it. I call this specific strategy of détournement an object extraneous to the individual protest, and using it in a revolutionary context anyway, the external mode of reproduction of images.

While historicization mode of reproduction is used to legitimize or discredit its object through identification with any given historical event, the external mode consists of politicization. The strategy of collating the Indignados protest with French revolutionary tradition had a mitigating, consensus-building purpose, because the events of 1789 and 1830 are commonly considered a positive breakthrough, and the validity of the revolting Third Estate is not up for discussion. The antagonizing, subversive power of détournement has made the seemingly neutral statue of a bull a powerful, yet negatively associated symbol. Apart from this, the precedent of police guarding the Charging Bull, while repeatedly violently dispersing the protest camp in Zucotti Park is also worth consideration, for the reason that it exposed the priority of protecting the safety of the statue rather than the citizens.

4. Justice, Superwoman, the hero, the martyr. “The Girl in the Blue Bra” as an emblem of the Egyptian revolution

After the protest in Tahrir Square in Cairo on December 17, 2011, almost all leading visual mass media, whether printed or online, Egyptian or foreign, published a film or a film still of the so-called Girl in the Blue Bra, depicting a young woman lying on the ground. It is impossible to see her face, because her abaya is lifted up, covering her head and showing an azure bra, as she is dragged, beaten, and kicked by three soldiers in full armor. The image quickly became a symbol of undeserved violation of the citizens, especially women, by the state and the military (Hafez, 2014, p. 20; Kirolos, 2016, pp.142-143).

This symbol was détourned and used on walls in Cairo by at least three street artists in their stencils—an anonymous artist who depicted The Blue Bra Girl as a personification of Justice (see Zakarevičiūtė, 2013, p. 61, no. 33); El Tennen, who portrayed the protester as Superwoman (see Zakarevičiūtė, 2013, p. 96, no. 55); and Bahia Shehab, who declined to represent the person and painted only the bra (see Shehab, Some People, n.d.).

Before analyzing these examples, it seems necessary to stress how extraordinary was the position of street art, especially graffiti, in Cairo at that time. New local artists emerged on the Cairo street art scene, and its rapid growth fueled international recognition (Awad and Wagoner, 2018, p. 2). As Rana Jarbou put it, “Graffiti and street artists’ creation and circulation of new symbols and language were illustrative of the events, cathartic for their audiences, and educational for outsiders” (Jarbou, 2018, p. 139). While indispensably taking part in creating an alternative discourse, it also physically—and illegally—appropriated city space for persuasive purposes (Awad and Wagoner, 2018, p. 2). While it lasts, protest graffiti, despite its generally ephemeral character, serves as a substitution for actual, active protest, by making the antagonism constantly visible and present for every citizen. In other words, protest graffiti designates urban space as a constant battlefield.

This trait of fighting the hegemony of media and official culture is closely associated with the International Situationist practice of graffiti, which grew in importance during May 1968, although the situationist graffiti had a predominantly verbal character. The majority of examples of situationist graffiti from that time, collected in the Situationist International Anthology, were a call to action, understood as a transformation of everyday life: “Talk to your neighbours”; “Create”; “Write everywhere” (Knabb, 2006, pp. 445–457). Some of them were also détourned quotations of Friedrich Nietzsche, André Breton or Heraclitus, etc. Frances Stracey writes that graffiti “had been a formative practice within the pre-history of the Situationist International and continued to be deployed as a strategic weapon throughout the group’s lifetime” (Stracey, 2014, p. 77). According to the author, graffiti was inscribed in a wider set of practices of the situationists, called constructed situations. Because of their ephemerality, subversiveness, and absurdity in terms of the constant imperative of profit and productivity, constructed situations exposed and denounced the omnipresent spectacle (Stracey, 2014, pp. 76–78). Graffiti, because of its common association with vandalism of private or municipal property, was a perfect tool for that. Although unpopular back then, stencils would be perhaps even more in agreement with situationist practice, as while they carry the same ideological features as graffiti, they are faster and easier to reproduce on a mass scale.

While writing about Arabic graffiti during the Arab Uprisings, Rana Jarbou, already quoted before, gave a description of street art practice that is very similar to the definition of détournement strategy itself:

“Street artists used this visual language of branding, playing with and on words, and mixing and matching images to create new meanings, and notably repeating them too, an effective tactic in advertising. The provocative disruption is the first step in delivering their message. The next step, making out its meaning, was dependent on effectiveness of the provocation” (Jarbou, 2018, p. 139).

The anonymous all-black stencil originally placed in Emir Kadar street, on which The Blue Bra Girl is depicted as a

personification of Justice is a clear example of mixing and emulating two different, symbolically saturated images. She is standing in a graceful pose with two attributes: a machine gun in one hand and a balance scale in other, and her right leg sticks out. Her outfit, composed of a flowing skirt and bra recalls those of belly dancers, but she also seems to wear a helmet of some sort. Above her raised left arm with the scale the author placed a laconic inscription, or rather a title: “Aadla” which means “Justice” (Zakarevičiūtė, 2013, p. 54). The Blue Bra Girl, embodying all protesting Egyptian women, becomes a modern Themis, goddess of not only justice, but also wisdom and good counsel. This seemingly plain image contrasts the feminine and the masculine, as well as the almost dancing pose of the women and unyielding stillness of the scale—the Blue Bra Girl here, even if exposed, is not a victim, but a figure of strength and righteousness. In the same manner Egyptian street artist El Teneen depicted The Blue Bra Girl as a Superwoman in her stencil *Supergirl Blue Bra*. She is painted in a dynamic fighting pose with clenched fists, a flowing red cape, and a grimace on her face. Her costume recalls the uniform of Superman, except instead of the usual tight top she is wearing a blue bra, and has red Arabic letter “tha” on her chest. It is an abbreviation of “thawra”, which means revolution. The text at the bottom in translation means: “It continues” (Linssen, 2018, p. 11). Again, the protester is portrayed as heroic and unconquerable. These two artworks have a strong feminist message, in accordance with heated discussions of that time, concerning women’s rights and their security during protests, that were followed by the active involvement of thousands of Egyptian women in marches and rallies.

The last example of discussed détournements of the still of The Blue Bra Girl in street art, in many ways contrasting with the previous ones, is Bahia Shehab’s stencil from the cycle called *Some People*. In this case, the only thing depicted is a blue bra. It seems that this object became so significant for two reasons: because of the lack of any other distinctive features of the protester, and because of the soldiers’ breaking of taboo by violently stripping her. The inscription below the image says in Arabic: “There are people who have been stripped naked so you can live decently,” and so it brings up both the heroism and martyrdom of women protesters. According to the author, the sacrifice made by

them during the uprising was emphasized because of the specific situation at the turn of May and June 2012, when the protests started to fade away (Shehab, *Some People*, n.d.). The artist also stated that putting the stencil on the streets of Cairo was a way to work through the collective sense of shame and humiliation after the incident, which sadly was not isolated (Jarbou, 2018, p. 144).

Two important procedures in building a narrative of protest are idealization and monumentalization. Because of them, the Girl in the Blue Bra, a victim of military and state violence, became a hero and a martyr at the same time. All of the examples analyzed in this section represent the internal mode of reproduction of images. The internal mode consists of reproducing images “inside” the protest—when the revolt is being documented and processed, and in consequence it produces its own mythology, symbols, images, and artworks. These “side effects” are separate and specific for each movement—and the scene of the beating of the Blue Bra Girl is the one that was most commonly associated with the Egyptian uprising in 2011–2012 and engraved in the collective memory for good.

6. Conclusion

While reflecting on the repetitiveness of protest art and its visual sphere, I distinguished three modes, or strategies, that are most commonly used within the image reproduction mechanism, and named them historical, external and internal. As I tried to demonstrate through examples, both the historical and external modes of reproduction are generally related to or “responsible” for the conventional visual components of protest—the internal mode, on the other hand—for more distinctive, innovative components. Moreover, the historical and external modes of reproduction are, metaphorically speaking, a battlefield of the meaning of images, whereas internal reproduction illustrates and processes current events and in this sense, is rather a foundry of new images. The historicization strategy is based on the legitimization or discrediting of the opponent, the movement itself or the individuals from either group, by assigning a historical analogy to the subject and identifying it through this association, either in a positive or an unfa-

vorable way. The external mode of reproduction consists of politicizing an image that was previously extraneous and neutral towards the protest. The internal mode reproduces the images within itself in order to create an autonarration of the protest—this often happens through idealization and monumentalization of its ideals, events and participants.

The presented model of different image reproduction mechanisms, supplemented with the situationist theory of *détournement* strategy, of course has its limitations. It is strictly focused on those protest images, that are mainly conventional, reproduced, and recontextualized, perhaps slightly neglecting innovative, creative images that in my view, appear significantly less often. Still, I believe the model has scientific value because of its nuanced answer to a question about the conventionality and innovation of protest art, as well as its ability to organize the researched material and to make it possible to see the individual artworks in their broader context and interconnections.

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Comparative analysis of street art cataloguing projects in the cities of Monterrey (Mexico) and Jaen (Spain): Proposal for the inclusion of communities

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Abstract

In the last few months of 2020 and the first half of 2021, two urban art cataloguing projects have been carried out in two cities in different countries, making it possible to put some methodological proposals into practice that, until now, were being carried out mainly at a theoretical level. This is the project “Painted on the wall. A study of wall painting in the province of Jaén in the XX-XXI centuries”, financed by the Instituto de Estudios Giennenses (Diputación de Jaén, Spain) and the project “The muralist creation of the CALLEGENERA Urban Expressions Festival as cultural artistic consumption” in the city of Monterrey, financed by the Mexican Programme for the Promotion of Cultural Projects and Co-investments. Methodological systems for working with and collecting information, cataloguing sheets and models for interviewing different artists have been developed in both of these projects with a common theoretical basis, such as the proposals that emerged within the GEIIC Urban and Public Art Group, and the CAPuS project and YOCOCU proposals. As such, this paper analyses both projects in terms of their methods and results, and draws conclusions about which options have worked best in terms of optimising resources for future projects. A proposal is also made to improve the urban art cataloguing sheets by including information regarding the correlation between the work and the communities surrounding it, since urban art only makes sense in its context, and some of this information is lost when the sheets are made. Furthermore, as far as possible action for the preservation of artworks is concerned, we consider the relationship the art shares with the surrounding community to be fundamental.

Keywords

Street art; mural; cataloguing; Monterrey; Jaen; registry

1. Introduction

The task of cataloguing artistic work is the basis for research, dissemination and conservation of pieces from any period. Only when we become aware of the artworks, can we start working on making them known to the public, either in person or virtually, and gain more insight into a number of other areas via specific research. This is, of course,

the first step towards taking preventive conservation action or restoration and, on a legislative level, is a measure of control. In other words, a catalogue of artwork is an essential tool in art history and cultural heritage. The catalogue becomes even more essential in the case of ephemeral works, as it will probably be the only early record that would remain of the piece of art. This is why, in recent years,

the cataloguing of street art has been a concern for some research groups, although it is a field still yet to be explored, and there is still work to be done in terms of establishing a clear action protocol, with a *modus operandi*, a cataloguing sheet suitable for the peculiarities of this type of art and working methods that would allow for all the components surrounding these artworks to be registered.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning certain advances in this area. On the one hand, especially on a theoretical level, all the work carried out by the GEIC Street Art and Commissioned Street Art Murals Group, with the publication of a cataloguing sheet in 2016 (Úbeda García, 2016) and a Code of Ethics (VVAA, 2016). This group's work stands out in particular for the way in which (spontaneous) street art has been differentiated from commissioned street art murals, commonly found at festivals and other similar events. In this sense, street art is often understood to be ephemeral in nature, something that shouldn't drive us to try and sustain its material presence. Although trying to define how long the ephemeral lasts is a complex task, it is understood that the artwork would lose its meaning if it lasted for more than one generation. (García Gayo, 2016). Ideally, this group believes that professionals should not act to intervene in the very concept of street art, and, as indicated in the Code of Ethics, only intervene in very specific cases when there is public demand for a case of particular importance. This group, therefore, considers cataloguing work to be something that is completely essential. Likewise, although commissioned street art murals may have other connotations, and at any given moment try and achieve a longer lifespan, the truth is that to a large extent, even when commissioned, a short lifespan is often preferable, as it enables the wall to be used again for another artwork in the not too distant future. This shows, once again, that cataloguing is an essential tool.

On the other hand, the CAPuS+ research project "Conservación de arte en espacios públicos" (Conservation of art in public spaces) financed by Erasmus+ and directed by Dominique Scaroni (CAPUS+, 2021), has worked intensively on the elaboration of a cataloguing sheet and a glossary, which pay special attention to the technical part of the artworks (materials, support, etc.), in order to give utmost importance to the conservation analysis, description of deterioration and damages, etc. The main difference in

CAPUS+ is that it seems to understand all artwork found on the street in the same way, whether it is street art, a commissioned street art mural or even an urban monument. An interesting repository of artworks with a complete technical and material analysis can be found on their website, although it does lack an artistic historical analysis and more importantly, the ability to analyse the context and significance of the artwork.

In this regard, another group worth mentioning is the international association of restoration professionals YOCOCU, which is also working on developing a street art cataloguing sheet that it has implemented at MURo - Museo di Urban Art di Roma (Street Art Museum of Rome) in Rome. YOCOCU's work and the GEIC Street Art and Commissioned Street Art Murals Group both share the idea of the need to implement different action modalities by separating the different types of artistic expressions found in cities and understanding their different idiosyncrasies. In this sense, they understand that their work should not affect the development of street art, and focus their activity on commissioned street art murals. Their cataloguing sheet, however, is more similar to CAPUS+ now, since they are committed to a fact sheet that is oriented towards gaining in-depth knowledge on the materials, deterioration and damages, etc. It is also essential to point out the differences between the objectives that the different information sheets may have. In the case of the two projects presented, cataloguing is understood to be a task that is vital for learning about the artworks and, as we understand that we are working with ephemeral art, it is also a way of conserving their memory, which otherwise would probably not last more than a generation at most.

There are other proposals of online street art registration, such as Google Art Project, which presents a photograph, the location and some basic data; Street Art Cities to keep up to date with what is happening globally; or the Civitas project of the University of Zaragoza (Spain), with more than a thousand works registered in Spain and a hundred in other parts of the world, also presents very basic information. Even in Google Art and Culture there is an extensive and very simple database with works of street art.

As these are the three most relevant contributions to date, it can be quickly understood that this is still a work in progress, as none of the proposals are sufficiently complete yet.

This is why we wanted to carry out a comparative analysis of two real cataloguing projects in this text, as studying them could help find out which elements established to date work well and provide good results, and what shortcomings are detected. The two projects are:

- a) "Pintado en la pared. Estudio de la pintura sobre muro en la provincia de Jaén en los siglos XX-XXI" (*Painted on the wall. A study of wall paintings in the province of Jaen in the 20th - 21st century*), financed by the Institute of "Giennense" Studies (*Provincial Government of Jaen*), developed between December 2020 and October 2021, with the idea of cataloguing both commissioned and independent street artwork in the province of Jaen (Spain), as well as cultivating an understanding of how graffiti has evolved (BOP, 2020). The project is led by Laura Luque Rodrigo, doctorate in Art History, professor at the University of Jaen and co-coordinator of the Street Art and Commissioned Street Art Murals Group GE-IIC; José Manuel Almansa Moreno, doctorate in Art History and professor at the same university; Rafael Mantas Fernández, doctorate in Art History and a high school teacher; and Carmen Moral Ruiz, restorer, doctorate in History and the Arts, professor at the Universidad of Huelva (Spain) and member of the aforementioned Street Art and Commissioned Street Art Murals Group. Sergio Cruz Molina, an undergraduate Art History student at the University of Jaen, has also collaborated as a research fellow for 6 months.
- b) "La creación muralista del Festival de Expresiones Urbanas CALLEGENERA como consumo artístico cultural" (The muralist creation of the CALLEGENERA Urban Expressions Festival as cultural artistic consumption). (Mendoza Lemus, 2020), financed by the program "Programa de Fomento a Proyectos y Coinversiones Culturales Emisión 35-2019" (Promotion of Cultural Projects and Co-investments Issue 35-2019). This program, FONCA, was developed between 2019-2021 and has worked with the identification, description, and

cataloguing of the artworks created in the Monterrey Callegenera Festival (Mexico) since 2011 in order to document them and study the impact they have. The project is led by Adris Díaz Fernández, doctorate in Art History, professor at the University of Monterrey and member of the Street Art and Commissioned Street Art Murals Group GE-IIC; Rodrigo Ledesma Gómez, doctorate in Art History, Ana Cristina García-Luna Romero, architect and professor at the University of Monterrey and Yadira Nieves Lahaba, doctorate in Philosophy, and teacher at the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon, Mexico. Ana Carolina Riojas Esparza, graduate in Sociology, and Sociology student Mextli Narada García Flores at the University of Monterrey and Library, and Information Science student Víctor Briones Galván from the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon have also collaborated.

2. Monterrey (Mexico) and Jaen (Spain): two realities

One of the important issues to take into account when creating a methodological protocol for cataloguing street art is that it is a type of artistic expression that is found in all types of locations, from large cities to very small towns. This obviously poses a challenge when it comes to finding a balance when creating a working system that needs to be both flexible enough to adapt to these different realities, but closed enough to ensure that the work is systematic. In this sense, the projects presented below precisely reflect these two opposing realities.

Project A was carried out in the province of Jaen, located in the north east of the autonomous region Andalusia (in the south of Spain). It is landlocked (it doesn't have access to the sea), and bordered by Cordoba, Granada, Ciudad Real and Albacete.

It spans a surface area of 14496km², covering 2,67 % of the national territory and it has a population of 631.381 inhabitants as of the 1st of January 2020 (INE, 2021). It is a territory that is mostly devoted to agriculture, in particular the production of olive oil, and it also boasts the biggest expanse of olive trees in the world, the so-called 'sea of olive trees', comprising almost 70 million trees. Jaen is the

province with the largest area of protected natural parks in Spain.

In terms of cultural heritage, its Renaissance style architecture and Iberian archaeological sites deserve special recognition.

Work has been carried out for the project in different locations by adapting the work method somewhat, largely due to the conditions imposed during the course of the COVID19 pandemic, which caused somewhat restricted mobility between towns for quite some months. The locations in which the work was carried out were:

- The capital city of Jaen, with a surface area of 424 km² (SIMA, 2021a);
- Linares with a surface area of 196,56 km² (SIMA, 2021b);
- Ubeda with 403,47 km² (SIMA, 2021c).
- Other smaller towns like Begijar, Valdepeñas de Jaen, Martos, etc. All of them are smaller in size.

The working method, which will be explained in detail below, has been implemented in particular in the capital city. As we are talking about a project with a duration of less than a year, with only four members and, as previously mentioned, that was completed in a period with significant mobility restrictions, modifications were made for the rest of the locations mainly due to the lack of time, personnel and resources. It should be noted that this province, including the capital city and especially Linares, has lost a large part of its population in recent years due to high unemployment rates. In other words, there is an exodus of young people that has obviously caused an impact on the cultural development of the province. Programs that promote artistic development have recently been run as a way of boosting economic and tourist development, as well as having a positive influence on its residents. It is a province where street art has been present possibly since the late 1980s or early 1990s, although very little has been studied about this period. In any case, over the last two decades there has been a clear increase in the development of street art and especially of commissioned street art murals in the province, and notably in the city of Linares thanks to the artist Belin, who has created his own language and has become somewhat of an icon in both Linares and Jaen. There are no festivals or programs run to promote the development of commissioned street art murals over a long-term period, only one-

time events. It does seem, however, that some initiatives are now emerging that could become more permanent, such as the program Murales Con Ciencia (Murals with Science) in Bailen (Ortega Alonso and Padilla Fernández, 2019), which is about three years old, or the initiatives emerging from the recently created collective Rampa (Rampa, 2021).

Project B, on the other hand, takes place in Monterrey (Mexico), capital of the state of Nuevo Leon, located in the northwest of Mexico and known as the city of mountains. It is characterised by being an industrial city, it is the second biggest business and financial centre of the country and therefore the second richest. Its population exceeds one million inhabitants, making it the most populated city in the state, and it has a surface area of over 451.30 km² and is bordered by thirteen towns that are part of the metropolitan area. This geographical extension has become the second largest in the country. The state of Nuevo Leon is bordered to the north by a 15 km border area with Texas, which means that it is strongly influenced by the cultural, economic and social life of the USA. Monterrey is also a city that has been shaped by migration due to its economic development, making it a melting pot of cultures. The city's history has always been marked by multiculturalism and is influenced by European cultures; mostly Spanish, but also Italian, Polish, English, French and Sephardic, and even German and Norwegian, after they settled on the ancient Chichimeca towns. In terms of heritage, this culture left no great monumental remnants like the Aztecs or the Mayas. Most of the oldest cultural heritage in Monterrey comes from the Baroque period, although there are hardly any remnants left and the notable landmarks date back to the 19th century. Its architecture shows a mixture of different traditions.

In this area, their very own urban expressions have developed, such as 'ganchos', a widespread type of graffiti writing that occupies quite a large part of the space, as well as other public space writing practices like street art and commissioned street art murals. Since 2011, the Callegenera Urban Expressions Festival has been held in the city, organised by the Nuevo Leon Council for Art and Culture CONARTE (Conarte, n.d.). The Callegenera festival is symbolized by the events that take place on the city streets, namely dance (break dancing), music, graffiti, murals, skateboarding skills, and other forms of pop-culture. The festival seeks to pro-

mote, connect and spread a wide range of urban trends, and has established itself as being one of the most influential forums for art and urban expressions in the state and the country.

The differences in terms of surface area and number of inhabitants, and their different situations in terms of the development of street art, have conditioned the working methods in each of the areas studied, thus allowing us to draw conclusions which will be set out in the following sections. However, the fact that they are mountain cities, with a very hot climate in the summer and a very cold and dry climate in the winter is something that they both have in common. The greatest differences are related to the level of economic status and infrastructure development, with Jaen being a quite a remote and therefore poorly connected province, while Monterrey, being a large city, has more urban facilities. This is something that can even be seen in sports, as Monterrey, for example, has a football team in the first division, as opposed to Jaen, which has a team in the third division.

3. Comparative analysis of two street art cataloguing projects

3.1 Objectives and working method

The objectives of project A (Jaen) are firstly concerned with creating a working methodology and a cataloguing sheet, with their corresponding thesauruses, that could be tested. Secondly, the idea was to catalogue all street artwork, commissioned street art murals and also to take into account the graffiti present in the capital city, with the idea of obtaining a large compendium of the current situation in the city that would serve to carry out other studies, such as some focused on specific writers, styles, gaining a deeper understanding of its roots, etc. As such, one objective we had was that this resource would serve to promote street art in the province, raising awareness amongst the local residents and also outside the province. Furthermore, the idea was to add more towns in the province to the resource, for different reasons. In the case of Linares, because it is the birthplace of street art in the province; Úbeda and Baeza because they are UNESCO World Heritage Cities; Bailén because of its street art creation program; and other small-

er towns such as Martos, Begijar or Villacarrillo, because either an artwork of particular relevance had been seen there beforehand, or for logistical reasons such as the possibility of travelling, etc.

The objectives in the case of Project B (Monterrey) however, were to identify, describe and catalogue the CALLEGENERA commissioned street art mural creations, to create a registry model for analysis and documentation and assess the impact it had.

When compared, we can see that both projects prioritized creating a registration system, i.e. the methodological development was considered both a priority and a result in itself, hence comparing them helps create an improved project. The artworks are usually only photographed from a tourist's perspective and most of the time they disappear without being documented as artistic objects (Ubeda, 2010, p.168). Thus, the registry proposal arose, the outcome of which is the need to preserve the mural production that has taken place in the city of Monterrey and its metropolitan area over time, and the idea was conveyed to street artists, cultural managers and street art conservation specialists, and neighbours' opinions were also taken into account.

These objectives did not to intervene in the artworks or prolong their lifespan in any of the cases.

The working method in the case of project A (Jaen) was as follows:

- Stage 1: a literature and newspaper article review, internet and social network searches using keywords such as street art, commissioned street art murals, graffiti, graffiti artist, etc. followed by the name of each town or village. At the same time, studies concerning the development of the cataloguing sheet and the thesauruses were carried out using Google Drive.
- Stage 2: field research, in situ study of artworks. The data collection method consisted of going down all the streets in the city of Jaen to photograph and geo-reference all the street art and commissioned street art murals that were found. We marked the streets on a street map as we were walking down them by drawing a line. A

number was drawn on the map to show where a photograph was taken. This number found on the map was also noted down on a small cataloguing sheet with other information, such as the location (postcode + coordinates), real name or a name that would help us recognise it, artist, marks or other information worth noting, such as its state of conservation, amongst others. The idea was to take, at least: a general photo of the whole artwork, face-on and as centered as possible, or, if the street width didn't allow for it, a photo taken from the side; a more general photo of the whole facade; an even wider photo where the surrounding facades could be seen; a photo of the whole street. In other words, for every artwork at least four photographs should be taken, as well as some other photos of details such as the graffiti writing or other marks or conservation details. The idea was to record the context of the artwork as well as the artwork itself.

- Stage 3: completion of the cataloguing sheet and interviews with the artists. The cataloguing sheets will be explained in the following section. As for the interview, the means of contacting the artists was, above all, via social networks. The basic interview included questions to gather any biographical information that might be missing, specific questions about street art and, most importantly, it was essential to ask if they wanted their works to be preserved and, if they were to be intervened, who they would want to do so, as this is information that should be included in the cataloguing sheets. Finally, they were asked questions that could be of interest for further studies. In addition, they were shown the cataloguing sheet so that they could assess for themselves which sections they felt might be missing or if they felt that any of them were unnecessary.
- Stage 4: completion and dissemination of the artist information sheets.

The working method in Project B (Monterrey) followed similar stages:

- Stage 1: Developing this street art registry required prior research, such as a literature search or desk-based research.
- Stage 2: Exploratory research based on fieldwork, combined with techniques such as observation, interview, life history and focus groups, enabled the collection and examination of the data to be studied. The fieldwork involved the artworks, the artists and neighbours of this mural intervention, as well as event managers and organisers. The observation is presented as a means to discover the existing artworks in the city, the intervention space, the conditions of the artwork, the subject matter and the artist, as well as the date it was completed and the relationship of the work with the context in which it was found. The interview was also used to understand the evolution of the artist and to analyse their practices, discourses and production after their participation in CAL-LEGENERA, for which three main lines of questioning were created: a) the visual discourse, i.e. motivation, ideas, language and perception, b) its implementation in the space, which includes the material, technique used and the geographical, temporal and symbolic landscape in which their artworks originate, c) the structure, in which genre, participation (both individual and collective) and legal or illegal production are considered.
- Twenty-four emerging and mid-career street artists, two festival managers and organisers, and four neighbours who lived close to the intervened walls participated in the research process. The History of Life, or the so-called biographical method, was another tool used in this investigation that aimed at generating an autobiography by the interviewees about the subject. In this case, this tool was applied to three established street artists in order to reconstruct their personal and artistic experiences in relation to mural production, so as to understand the individual and collective dynamics of intervention and its impact, and thus achieving an in-depth analysis. In order to find out the opin-

ion of the street artists with respect to the registration form and its purpose, the idea of creating a Focus Group was considered because of the advantages that this tool provides, such as: it allows information about the proposal to be gathered in the same space with the aim of enriching and improving it, and it also helps to collect data on the views that the artists hold regarding the subject in question. In order to encourage dialogue, an infographic was designed in Canva, a simple text that creatively summarises the ideas of the registration form in a way that can be easily understood. The form was displayed as a poster, enabling a large scale view of the components and/or parts of it, and also contained blank spaces, in which the artists were able to contribute by adding comments and suggestions.

- Stage 3: Proactive research, as a registration form was hopefully going to be proposed as a result of the study. To do so, a search was carried out for existing registration forms in order to classify, understand and restore artworks classified as street art and graffiti. The complete search made it possible to identify the indicators needed to obtain, record and interpret the data, and to make decisions.
- Stage 4: Dissemination. This research process is not only aimed at designing a street art registration form, but also at finding a means of distributing it in such a way that the artists' works are displayed, and that 'individuals' can access it, and thus turning it into a tool to help understand street art. To meet this challenge, we turned to the use of a digital database. The dissemination of the digital registration form has two main aims: a) to promote the artists' work and b) to provide the public with tools to help understand and encourage dialogue about these urban expressions, while the analysis provides data to create routes by topic, year, artists and/or important events or happenings, as well as new lines of exploration. In this way, the registry and its display in the digital

database provide overall results of what is happening in the city in terms of what is produced by the street artists.

If we compare the two projects in terms of their objectives and methodology, we can see that as far as the former is concerned, they are quite similar. In other words, the aim is to find out about the real situation of a territory in terms of its artistic expressions of street art with the intention of obtaining knowledge that would give rise to other future actions, prioritising dissemination. However, the field of study is very different, in A the aim was to learn about the situation as a whole, while in case B the focus was on the production of the festival, as a case study, to then later focus on the production of street art and mural art in Monterrey and its metropolitan area. Given that Monterrey hosts an event as important as Callegenera, this makes practical and logical sense, as it would be unfeasible to apply the Spanish way of working to projects in a city of such dimensions in such a short time and with so few people. It would, however, be interesting to try and see how a study of such magnitude could be extrapolated to a larger city. As for the working methods, they are quite similar in terms of their working procedures, starting with a literature and newspaper article review that gives way to fieldwork, coming into direct contact with the artworks, developing the cataloguing tool and finally, dissemination. The biggest difference is the particular prominence given to the binomial artwork/artists. While the Spanish project has mainly focused on working with the artworks, placing importance on their state of conservation, urban context, etc., the Mexican project, from an academic point of view, has further included the artists and even neighbours in the work process. Although interviews were also conducted in the Jaen project, the approach falls short of the Monterrey project, which not only conducted interviews but also set up a discussion group. Moreover, for the Monterrey project, biographies of major artists were compiled, while for the Jaen project, very basic artist information sheets were drawn up and the interviews were more focused on aspects related to completing the sections of the sheet itself, in particular those related to the work process from a technical, rather than a stylistic or concep-

tual, perspective.

It is certainly clear that combining the two working methods would allow for a more comprehensive study, as it is evident that both projects place utmost importance on the context. Finally, it should be noted that from the outset, the Monterrey project has given much more importance to the extra-academic dissemination stage, whereas in Jaen it was considered to be something that should be carried out at the very end of the project period. Another aspect to bear in mind is that the Jaen registry strongly alludes to collecting data, with the artists' approval of course, for future wall restoration and/or conservation, while in Monterrey, wall restoration and conservation is not considered to be an element of priority as it is not yet regarded as forming part of the academic and cultural dynamics.

3.2 Cataloguing sheets

The cataloguing sheet used in Project A (Jaen) is based on the sheet drawn up by María Isabel Úbeda García, member of the GEIC Street Art and Commissioned Street Art Murals Group, and published in *Ge-Conservación* (Úbeda García, 2016). A long list of areas are covered in this sheet, based on criteria such as: technical and formal details, ownership, location, description; criteria based on artistic observation like iconography, aesthetic appraisal, style, context, etc; criteria based on conservation; criteria based on restoration; criteria based on external assessment; criteria based on personal assessment; and criteria based on the assessment taken from the opinion or information given by the artist in the interviews and/or the setting of the artwork. Specifically, the first section is dedicated to the fact sheet, which includes the title, the name it is known by, ownership, technique (material, support, preparation of the wall, documentation of the process, if any), date of production, legal status of the piece, location, dimensions and orientation. The sections were left open except for Materials, Support and Orientation, which were filled in using thesauruses. The pieces have been geolocated for location purposes. The artwork description has been included in the following section, which considers the typology (a section that was completed using thesauruses), a formal, iconographic and subject matter description, the style, the creative dimension and its relationship with the context, assessing above all whether or not it was site-specific. The next large section

corresponds to its conservation status, assessing the deterioration and damage present, whether the artist intends to preserve the wall, whether they prepared it for this purpose and if so, how, whether there were any interventions and whether a restoration plan was envisaged for any particularly significant cases. Finally, the bibliography and graphic documentation were included: dated photographs and in some cases, the photogrammetry used. The latter is interesting because it gives us a full scale, three-dimensional model of the artworks and their context, which is ideal for keeping a record of them in case they disappear, and also allows for an exhaustive study of deterioration and damage in case of intervention, as well as being useful for spreading information via the internet (Moral and Luque, 2019).

It is therefore a very heterogeneous fact sheet that could nevertheless be improved in some areas, in particular the assessment of the significance of the work and the relationship it shares with the surrounding community, hence the proposal put forward in Point 4 of the text.

The street art database of Monterrey and its metropolitan area is an organised collection of information concerning the image, including details regarding the work and the artist, and is stored digitally in the cloud and on a computer system. The purpose of the database is to record mural production via exploration and/or via the personalised use given to it by the artist or collective of artists in order to safeguard the artistic interventions and transformations that have taken place in the city by means of art.

This digital registry seeks to record, from an art perspective, this activity in the city, and to recognise the participation of its creators and the topics of interest covered. It also helps to visualise the artists' development, to recognise the supports, the spaces intervened and the relationship the artwork shares with the context, as well as its dissemination and analysis.

Several stages were considered for the registration form:

- Preliminary stage: The purpose of this first stage was to guide the registration process, taking the following questions into account : where, who, when and how the registration is completed.
- Action or registration stage: This second point, which is nothing more than setting the registry in motion, focuses on two fundamental aspects: the selection and registration of urban production. If

it is the artist who does this, then they will decide what image and information to record, and if it is someone else, i.e. a researcher, academic, scholar or cultural manager, then they will be in charge of deciding what to track and register. In this stage, the registration template is used for each of the artworks. The last part of the registration process includes questions for the artist in order to find out, from their point of view, what impact their artwork has on neighbours and passers-by.

- Dissemination stage: This stage is crucial, since the purpose of this registry is not only to collect information on the artworks and the artists, but also, as explained above, to make them known to the public. As such, it becomes a way to display this material, and is therefore of great importance.

Whilst there are currently many dissemination channels, it is important for all of this information to be concentrated in Big Data, as this allows it to be grouped in a single space and enables its dissemination and subsequent analysis, depending on the interest of the data operator.

One of the limitations of this registration process is concerned with the information: on the one hand, the data collected may not be correct, the file may be incomplete, or the images may not be of the required quality, and in the worst case, the interventions may not be registered, and moreover, given the complexity of the process, the registration template might not be used or distributed correctly. As it is an ambitious project, it is quite important to be able to understand its intended purpose and how to use it. It could easily fail if those involved, such as street artists, researchers, scholars or managers did not commit to using it.

That being said, the registration process has some clear advantages. The first and foremost is the ability to safeguard and put all the data and images related to the mural interventions on public display. This public database would, over time, help represent the mural production that has taken place in the city of Monterrey and its metropolitan area. In an interview (personal communication, June, 2021) the cultural journalist Isabel Villarreal states that Monterrey street artists and graffiti artists are very much interested in the dissemination and recognition of their work, an opinion

that was given after the first digital registration was made in Monterrey in 2009. Therefore, a publicly accessible digital database could be perceived as a joint effort to display the evolution and development of street art and commissioned street art murals, rather than individual isolated efforts made by artists or crews.

Significant differences can be observed when comparing the two proposals. On the one hand, the Spanish sheet highlights the importance of all the different aspects of the artwork, in particular the technical aspects and the artwork itself, while on the other hand, the Mexican sheet is more focused on the artists' work, and it is even the artists themselves who must fill it in. This gives them an advantage in the registry, as they would not have to search for academics or researchers to make new interventions. In addition, the first project's sheet is internal and intended for academic use, whereas the Monterrey project was always intended to be accessible to the public, and therefore uses very different IT tools. We believe that mixing the two would give rise to a much more comprehensive project whose impact would have a broader scope. As such, an improvement proposal has been set out in the following section.

3.3 Results

The results obtained in both projects point in two directions. On the one hand, to the advances made in terms of the design of a tested method and the street art cataloguing tool, which, especially after comparison, have allowed us to evaluate and improve it for future projects. And, on the other hand, to the results provided by the idiosyncrasies of each of town obtained thanks to their artwork and artists. In regards to this last point, Project A (Jaen) has made more than one hundred street art information sheets in the capital city, another hundred in Linares, plus a smaller number in Bailen, Ubeda and other towns. In addition, an analysis of the graffiti and advertising murals were carried out, and 2 dozen artist information sheets were made, most of whom were also interviewed. This enabled us to find out which neighbourhoods host the *walls of fame* in each town, which graffiti writers are more prevalent and how neighbourhoods are distributed, what commissioned street art mural programs have been run or are being run, in what state of

conservation the artworks are found, and has also allowed us to develop plans for the dissemination of artworks and artists. As for project B (Monterrey), eighty-nine murals made by local and international artists have been recorded, twenty-four of these walls have been erased. Mexican cultural figures, such as Pedro Infante or Cantinflas, appear on the walls that line the city's streets and in the Metrorrey System stations, as do images with a social context, or anime. The project comprises a directory of 112 street artists and graffiti artists and 15 crews (families) participating in the festival and the geolocations of all artworks, including those that have since disappeared, in order to ensure their digital safekeeping on the Omeca Net webpage, which is dedicated to the production of the Callegenera Urban Expressions Festival. In addition to a compilation of intervened walls in the "Generator Sheds in the Fundidora Park", the festival laboratory and those that were produced in public places, this registry includes the artist, background, artwork location, physical-spatial state of the artwork, title (if available), the artist's social networks, technical description of the mural and street artworks, and detailed photos of the procedure and of the finished wall. A socio-spatial and architectural study of the photos is also carried out, based on the registration and cataloguing process.

The differences in the results have to do with the projects' different objectives and working methods, but perhaps an interesting proposal would be to merge both their working and registration methods in order to give rise to a comprehensive and thorough study procedure. In this respect, we have proposed a working method which is detailed in the following stages. All stages are considered to be of equal importance, and each of them involve people with appropriate professional profiles (art historians, curators/restorers, architects, anthropologists, even lawyers). Thus, if the appropriate cataloguing tool were already in place, the objectives of a hypothetical future project applicable to other locations would be to study all of the aspects of street art. If the project were focused on a specific festival, a study of spontaneous street art and graffiti would also be carried out, as a way of better contextualising the situation at the festival within the town in question, and thus being able to understand its significance and the idiosyncrasy of the place itself. The method could be structured as follows:

- Stage 1. Literature review and collection of information and documentation, looking at academic publications and social networks, and especially newspaper articles.
- Stage 2. Fieldwork, taking photographs of the context of the artwork and artwork itself, detailing possible deterioration and damage in terms of the state of conservation, using photogrammetry where necessary, and writing down the coordinates.
- Stage 3. Working with the artists, carrying out life history interviews using the bibliographical method whilst also devoting an important part of the time to technical questions regarding their artwork.
- Stage 4. Uploading the artwork and artist biography files to an open consultation system, linking each file to a specific urban context, an era, catering for searches by artist, by stages, typology, etc.

As for the technical specifications of the artworks, a more specific section that better analyses the significance of the artworks could be added to the Spanish project, i.e. the artworks' connection with the urban, as well as historical and social context, as well as a connection with the biographical details of the artists, and therefore, completing the Spanish project with the sections that are more present in the Mexican project, which, in turn, also lacks technical, material and conservation studies.

4. Proposal for a study of significance across communities

It is no secret that street art lets people feel like they own a specific space, since a personal history is created and this in turn determines a feeling of ownership, to which each person gives their own meaning according to their needs and desires (Fonseca, 2014). This is why the Monterrey project is also working on creating research tools aimed at evaluating the impact this has, which could also be applied in any context with some minor modifications. These instruments are: observation checklists, interview questions, indications and management of focus groups, questionnaires, semiotic analysis of images and socio-spatial analysis. Whether this appropriation is appreciated as a socio-cultural phenomenon or not, is an important factor in order to understand the impact it has on mural artwork, the artist, the context

and the people who inhabit the area in which the artwork is found and the link that exists between them. As such, it would also be possible to better understand the influence street art has on the construction of the urban and individual identity of those who make up the community.

Possibly the biggest challenge we face is finding a way to incorporate into the fact sheets a way of capturing the significance of each artwork within the community that it belongs to. The main obstacle is how to collect this information. One way could certainly be via social media, when the artworks are uploaded by the artists or if they are produced as part of a festival. This would involve those working on the files to collect interactions in the form of 'likes' and comments on the main platforms, mainly Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Instagram in particular is a platform through which it is possible to analyse how graffiti and street art is produced and consumed, as it offers the artist and the viewer numerous possibilities, due to its ease of use and the possibility of interaction (MacDowall, 2019). However, although social networks are a good form of analysis, which are already sometimes used by researchers (Luque, 2019), they do create certain problems. To start with, this implies that you have to be paying attention to these social media platforms at a specific time, as posts are quickly forgotten when they are pushed aside by newer ones and then it is difficult to find them. It would also gather not only the opinion of those who live alongside the artwork in question, but also the opinions of many people who have only seen a photo of the artwork and who have had no contact with the context in which it is found, which means that their opinion may be far removed from that of the community and should perhaps be collected using other parameters. Moreover, social networks are by no means used to the same extent across different age groups, so we would only get a partial view. Finally, the speed at which other new social networks are appearing and rapidly catching on means that it is becoming increasingly difficult to compile this collection. For example, while Tik Tok does not seem to be particularly useful for artists to upload this kind of information, we might be able to see a certain boom with Twitch. Or, as in the case of the Mexican project, it is the street artists themselves who take on the responsibility of registration. Another possibility would be

to carry out surveys and, more importantly, interviews with these people. This would not be an easy task either, as the option of going door to door does not appear to be possible and it would mean having to go to neighbourhood associations, for example. Perhaps it would also be interesting to go to schools and training centres in order to widen the age range.

On the other hand, this study of significance is complemented in part by a study of the artwork itself and an interview with the artist, so as to find out whether what they have created is site-specific or if they have presented an artwork with no contextual relationship. It would also be necessary to find out whether it could be considered a work of relational art that sought to include the active participation of the community in some way, or at least whether the creator made an attempt to try and better understand the distinctive characteristics of the community they were going to influence with their artwork. In addition, it would be interesting to find a way to include information, in an objective manner, related to the historical, socio-political and economic situation the place finds itself in. Including all of this objectively in a short closed-section form is complex, but possible.

5. Conclusions

Undoubtedly, we can conclude that these two projects have advanced not only in terms of the knowledge of street art and commissioned street art murals in their respective regions, but also in terms of how to record such complex expressions. At the same time, some remaining shortcomings have been highlighted and possible solutions put forward, which, although they still need to be further developed, open the way at least for reflection and exploration. In conclusion, the work of cataloguing street art continues to present challenges that researchers will have to try to solve over the coming years, since, as we have already mentioned, a documentary record and study of the artworks is the basis for the preservation of the memory of an art that is, in its very essence, ephemeral.

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