
Beyond Artification: De/reconstructing conceptual frameworks and hierarchies of artistic and creative practices in urban public space

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to provoke more in-depth discussions on the dynamics and power structures underlying the conceptual frameworks of artistic and creative practices among practitioners, researchers, institutions, city officials, and urban planners in the face of growing city branding, social activism, privatization of public space, and a neoliberal art scene. It is based on ethnographic research undertaken since 2012 during extensive fieldwork, mainly in Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Seoul, and has benefitted from comparative perspectives across the regions.

I wish to shift emphasis from providing competing definitions to the more essential questions of what we gain – or lose – by the “artification” (Naukkarinen and Saito, 2012) of artistic and creative practices in urban public space. What kind of institutional and conceptual hierarchies do we de/reconstruct with our choices of definitions? Especially the official aestheticization of public space has often transformed previously subversive forms into tools of regeneration and gentrification. In addition, the common understanding of urban art as a commercial form of street art has become prominent in Euro-American discourse and city branding while artists and, for instance, public art are ever more involved in what Sharon Zukin (1995: 23) defined as the “aesthetic mode of producing space.” I posit that more nuanced research on the contingencies and impediments resulting from the growing pressures to conceptualize anything as “art” by the various stakeholders involved in artistic and creative practices is needed for better understanding current societal and cultural changes in cities, the arts, and creativity.

Keywords:

artification, de/reconstruction of conceptual frameworks, hierarchies, urban art, artistic and creative practices

1. Introduction

Cities are filled with artistic and creative practices that de/reconstruct urban public space through varied strategies of, among others, guerrilla gardening, flash mobs, urban furniture, street art, contemporary graffiti¹, urban knitting, and creative activism. Although aesthetic concerns are essential for the majority of these practices, for many the primary aim is to enhance civic participation, sharing, and belonging. The organically emerging manifestations around the globe have gained academic attention as new forms of do-it-yourself urbanism (Iveson, 2013; Talen, 2015), guerrilla urbanism (Hou, 2010), everyday urbanism (Chase et al., 1999), urban interventions (Pinder, 2008) along with more artistically inclined interpretations as art activism (see e.g. Felshin, 1995; Thompson, 2015). Despite the differences in

1 - As I have clarified elsewhere (Valjakka, 2015a; Valjakka 2015b), the concepts used in Anglo-American research are not fully applicable to artistic and creative practices in Asia because of the local perceptions and adaptations. In order to make a differentiation from the indigenous forms of writing in urban public space, with “contemporary graffiti,” I denote the transcultural forms inspired by American and European graffiti that started to emerge in East Asia mainly in the 1990s.

the conceptual framework employed, what the previous studies (in)consciously share is the emphasis on more socially just future and liveable urban fabric resonating with Henri Lefebvre's (1996: 147-159) often reiterated "right to the city," even though the question of what kinds of right are at stake is not thoroughly addressed (Attoh, 2011). The questions of *who* can interact with the urban public space and *how* are especially relevant amid of privatisation of public space and gentrification.

Many of the artistic and creative practices in urban public space resonate with David Harvey's (2012: 115-154) call for "reclaiming the city for anti-capitalist struggle." Because of geopolitical circumstances, growing social inequity, and intricate interrelations between the local and global art scene, the issues addressed by these practices are not, however, limited to anti-capitalism today. In the shadow of the ever growing instrumentalization of arts and culture for city branding, privatization of public space, and intricate power structures in neoliberal art market, the dynamics and power relations underlying the conceptual frameworks employed are far more complex than previously acknowledged. Furthermore, as Alana Jelinek (2013: 4-5) suggests, most of contemporary practices, including street art and graffiti, have become clichés of resistance that actually maintain rather than challenge neoliberal structures. Hence, I posit that the intricate questions of artistic, aesthetic, cultural, commercial, and social values involved in creation, participation, and evaluation of practices and, more importantly, reflected in the academic discourses are essential for in-depth analysis despite the fact that their continually changing qualities seem to escape permanent definitions.

More research is needed for analyzing the factors that are transforming perceptions and, furthermore, the kind of contingencies and impediments that result from growing pressures to conceptualize anything and everything as "art" by the various stakeholders involved in artistic and creative practices in urban public space. Through nuanced transdisciplinary studies, and better understanding of current societal and cultural changes in the cities, a more critical analysis of the value and power structures reshaping the role of arts and creativity can be gained. One possible way to approach these issues is through the conceptual lens of artification that "refers to situations and processes in which something that is not regarded as art in the traditional sense of the word is changed into something art-like or into something that takes influences from artistic ways of thinking and practicing" (Naukkarinen and Saito, 2012). Although not directly addressed using this specific concept, artification of graffiti and/or street art is one of the core processes underlying the current debates both in academic and public discourses. This is indicated by a more commonly accepted concept of urban art in the Euro-American context. Since the varied manifestations of artistic and creative practices emerged in urban public spaces both in European and North American cities in the 1960s, the mediation processes between urban public space and the "white cubes" of the art world has launched heated discussion on the role, status, evaluation, and definitions of the practices. As Roberta Shapiro and Nathalie Heinich (2012) maintain, the understanding of this dynamic process of social change requires the close examination of symbolic, material and contextual levels simultaneously. To reveal the dynamics of the artification process itself, Shapiro and Heinich suggest "ten constituent processes: displacement, renaming, recategorization, institutional and organizational change, patronage, legal consolidation, redefinition of time, individualization of labor, dissemination, and intellectualization."

What then constitutes the artification of artistic and creative practices in urban public space today and renders them as urban art? What kind of strategies, power struggles and dynamics are in play both on the public level and behind the scenes? More importantly, what can be gained – or lost – by the artification of artistic and creative practices in urban public space? What kind of institutional and conceptual hierarchies do we de/reconstruct with our choices

of conceptual and theoretical frameworks; and what kind of values are implied through the chosen definitions and identities? It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a detailed (art) historical analysis of the transformations or a holistic overview of artification processes across borders. Rather, my aim is to elucidate the major internationally shared trends and the most visible symbolic, material, and contextual features of artification in urban public space. The framework is based on an extensive ethnographic research since 2012 in various cities in East Asia, and on a comparative perspective built through and in dialogue with scenes in Europe, Canada, the U.S., and South Africa. Hence, my wish is to bring forward the importance of comparative and transdisciplinary analyses of artification processes around the globe and how they impact to our academic research.

2. Multiple perceptions, intentions, and use of “urban art”

The understanding of the *varied* prevailing perceptions of urban art – as well as its forms of agencies and intentions – provide a beneficial starting point for the deeper analysis of the dynamics between different disciplines, value structures, and contextual artification in both public and academic discourse. The main tendencies can be categorized in five broad rubrics which are not exclusive but often overlapping: 1) the mediation and re-imagination of a city and/or urban; 2) (un)authorized interventions and/or art in urban public space; 3) promotion of art forms deriving from the practices of street art and graffiti; 4) bridging the dichotomy between street art and graffiti; 5) employing art for branding and social well-being.

The first trend is evident among scholars from varied disciplines who examine how the city or the urban is mediated and reimagined in different forms of arts including literature, film, contemporary art, and photography. Edward Soja (2000) interprets the Neolithic wall painting from Çatalhöyük, the world’s first known artistically rendered image of a cityscape dating back to roughly 6150 BC as urban art. For Soja, this mural depicting an erupting volcano and around eighty household compounds is an artistic breakthrough of imaging the city. As the “original example of a distinctively and self-consciously panoramic *urban* art form” he maintains, it “expresses a popular awareness of the spatial specificity of urbanism” (Soja 2000: 40). The definition of this settlement as a city or a proto-city is still debated among scholars, but Soja regards such reservations as a primary example of Eurocentric perceptions. He recognizes the importance of the erupting volcano and the possibility of the meaning of the image lying more in the relationship of the volcano and the city, than on the depiction of the city itself. What he fails to take into account, however, are the contested interpretations of the mural as the oldest known map, a representation of a settlement, which has recently been proved (Schmitt et al., 2014; Clarke, 2013). In addition, it is made on three interior (not exterior) walls of a house. The question remains whether we could consider this as the first example of urban art when it is a realistic representation of the settlement placed inside a building rather than on shared outer space?

Insignificance of physical site to the definition of urban art is especially visible in cultural studies, where research on urban imaginations and representations is well established and the use of urban art simulates the use of urban literature, meaning that the focus is on the depictions of the city, its people, and narratives. In her recent study, Robin Visser (2010) examines the post-socialist aesthetic circumstances in Chinese cities through urban literature and urban art. Unfortunately, she does not provide a definition for urban art but employs it for contemporary art works that examine the varied issues of urbanization in China, both the city as the subject and the subject in the city. While some of the art works are interventions in urban public space, some are oil paintings, installations or sculptures about the new subjectivities in the cities aimed to be displayed in art institutions. In these discourses on (re)imagining the urban, the defining criterion for urban art clearly relates more closely to the *content* of the art work and its recognition as an art form, but is not limited to the city itself or restricted to emerge as interventions in public space.

The second tendency is most represented by scholars from art studies and urban studies with the focus on the interfaces of urban public space and artistic and creative practices. For them the ontological classification based on the position of the art work in urban public space versus private interior space is far more common than the content criteria. The emphasis on (un)authorized interventions and/or art in urban public space versus works displayed inside art institutions is indeed one of the dividing questions in the understanding of urban art today. However, the growing demand of *art* in urban public space along with the privatization of public space are reshaping the urban fabric and art scene not only in cities in East Asia but across borders, bringing challenges to this approach. While museums, galleries, and other art institutions are exclusive to some extent, the majority of them aim to enhance their accessibility and publicness with growing emphasis on art projects reaching out from their material premises to urban public space in forms of events, performances and murals. In addition, urban art and street art museums add their own characteristics to the equation enhancing the presence of art in urban space. The most often voiced question is: Is it urban art regardless of whether it is commissioned or not?

This perception closely intertwines but also questions the third tendency, namely the use of urban art for emphasizing the artistic value and status of various practices based on or borrowing from graffiti and street art by art institutions that wish to legitimize exhibiting and presenting the art forms in question on their premises. Similar to galleries and museums, some established auction houses, like Bonhams since 2008², promote urban art as a groundbreaking art movement. In these cases, the key denominator is the emphasis on aesthetic and material resemblance with the artistic forms emerging in urban public space, although the forms are restricted to those easily sold for private or semi-public spaces.

The fourth rubric is visible among the creators themselves who aim to overcome the dichotomy between graffiti and street art. At the same time, they both challenge and gain the acceptance of a larger audience. For instance, the Seoul Urban Art Project in 2012-2013, was a contemporary art collective that included both local and transnational artists working under the “open gallery” concept to provide alternative sites and ways of interaction in the city. According to Junkhouse, the paragon of the project, the main goal was to show “real art on real street” instead of “public art that fits the taste of the masses.” The attention was given “to diversity and a daring experimental spirit.”³ Despite the inspiring rendering and inventive experiments in abandoned buildings, the aims of the project did not fully succeed because of restrictions by city officials for safety reasons (e.g. lack of audience access to see the art works in person). In the end, the project needed to rely partially on representations through video and photographs displayed in other sites, such as alternative art spaces, resulting in unplanned artification itself.

Finally, as Sharon Zukin (1995: 23) has elaborated, although artists have become more aware and active of their role as artists and participants in political activism, they are also often collaborating with urban redevelopments as “beneficiaries, both developers of an aesthetic mode of producing space (in public art, for example) and investors in a symbolic economy.” The same applies not only to artists but also practitioners from varied backgrounds in East Asia today. Coevolving tendencies bring forward unseen contingencies: while the art markets are promoting the commercial value of urban art, and various private, commercial, and non-governmental stakeholders are reaching

2 - For more information, see Bonhams's website, http://www.bonhams.com/departments/PIC-URB/#/ag1=past&MR1_main_index_key=sale&m1=1, accessed 15 January 2017.

3 - Junkhouse, a local painter and street artist, interview with the author, 7 June 2015, Seoul.

out to public space through art, city officials and urban planners across the world use the instrumental value of any kind of art for tourism and city branding. The growing official interest provides fertile ground for urban art festivals and projects to bloom across national borders with mixed agencies and aims.

In parallel and with official initiatives, also artists and residents can launch large-scale regeneration projects in order to preserve and brand their neighborhoods. One of the recent key examples from East Asia is the Gamcheon cultural village in Busan, South Korea, which has become a highly popular touristic site because of its artistically rendered public spaces. In 2009, the residents participated in the Village Art Project Competition, sponsored by the Korea Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, and received 100 million Korean won (about US\$ 95,000) for the project (Hong and Lee, 2015). Regardless of how these kinds of projects label themselves — whether they are organically initiated or government-led projects and what concept they use — they are often more focused on the aestheticization of the space and artification of all sorts of practices, including but not limited to everyday practices such as cooking together or pot planting outside of one's house. Hence, they more likely add to the cultural, symbolic and/or commercial capital of the neighborhood or city in question.

3. Prevailing hierarchies and their interrelation to power structures

Besides the varied use of the concept urban art in different disciplines and practices, the growing need to promote artistic and creative practices in urban public space by various stakeholders for regeneration, branding, cultural capital, and social well-being brings challenges and contingencies to practitioners, artists and scholars alike. While harnessing art and creativity for various purposes enhances the processes of artification, it inevitably also blurs the line between support and exploitation. Organically or privately initiated projects, such as an annual street art festival in Hong Kong organized by HK Walls, a non-profit arts organization⁴, can get the attention of the local tourist board, which then advertises the event in order to create a more alluring city image for younger generations of tourists in Asia. Publicity can bring new audiences to the event but also cause misunderstandings and unjustified accusations of the commercial intentions of the organizers. Indeed, occasionally, city officials, private entrepreneurs and developers employ artistic and creative practices as they see fit to their own agendas, regardless of the creators' own wishes. Art has the ability to catch public attention in today's image dominated world and, consequently, to enhance the notion of a vitality of a place or a neighborhood. Because of the commonly perceived positive impact of art to community, it more easily wins support from different stakeholders. The artification processes of renaming, institutional and organizational transformations, and growing patronage of artistic and creative practices in urban public space in East Asia are both the result and cause of social and cultural reconstruction of the urban fabric today.

Concurrently, this official and government-led artification of artistic and creative practices in urban public space creates pressure for other stakeholders, such as practitioners, artists, NGOs, NPOs, and art institutions to come up with socially engaged art projects to be funded by the local governments, transnational corporations and/or other legitimate institutions. On the one hand, aesthetics and arts may risk to be reduced into a mere instrumental role resulting into what Raminder Kaur and Parul Dave-Mukherji (2015: 15) regard as NGO-ization of art practice. On the other hand, growing support for art projects engaging with communities and social groups provide new opportunities for financial support: conceptual framing of, for instance, a social neighborhood experiment as art in a funding application improves the possibilities of acceptance and is a valid choice for aiming to maintain the practice in question. Artification of artistic and creative practices in urban public space is, indeed, a double-edged sword.

4 - For more information on HK Walls, see its website, <http://hkwalls.org/about/>, accessed 8 June 2017.



Fig. 1 - Prevailing hierarchies in conceptual frameworks and subjectivities. Copyright Minna Valjakka.

It enables novel sites, agencies, and aesthetics to be appreciated by larger audiences and adds to accessibility. At the same time, commissioned works might have limitations to the aesthetical, artistic, and ideological aims of the practitioners themselves.

The reframing and renaming strategies of artistic and creative practices in urban public space and their (un)conscious implications deserve more (academic) attention. The involvement of various agencies and their position in de/reconstructing the power structures, hierarchies and value constructions (e.g. on commercial, social, symbolic, cultural, and artistic values) need to be taken into account. The intricate value questions underlie any commissions, events, collaborations, and interventions causing heated debates, unequal treatment and even unreasonable accusations. One possible method to examine the ongoing power negotiations and what kind of impact artification actually has on practitioners and researchers is to question the prevailing and dominating hierarchies in both practices and practitioners' professional status (Fig 1).

The linear and reductive understanding of so-called evolution from graffiti to the realm of fine art or contemporary art echoes in the subjectivities and professional roles taken by the practitioners themselves. Both the need to be accepted by the global art world and, possibly, benefit from the exposure and financial profit, encourages the practitioners to follow the path both in self-definitions and practices that might make them globally recognized, as has happened, for instance to Portuguese Alexandre Farto (a.k.a. Vhils), French Julian Mallard (a.k.a. Seth) and South African Faith47. The pattern of hierarchic progress is especially visible among practitioners deriving from the streets but aiming to reach the acceptance of the art world: while reaching for recognition as artists they tend to replace the concepts of urban art, street art, and graffiti with interventions, site-specific art, and public art. From the perspective of art galleries and curators, such a change can also be a highly positive factor enabling a new position in the art world.

These kinds of conceptual hierarchies aim for artification of the practices in urban public space — and even bringing them into the “white cubes” — and are especially visible among the art institutions and, to some extent, in NPOs and NGOs competing for public funding. The question remains: Does this conceptual framework have an impact on academic discourses, too? What kind of intellectualization processes it might provoke? Do scholars, especially

in art studies, employ artification to research projects in order to be academically more accepted, appreciated, and supported?

These linear patterns require more nuanced de-/reconstruction through examining varied agencies from different backgrounds with contradictory intentions. It is essential to acknowledge that the value structures *are not universal*, and vary greatly from one individual to another and are continuously changing. As is well known, the prevalent sentiment shared by many pioneers from the streets, especially those from the old-school graffiti and street art in Euro-American contexts, is that street credibility through unauthorized practices serves as the cornerstone for the other phases in a possible career and as a legitimization of the financial profiting of one's work as art (Fig 2). For many practitioners today, the artistic and aesthetic aims are nonetheless more important than making a statement through, for instance, writing one's name, and the internationally growing public appreciation for art on the streets has shifted for valuating street art, encouraging more people to create it. Hence, the professional roles and subjectivities today have become ever more complex: while for some identification as a graffiti writer is still the core of subjectivity, many prefer alternative roles, even transcending those related to arts and/or creativity *per se* and without clear hierarchic relations (Fig 2).

In addition, in East Asia the genealogies, conceptual frameworks and the evaluation criteria of artistic and creative practices in urban public space do not follow the same logical structures as in Euro-American contexts. For instance, in Japan the strong social norms of proper behavior and the emphasis on aesthetically harmonious urban public space, especially in certain neighborhoods in Tokyo, evoke strong public reaction against contemporary graffiti. Meanwhile, certain forms of commissioned "street art," such as murals, are gradually gaining (limited) acceptance. The discrepancies of the appreciations of artistic and creative practices in different cultural contexts create other forms of pressure for artification of both the practices and professional roles: practitioners aiming for recognition as street artists or artists may find it necessary to conceal their possible background as graffiti writers.

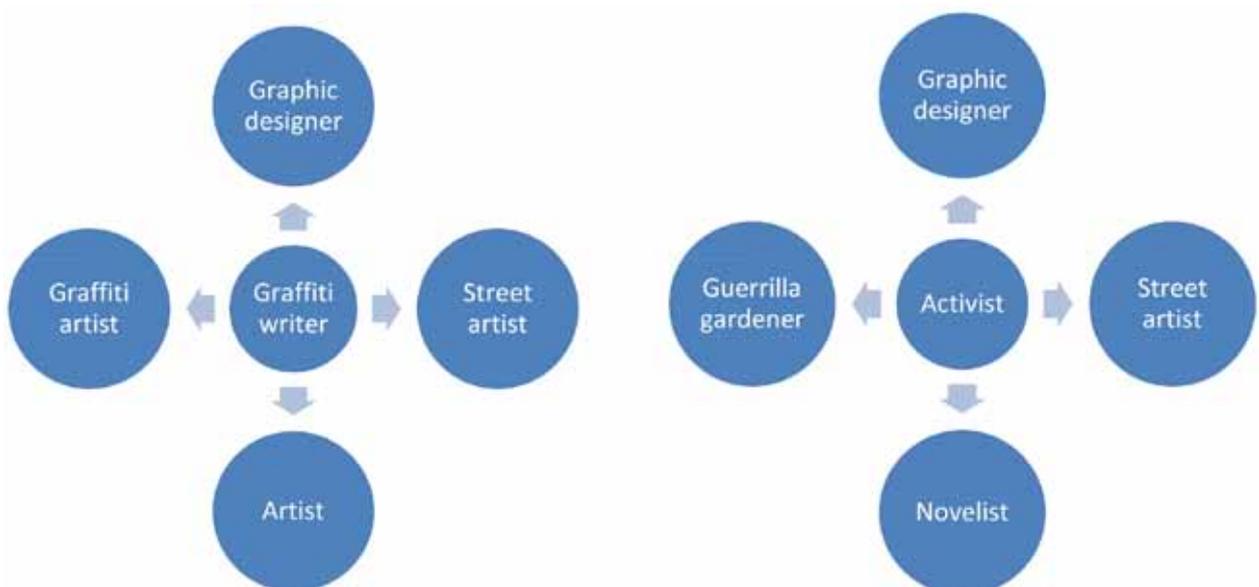


Fig. 2 - One possible example of an alternative understanding in conceptual frameworks and subjectivities. Copyright Minna Valjakka.

Art historical perspective can provide another angle for questioning the need of artification. Since the 1960s, especially avant-garde and experimental artists, such as those involved in the Situationist International, Fluxus, and Japanese Gutai group, among others, aimed for criticizing capitalism, social inequity, and problems caused by urbanization. They have been keen to eschew art world values and reference points by creating radical interventions and participatory projects in urban public space. The questioning of the dichotomy between life and art has been one of the core values among these artists promoted conceptually, for instance, by German artist Joseph Beuys (1974: 48) with his insights on social sculpture aiming to enhance new aesthetic and social consciousness to build “a social organism as a work of art.” His broader conceptual take on art did not only aim to erase the dichotomy between art and life but furthermore as to transform art practices to include conversation, collaborations, and shaping the actual world (Beuys, 2004: 9). This tendency has only grown and expanded in terms of new public art practices, especially since the 1990s, in Euro-American art scene, which has brought about novel perceptions and value constructions (see e.g. Lacy, 1996). Following art historian Grant H. Kester’s insights, collaborative art practices have an emphasis on exchange and partnership instead of the artist’s authorship and aesthetic autonomy. A more nuanced study of these art practices, as Kester (2011: 89) rightfully emphasizes, “can reveal a more complex model of social change and identity, one in which the binary oppositions of divided vs. coherent subjectivity, desiring singularity vs. totalizing collective, liberating distancing vs. stultifying interdependence, are challenged and complicated.”

More recently, the conceptual frameworks and values involved have become even more complex and instead of expanding the notion of art to everyday life, there are tendencies to transcend art and the artification processes: instead of labeling their works as urban art or public art, many artists prefer concepts such as interventions, projects, events, and even social studies. This novel process could even be understood as non-artification of art practices and their professional identities: the aim to promote conceptual frameworks, subjectivities, professional roles, and practices beyond art, meaning that they are not merely dependent on the artistic or aesthetic values (Fig. 3).

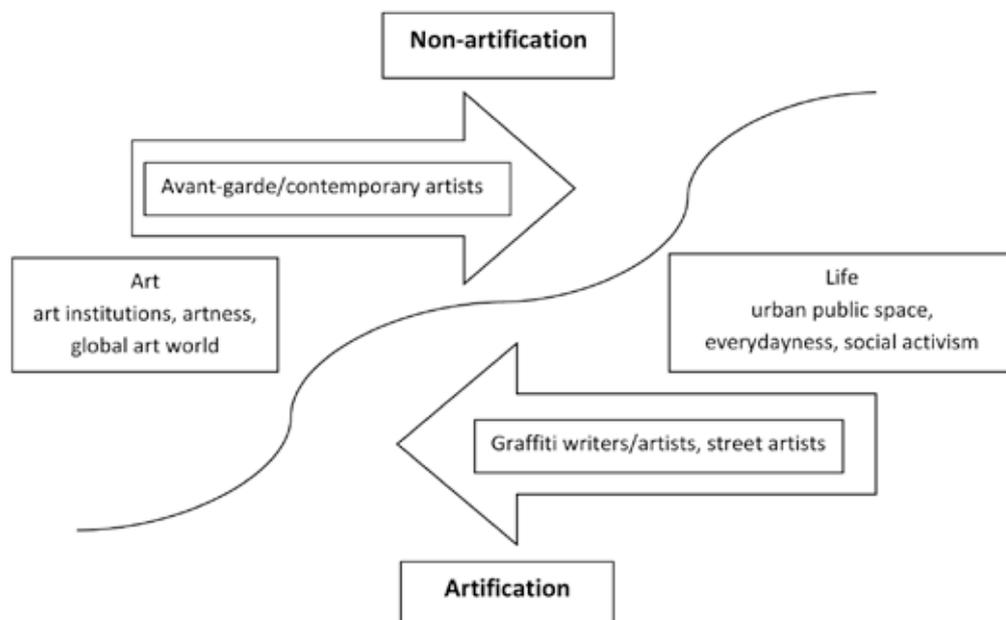


Fig. 3 - The contesting trends of artification and non-artification in practices, values, and discourses. Copyright Minna Valjakka.

To be reductive but rhetorical, a kind of two-way inversion in practices, discourses, values, intentions, and processes has emerged: a movement toward the acceptance by the art institutions foregrounds the practices on the streets. But a movement toward everyday life and employment of urban public space underpins the aims of some of the contemporary artists. These two simultaneous yet contradictory tendencies set an intriguing challenge for our research. How can we do justice to the continuously changing, myriad manifestations, agencies, forms, aesthetics, and intentions across the borders and without forgetting the urbanites who also are actively engaged with urban public space outside of these art discourses?

4. Conclusions: toward more multivalued appreciation

The recent social and political turmoil in cities in East Asia reveal how the authorized city making policies does not always fulfill the everyday needs of urbanites. From this dissatisfaction, the urge for urbanites to develop new artistic and creative practices arises: to facilitate social changes with or *without* the help of established artists. The artistic and creative practices in urban public space today are not limited to art projects initiated and led by professional artists, even though using art and creativity for branding along with NGO-ization of art practices is popular. The multiplication of agencies taking part in reshaping the urban public space to include citizens, activists, designers, educators, professors and/or varied institutions is ever more visible across the globe. Many of them involved in artistic and creative practices in urban public space emphasize process instead of the physical outcome and highlight subjects rather than objects.

Furthermore, either traditional or new forms of artistic and creative practices in cities in East Asia do not always fall under the Western notion of "contemporary art." The forms of creative engagement with the urban public space, such as street furniture, urban knitting, and urban gardening, aim to improve the urban fabric for and by urbanites who do not usually consider themselves as artists or their input as art. We could accept the proposition that everything is art and everyone is an artist, voiced, for instance, by often quoted Joseph Beuys. But what would we actually gain with the aim of the artification of everyday practices? Some of them might be then "accepted" as art and remediated, for example, in digital forms in order to be displayed in art institutions. This kind of institutionalization might benefit their evaluation in terms of collectability, monetary value and/or preservation practices. The physical distancing would, however, separate them from the shared space they aim to build in the city itself and change the ideological framing, too. Moreover, posing value constructions from art world could contradict the perceptions of the urbanites themselves. The major risk of mislabelling includes the probability of transforming the value of the manifestations from social to cultural and even to artistic capital benefitting other institutions more than the people who created them in the first place.

Varied forms of artistic and creative practices are especially visible during social movements. The approaches based on urban art, street art, public art or protest art are beneficial but they fail to grasp the diversity present in protest sites in terms of infrastructure, mediation, and agencies. Average urbanites, without previous experience or training in arts, are joining contemporary artists, art activists, street artists, and graffiti writers to make their concerns heard in relation to local, regional, and global issues, such as social discrepancy, environmental issues, and urban development — by creative actions building up re-imaginings for the future.

As an example, in Hong Kong an unseen wave of creativity by urbanites swept across the city to support the Umbrella Movement in the autumn 2014. Many artists contributed through workshops, lectures, and interventions too, but most of them strongly emphasized the anonymity of their input. They promoted the social rather than artistic values of their

works — even by letting the works to be destroyed rather than preserved when the space was cleared by officials. One of the primary examples of non-art intervention was the Lennon Wall Hong Kong, initiated and maintained by a group of local social workers and students, none of claiming the status of an artist. Uncountable number of varied contributions were made by tourists, urbanites, activists, and artists, but majority of them were post-it notes (Fig. 4). Although participation and aesthetics were essential also to the Lennon Wall, it does not fully correspond with current understandings of collaborative art because it was not an art project organized and lead by professional artists. What value would it add to this ephemeral project to artify it, and for instance, to display it in an art museum?

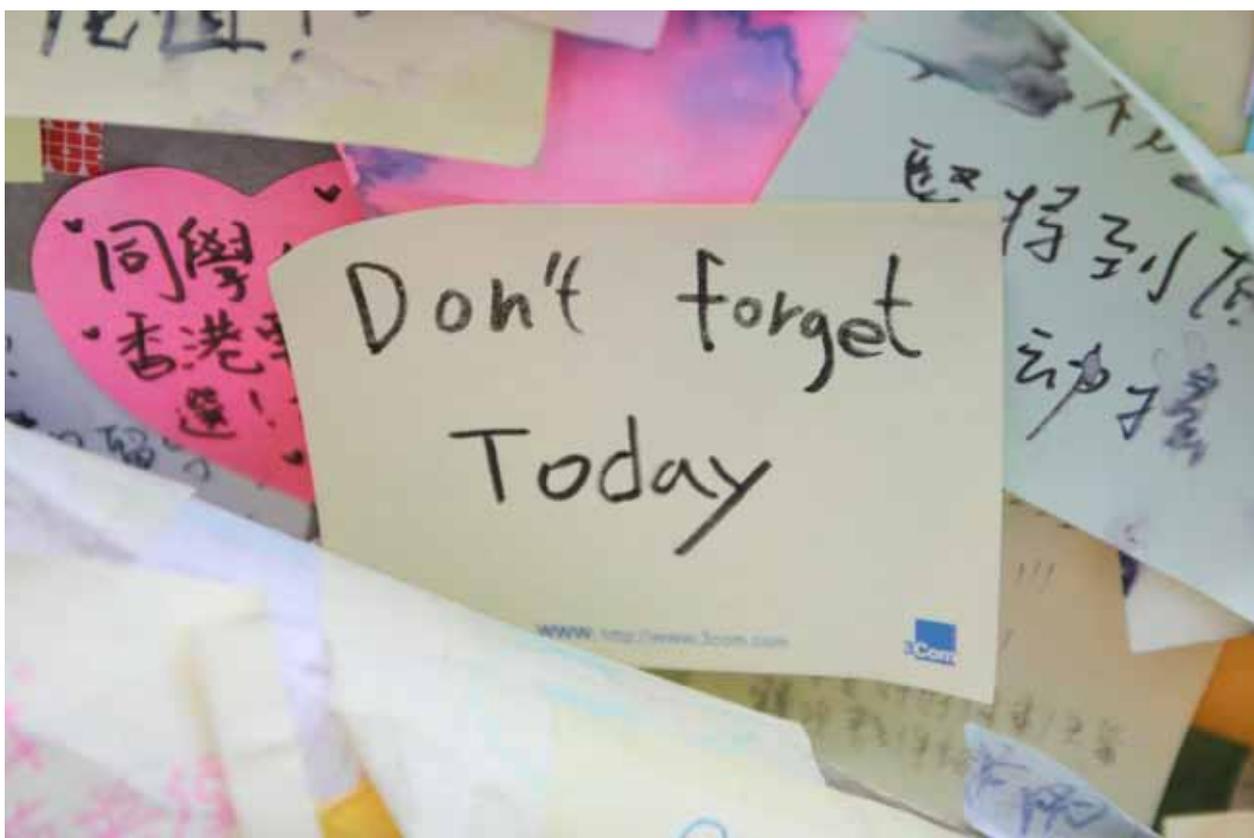


Fig. 4 - One note on Lennon Wall, Admiralty, Hong Kong, November 2014. Photo: Minna Valjakka.

I posit that critical analysis of more versatile practices than those falling under the current notion of 'urban art' is needed in order to transcend the binaries in perceptions as Kester suggests. More detailed understanding of the shifting agencies, conceptual frameworks, power relations, and artification processes will reveal more intricate interrelations of societal changes, art, and creativity. Artification of artistic and creative practices in urban public space does not necessarily add cultural, aesthetic, commercial, social or artistic value to the practices or practitioners themselves. On the contrary, artification may even cause unexpected and unwanted outcomes in terms of misinterpretations and even exploitation of the practices in the benefit of other institutions or official programs.

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