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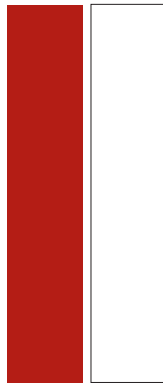
PLANEAMENTO E PROJECTO URBANO

Talking Walls: Exploring Graffiti as “Artivism” in Public Spaces

Mariza de Alencar e Paiva

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2020



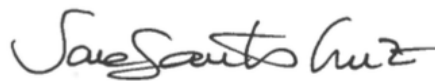
TALKING WALLS

Exploring Graffiti as “Artivism” in Public Spaces

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Dissertation submitted for partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTERS IN SPATIAL PLANNING AND URBAN PROJECT



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To the streets.

Aufgabe von Kunst heute ist es, Chaos in die Ordnung zu bringen.

(The task of art today is to bring chaos into order.)

Theodore Adorno

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RESUMO

Esta dissertação pretende discutir a relação entre o graffiti enquanto expressão da arte urbana e a apropriação dos espaços públicos, explorando as narrativas urbanas implícitas nessa forma de arte urbana. Além disso, relaciona as tipologias do graffiti com o conteúdo das mensagens enviadas aos usuários do espaço público, como uma tentativa de entender a influência que essas expressões podem ter em questões como a ocupação, transformação e contestação de determinadas áreas do tecido urbano. Para tanto, analisa a produção de material visual e textual gerado em situações subculturais, comissionadas e institucionais, com o objetivo de investigar o papel do graffiti e da arte urbana como mediadores de uma voz coletiva mais ampla. Explora também o conteúdo das narrativas e estuda a relação entre o local e os temas, considerando a volatilidade que permeia este assunto.

A primeira parte deste trabalho consistiu na construção da fundamentação teórica, através de revisão bibliográfica. O capítulo inicial dispõe os conceitos relevantes relacionados à temática, um breve apanhado histórico e as tipologias de graffiti a serem analisadas em capítulos posteriores, e finaliza por ressaltar a contradição inerente à percepção coletiva do graffiti – que têm oscilado constantemente entre aclamado, aceitável e rejeitado. Na sequência são abordadas as narrativas, são discutidos os conteúdos e a sua ligação com uma contestação a nível de coletividade. Este mesmo capítulo inclui ainda a questão da importação e exportação de temáticas e narrativas, abrangendo o posicionamento político implícito nas mensagens. A definição das tipologias e classificação das narrativas foi especialmente importante por servir de base para a investigação da relação entre conteúdo e localização, e de como o graffiti pode ser utilizado como ferramenta de contestação e ativismo no contexto urbano atual. Em seguida, e para finalizar a parte teórica, foi feita uma exploração sobre a possível conexão entre o conteúdo das mensagens e a localização onde os graffitis são inseridos, tanto mundialmente como dentro de cada ambiente urbano em si.

Subsequentemente, é feita a introdução da metodologia utilizada para a pesquisa, seguida do estudo comparativo de casos envolvendo cidades no Brasil e em Portugal, seguido da avaliação dos dados coletados através das entrevistas feitas com *graffiters* e artistas de rua.

Foi possível observar a existência de uma estreita relação entre a arte de rua – especialmente o graffiti em todas as suas categorias de produção – e a reivindicação de espaços públicos e questões públicas por meio do 'ativismo' (arte + ativismo). Isso tem sido notado em muitas cidades do mundo, incluindo brasileiras e portuguesas, o que revela um fenômeno atual e crescente, capaz de ultrapassar fronteiras territoriais, que ocorre paralelamente em vários lugares do mundo. Este fenômeno evidencia um padrão de contestação e apropriação dos espaços públicos mediados por expressões artísticas nas cidades contemporâneas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Graffiti, Narrativas Urbanas, Expressão Coletiva, Contradição, “Artivismo”.

ABSTRACT

This paper intends to discuss the relationship between graffiti as an urban art expression and the appropriation of public spaces, exploring implicit urban narratives in this kind of art from the streets. Moreover, it relates the graffiti typologies with the content of the messages sent to the viewers/users of the public space, as an attempt to understand the influence that these expressions can have in issues such as appropriation, transformation and the contesting of certain areas of the urban tissue. Therefore, it analyses the production of both visual and textual material produced in subcultural, privately commissioned and institutional situations, aiming to investigate the role of graffiti and street art as mediators of a broader collective voice. This research also explores the content of the narratives and studies the relationship between the places and the themes, while aware of the volatility surrounding this subject.

The first part of this work consists on the construction of the theoretical backup, achieved through bibliographic review. The opening chapter sets out the relevant concepts related to the theme, a brief historical overview and the types of graffiti to be analysed in later chapters and ends by highlighting the contradiction inherent in the collective perception of graffiti – which has oscillated constantly between acceptable and rejected. Following, the narratives are discussed, along with their contents and their possible connection to collective claims. This same chapter also includes the importing and exporting of themes and narratives, examining the political statements that permeate these messages. It is important to emphasize at this point that the definition of the typologies and the classification of the narratives was fundamental because it served as basis for investigating the relationship between content and location, and how graffiti can be used as a tool for contesting and for activism in the current urban context. Then, and to conclude the theoretical part, the possible connection between content and the location is examined, both worldwide and within the urban environment itself.

Subsequently, a section related to the investigation is introduced, and the methodology used for the research is established, followed by the comparative study of cases involving cities in Brazil and in Portugal, followed by the evaluation of the data collected through interviews with street artists.

It was possible to observe the existence of a close relationship between street art – especially graffiti in all its output categories – and the claiming of public spaces and public issues through ‘artivism’ (art + activism). That has been noticeable in many cities worldwide, including Brazilian and Portuguese ones. This reveals a current and growing phenomenon, capable of surpassing territorial frontiers, that is paralleling happening in several places around the globe, evidencing a pattern of contestation and appropriation of the public spaces mediated by artistic expressions inside contemporary cities.

KEYWORDS: Graffiti, Urban Narratives, Collective Expression, Contradiction, “Artivism”.

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SYMBOLS, ACRONYMS, AND ABBREVIATIONS

CCP – Clean Car Program

CUFA – Central Única das Favelas

GAU – Galeria de Arte Urbana

IACIS – Instituto Ambiente Cultural e Inclusão Social

MAAU-SP – Museu Aberto de Arte Urbana de São Paulo

PUTRICA – Propostas Urbanas Temporárias de Reabilitação e Intervenção Cultural e Artística

WAD – We Are Destinations

1

INTRODUCTION

Times are changing. Contemporaneity usually forces a disruption with tradition, and the shift can be felt in many different spheres: relationships, work, education, technology, culture. And space. The way people approach, experience and relate to places is transitioning. In that scenario, the urban setting has become more participative over the years. Both the population and the public power realize the importance of active engagement and participation.

Meanwhile, street art has become a perennial feature of life in the contemporary city and an emotionally charged public order issue, faced as a challenge to urban relations, as the transgressive act of property crime and a subversive non-traditional claim to the rights of the city. Graffiti is a phenomenon that extrapolates national frontiers and is nowadays being produced by an increasing number of plural subculture¹ creative clusters with more acknowledgment and acceptance than it ever had before. This unique form of artistic expression has been making its way from vandalism to art and is gaining further ground as it becomes a frequent presence in contemporary life, being featured in various ways by a growing number of urban actors – including private agents and public institutions – with an outstanding commonness.

The relationships between social and spatial are fluid, as one directly influences and helps construct the other, as the Lefebvrian insight stipulated years ago (Kerr, 1992). These mutating intertwined aspects impact urban character and place identity, amongst other spatial characteristics, as the collective and individual meanings are developed and internalized.

As Tunnacliffe (2016) said, graffiti is a form of expression that is able to embrace a various range of elements: creativity, anonymity, illegality, longevity, and ephemerality, whilst displaying nuances of social activism, performance, gentrification and place-making. Therefore, graffiti can be seen as both

¹ Subculture is here defined as an informal gathering and/or a small-scale association of people that come together due to interests in common (Gelder and Thornton, 1997).

an artistic and a social movement that explores the power to repurpose the spaces through experimental interventions.

1.1. MAIN OBJECTIVES

Kevin Lynch stated that city planning needs to go beyond aesthetics and include the understanding of how people live, act, and respond to their environments, namely, how they experience cities: "The urban landscape, among its many roles, is also something to be seen, to be remembered and to delight in" (Lynch, 1960, p. V). In that sense, the interactions between people and the urban environment are key elements to spatial planning.

Hou (2010) highlights that public spaces are more than a material setting though, as it serves as "a vehicle of social relationships, public discourses, and political expressions" (Hou, 2010, p. 2). Public spaces are supposed to be, by excellence, areas of the collective sense and of democracy, and as they become more heavily regulated or even privatized, both the individual and collective attempts at reclaiming and fighting for greater freedom are more frequently present. Mitchell (2003) argues that that struggle "is the only way that the right to public space can be maintained and only way that social justice can be advanced" (Mitchell apud Hou, p. 7).

As communicational beings, people feel the need to express their thoughts and feelings and, inside the public sphere, some do that through writing on walls. Despite its somewhat momentary nature, this form of expression has been present since the stone age, traversing a long path until contemporaneity. And in the 20th century this writing became known as graffiti and it has – since the earliest displays in the 1960's – been associated as a transgressive form of expression. Graffiti disrupts the normalcy as it defies a whole set of established boundaries, and it is precisely because of this disruptive nature that it can be such a powerful instrument for insurgent statements and demands.

It is important to remark that despite the existence of a considerable number of studies and academic production on this topic, only a few encompass the graffiti phenomenon in all its complexity. Most of the analyses focus only on one fragment, usually related to a specific sub-discipline, i. e. legal essays often discuss graffiti through a criminology and regulatory perspective, many times failing to take into account all its interconnections in its inherent ambiguity (Van Loon, 2014).

In view of the relevance of the theme, this dissertation aims to explore how graffiti and street art can be used as a tool for activism, representing oftentimes collective claims. The analysis focus on a more holistic approach, including its socio-cultural and spatial aspects. The main objective is to bring to light these subversive and revolutionary public displays, underlining the relationship between the content of the messages and the urban narratives.

Thus, we intend to deepen the object of work by identifying, through qualitative research, the particular elements that compose the perceptions surrounding the urban environment and its capacity of being a vehicle to change in status quo through 'activism'².

More specifically, we seek to answer the following questions:

- What are the writers'/artists' motivations when selecting the content of their work?
- How do the public space and its dynamics influence the writers³/artists regarding their choices on what to paint and where to do it?
- How the writers/artists choose the places to intervene? (spatial relation)
- How do graffiti messages come to have a socio-political connotation?
- How does the government see these forms of expression?
- How does the relationship between public power and writers/artists and graffiti unfold?

In order to provide answers to these questions, a method for analysing perception and collecting information is established, which will be seen below.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied in this work consisted of several steps. First, a bibliographic revision was conducted to create a theoretical backup on the subject. Image collection and the creation of a photographic database took place parallel to this theoretical phase, in order to subsidize and illustrate the argumentation. Then, a series of interviews were conducted (see Annex), adding a practical standpoint to the research and enabling an empirical review of the prevailing meaningful aspects. The results were used as a qualitative sample of a reflected context and, since a qualitative perspective is influenced by many aspects, the complexity of the construction of an urbanly situated object is exposed, being, therefore, the target of multiple representations.

Although they are not often cited in the text, the reading of other masters' dissertations and of several articles published in online magazines and newspapers on the relevant topics were of large importance, as they have enabled both a global and local understanding of current situations and events. Documentaries and short films were also crucial to comprehend this entire subculture. The most recent pieces provided a greater knowledge of the differences between the 20th and 21st centuries, in relation to graffiti and street art.

² The term 'activism' is a combination of the words: art and activism, basically meaning artistic activities and interventions of political nature. This terminology will be further explored on Chapter 3.

³ See definition of writer in Glossary (Annex).

1.3. STRUCTURE

This dissertation is divided in 6 chapters: The first chapter is an introduction to the thesis, in which the reasons to study the subject were elucidated, along with the presentation of main objectives, the general methodology and the overall structure.

The bibliographic review and the build-up of the academic backup enclosed distinct sessions of theoretical analysis. The second chapter presents an overview of the conceptualization surrounding graffiti and street art, as well as its historical aspects and evolution through time. This contextualization was then proceeded by the identification and listing of the different typologies of graffiti, followed by a discussion regarding the ambivalence of its status quo in a global context.

In the third chapter, a scientific-based bias was developed about the narratives surrounding graffiti/street art, resulting in a systematic exposure of the narrative's categories. Such categorization was intended to be an aiding element for the spatial analysis coordinated in a later stage. The global aspects of the graffiti/street art phenomena and its intricacies were considered as a final feature of this chapter. Subsequently, the intertwined relationship between art and politics was examined, introducing the concept of 'artivism' to question the connections among the contesting tendency of street art's demonstrations.

The fourth chapter discusses the connection between place and human expression. The relation between the output (street art typologies) and the place is examined, as well as the relationship between place and the content of the pieces/work. A parallel is then traced between those two aspects to identify possible patterns that could support the presented theories, such as the representativeness and meaning of the location when it comes to insurgent displays.

In the next sections, on chapter five, the exhibition of different moments of data collection is organized, according to two main practical axes: images and interviews. This is followed by the processing of the collected testimonies, and the assessment of the obtained responses.

The final chapter discloses the conclusions and further questionings. As the work entails qualitative research – and, as such, it relies on non-numerical data – the results were presented by various assumptions made through phenomenological methods based on subjective experiences.

2

GRAFFITI: CONTEXTUALIZATION

“There was always something besides the official history of art: a rather stubborn art that doesn't take place in the shelters of the church, collection or exhibition house, but on the street. It is not uncommon for this art to come from people who do not want to make art in the first place. But just like many artists (and unlike in advertising), they are concerned with images and messages that primarily have to do with themselves” (Stahl, 2009, p. 6).

For Johannes Stahl the word graffiti is not known to be a Latin term as many may think, as it derives from the term *sgraffito*, first mentioned by Giorgio Vasari in 1564 to designate a technique that was associated to fresco paintings or the scratching of the facades of houses during the Renaissance (Stahl, 2009). In the middle of the 19th century the word graffiti was used in that same sense when wall signs in Pompeii were discovered, as they were made with the aforementioned technique.

According to Joe Austin, “graffiti art is neither ‘simply graffiti’ nor ‘simply art’, but a new kind of visual cultural production that exceeds both categories” (Austin, 2010, p. 33). Regarding the relation between graffiti and street art, one might argue that ‘Street Art’ is a comparatively young definition for an age-old culture: to put a sign on a wall and to carry it out to the public. To define the term street art⁴ is a challenging task since what it designates is constantly negotiated (Bengtson, 2013). Concepts are contingent and the meanings attributed to certain words are the result of clashes and negotiations that include issues related to power, socio-historical-cultural contexts and theoretical reviews.

Therefore, a consensus regarding definitions within the academic scope is far from existing: some authors prefer to use the terminology in a more comprehensive and broader way, intertwining all the different types of intervention under the same classification – also as a way of establishing a connection between the different moments in human history when this practice emerged – while others choose to dissect the term in specific expressions to name each unique aspect of the phenomenon.

⁴ For semiotics purposes, it is key to state that street art within this paper encloses graffiti and street art, as well as the various artistic public expressions these may bound.

One fact remains true though, among all the ambivalence surrounding graffiti's definition and history: humans are communicational beings. There was and there will always be a human necessity to communicate with others. And there are a whole set of tools available to do that, including writing on walls. This form of expression has been present since the stone age, traversing a long path until contemporaneity. It has been present, even, in the particular and private realm of some homes. As Juliet Fleming said, "while writing on the walls of schools, prisons, municipal toilets, and other public places has to be specifically forbidden, the prohibition against writing on the interior walls of a house is, for us, a deeply internalized one" (Fleming, 1997, p. 30).

2.1. A SKILFUL EVOLUTION: TRACING A TIMELINE IN HISTORY

When attempting to delineate a historic timeline for the graffiti/street art phenomena, it is necessary to consider the probability that a great deal of the displays and contributions to this long-standing event has gone unnoticed and/or undocumented. As Austin (2010) noted, the history of graffiti and its development does not fit in commonly established categories of understanding nor of established academic discipline, given the experimental character of this public manifestation.

One of the most recognized (and agreed) turning points for graffiti was the emergence of writings on walls and public transportation – mainly train wagons – at consolidated city centres such as New York City, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It is noticeable that this occurrence was recurring, quite similarly, in various long-term centres around the globe, such as London, Berlin, Melbourne and São Paulo, to name a few. The global diffusion of the 'railway graffiti' tend to differ more in chronology than in technique or venue, being that graffiti subcultures were most widely spread by the mid-1980s. "A major transformation came with the advent of punk, metal and hip-hop movements in the 1980s fuelled by MTV and other new media" (Dovey, Wollan and Woodcock, 2012), and it was in that decade that the graffiti phenomena reached a consolidated global status.

According to Claudia Walde (2007), street art has only become a collective movement since 2000, as before that mainly solo artists produced works. As graffiti developed, working in groups started to become more common since the writers/artists started to need more and more time to perform, what made having a lookout a very useful tool.

Apart from having been for many years a solo production, graffiti also had an exclusive aspect as its culture embodied the "colonizer's ideals" of masculinity, stating that men needed to express their emotions through dangerous and aggressive acts – such as graffiti writing – and that the urge to take risks and the adrenaline rush were part of a medium with which men could tell their stories (Lombard, 2013). For a very extensive period the subculture had an unmistakable male dominance, which has just recently begun to acknowledge the female contribution. On the Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and

Street Art (2016), Nancy Macdonald dedicates a chapter about the changes in gender dynamics of the graffiti subculture, but she still presents it as an asset used by young man to construct and validate their youthful masculine identity. Then, she follows with a discussion on how male writers tend to marginalize and exclude women writers in an attempt to annihilate their emasculating threat. Notwithstanding, over thirty years ago, Elizabeth Wales and Barbara Brewer (1976) were already discussing how the emphasis on female sexuality and freedom of expression was being reflected in graffiti. There is a rupture in the status quo as an increasing number of female graffiti artists join the scene and gain respect.

In the same way that graffiti used to be related and tied to gender, it also was – and sometimes still is – strongly associated with social layers. Graffiti can be an indicator of attitudes, of behavioural dispositions, and of social processes in settings where direct measurement is difficult. In an ethnic neighbourhood, for instance, it can identify tension zones related to social change (Cybriwsky and Ley, 2018). Taking New York city as an example, one can easily identify such connection in the 1970's and 1980's, when graffiti widely spread around subways and building walls. At the time, New York was crime-ridden, and graffiti was certainly not seen as an improvement for the struggling city. This illegal act became popular among the working-class youngsters, specifically those with Latin and African origins, in some neighbourhoods like Washington Heights, the Bronx, and Brooklyn. These were less privileged areas of the city, marked by violence and neglect, thus graffiti became a chosen form of expression for those who desired to be heard and to feel represented. By the mid to late-1980's, stricter anti-graffiti measures were implemented by the government, including harsher penalties, restrictions on paint sale and an increased police presence and by 1989 all the graffiti were removed from the train wagons and subways by the Clean Car Program (CCP).

Over time graffiti has morphed from being solely an act of signing one's pseudonym on public property with a black marker to an art form, even more so with the introduction of colour spray paints to the scene. It 'grew' into Street Art – which is often more legal and permissible – progressing from subculture to culture through greater recognition. There are also some that consider Street Art to be a post-graffiti movement that encompasses numerous new strands, including stencils, paste-ups, stickers, and mosaic, to name a few. While graffiti and street art can be considered as two separate cultures, there is still a big overlap as graffiti is not as underground as it once was.

Although it might be challenging to trace a timeline for graffiti's rising, in the modern and contemporary settings, the approaches, traditions, arguments, innovations, and trends within graffiti and street art can be followed particularly well. "There is an extensive and growing field of literature devoted to graffiti and street art, from the popular to the academic, and from fine arts to criminology" (Dovey, Wollan and Woodcock, 2012, p. 21).

2.2. THE KINDS OF GRAFFITI: OUTPUT TYPOLOGIES

Some types of graffiti are historically older and, as such, are more recognizable, like tags and murals. Nevertheless, other typologies have been registered and documented in diverse academic studies and literature, enabling the organization of a consistent global lexicon to help describe the categories of graffiti (Halsey & Young apud Dovey, Wollan and Woodcock, 2012).

As per this lexicon, several types of graffiti can be identified. Thereby, it is important to note that, for didactic purposes, this dissertation follows Dovey's, Wollan's and Woodcock's (2012) classification, thus listing the typologies of graffiti as: 'tags', 'throw-ups', 'stencils', 'paste-ups', 'slogans' and 'pieces'.

2.2.1. TAG

'Tags' are a signature written in a very fast and simple way to state the author's presence in a certain space by getting his/her – although mostly his – name (or nickname) onto a surface and/or wall. Tags started as an act of signing one's pseudonym on public property with a black marker and have evolved greatly in technique and style over the years. In the 1970's and 1980's, 'taggers' were usually members of street gangs who wanted to mark their territory. They worked in groups called crews⁵, and called what they did writing. With the introduction of colour spray paint, the signatures began to be planned and some crews created their own set of letters, introducing new typographies (and sometimes even 'mascots') to the scene. Those elaborate kinds of tag can also be called throw-ups.



Image 1 – Tag.
Source: Photo by the author.

⁵ See definition of writer in Glossary (Annex).

2.2.2.THROW-UP

A ‘throw-up’ (or colloquially known as a ‘throwie’) is an augmented version of a signature tag, most of the time containing more details and colours than the tags. As mentioned above, with the throw-ups came the development of different lettering and font styles – including the well-known bubble style, block letters and 3D lettering. Despite being more elaborate than tags, throw-ups are still a simpler kind of graffiti, normally using two or three colours (one for the outline and the others for filling in the letters), still requiring more time, thought, and placement strategy than a tag, but not as much as some other types, as a mural for instance.

As graffiti became more developed, so did the escape methods. Writers started to plan everything very carefully to flee the scene without getting caught. In order to do that the preferred timing is either late at night or early in the morning, to avoid having people around.



Image 2 – Throw-up.
Source: Photo by the author.

2.2.3.STENCIL

‘Stencils’ are sprayed on drawings and/or phrases that follow a template previously prepared, so they can be easily reproducible (very quickly and in a large number). The stencil matrix can be made using almost anything: paper, cardboard, plastic, etc. Some artists even use old x-ray images to cut out their messages and begin spraying. That makes it a very accessible – also democratic – graffiti typology, as it doesn’t require many tools and enables the reproduction of what can be an intricate indoor creation in a few seconds in the public space.



Image 3 – Examples of stencils.
Source: Photos by the author.

2.2.4.PASTE-UP

‘Paste-ups’ are graphic design pieces that are stuck on surfaces with glue (as the name already suggests). As the stencils and unlike other forms of graffiti, the paste-ups are created away from the streets, which then act only as its place of final display. This allows the artists to freely think through a creative process, exploring the forms and contents in detail, thus conceiving an artwork with depth and concept. In that way, stencils and paste-ups have similarities with other art forms, as they can embody more complexity.



Image 4 – Paste-ups on a concrete wall.
Source: Photo by the author.

2.2.5.SLOGAN

‘Slogans’ are highly legible texts that usually carry creative poetic/political content, aiming a broader audience. They can be executed using a marker, canned spray paint, through stencils, or they can be printed as a paste-up. Slogans have a deeper more intertwined connection with the message when compared to some of the other typologies, which may sometimes have more emphasis on aesthetics rather than content.



Image 5 – Examples of slogans using different techniques: canned spray paint, stencil and paste-up.
Source: Photos by the author.

2.2.6. PIECES

All the previously presented types can ensure safety from prosecution by the speed of application whilst ‘pieces’ are a more time-consuming work that involves larger-scale graphic design with the use of multiple colours in most cases. It is short for ‘masterpiece’ and, as the name conveys, the time invested in the creation and execution of a piece is considered as one of the reasons why pieces are increasingly being commissioned as wall murals, sometimes formally authorized by the public power and other times informally legalized through an agreement between the artist and a business or property owner.



Image 6 – Piece on a building side gable.

Source: Photo by the author.

It is important to point out that the separations between these categories are hazy – tags slide into throw-ups which slide into pieces (see Image 7). Stencils, paste-ups, and pieces can also enclose slogans – as already illustrated on Image 5. Also, the design skills and time of application can achieve many different levels in each of the categories presented. “Pieces, stencils, and paste-ups are often semantically rich but with ambiguous meanings — in this, they take on characteristics of the fine arts. The best examples of these categories are widely regarded as street-art rather than vandalism” (Dovey, Wollan and Woodcock, 2012, p. 25).

Since this dissertation aims to explore the content of the messages in an effort to understand the relationship – if one can affirm that it exists – between graffiti and a wider public way of expression, the research focus was directed to the more semantically rich types of manifestations: pieces, stencils, slogans, and paste-ups, although not excluding the other more ‘simple’ typologies.



Image 7 – Mixture: Piece that incorporates various throw-ups from local artists/writers.
Source: Photo by the author.

2.3. CONTRADICTION IN PERCEPTION: BETWEEN REFUSAL AND ACCEPTANCE

Signs and images on walls have always existed, they have been registered since the Stone Age. Significant for the people who make them and clear signals for their viewers, they have caused a stir and controversy throughout history (Stahl, 2009).

The world of graffiti and street art not only has its own culture but also its own vocabulary and set of aesthetics. And the aesthetic feature tends to be the most questioned aspect of these forms of self-expression. There is volatility embedded in its concepts and its (public) acceptance. Initially, graffiti was powerfully frowned upon, especially because of the illegal and disruptive imprint that it carried. It was mainly connected with stranded social layers and it conveyed a ramshackle feeling of filth and abandonment to the places it was inserted. That immediately triggered popular rejection and encouraged actions from the public power, implementing several policies and programs to fight this unwanted initiative. But this panorama has been progressively changing over the years, notably by the shift in perspective processed from being essentially a crime to being considered by many as an art form.

Current public discussions about graffiti are characterized by the co-existence of contradictory claims (Kimvall, 2014). Graffiti has been described as both vandalism and an artistic movement, though art and vandalism are frequently defined as opposites: one creates as the other destroys. Being that a wide range of fields interacts with graffiti – the population in general, the police, art institutions, public

transport companies, businesses – it is only natural that each one understands this form of expression according to their own interests and perspectives. Some of these agents base their perception on the premise that ‘graffiti is art’ whilst others have a rejecting approach, stating that ‘graffiti is a crime’. The writers themselves do produce both legal and illegal graffiti, showing that there is also ambiguous behaviour within the graffiti scene (Van Loon, 2014).

The ‘broken window theory’ (Kamalu and Onyeozili, 2018) endorses the idea that graffiti is a negative factor by relating the simple existence of a tag with a sense of abandonment which can entice or increase criminality. Therefore, it becomes a practice that needs to be controlled. In this scenario, graffiti absorbs the positive and negative aspects of the symbolic capital as it simultaneously ‘pollutes’ and ‘sells’ walls, buildings, streets, and places. Both art and vandalism can be considered as forms of transgression, but the first incites transgressive discursive frames as the second violates the law.

The controversial facet of graffiti goes beyond the discussion of art versus vandalism, as this form of expression tends to oscillate between various other opposite poles: private and public, visible and invisible, mainstream and underground. Many differentiate ‘good graffiti’ from ‘bad graffiti’ by its artistic quality, in terms of having the ability to generate value to the places it is inserted. That has been changing over the years since oftentimes graffiti fulfils the growing desire for contrast and authenticity prevailing in contemporary cities. “Graffiti is produced from intersecting and often conflicting desires to create or protect urban character and place identity” (Dovey, Wollan and Woodcock, 2012, p. 21).

It is undeniable that street art and graffiti have gained a leading role in the contemporary setting, whether through academic production, the media, public investments aimed at its promotion or repression, or the increasing number of projects related to the theme that are being accepted by cultural centres and/or private initiatives, even within the arts, publicity, and entertainment market. Still, expressions like the Wildstyle⁶ ones tend to be oftentimes misunderstood and frowned upon.

Over forty years ago graffiti and street art were mainly used in campaigns, for political slogans or for gang tagging and one can argue that it has since gone through an evolutionary line to become a well-accepted – and sometimes even prestigious – form of artistic expression.

The new skills, techniques, and knowledge surrounding street art have won over the contemporary art circuit and artistic movements and this manifestation has been accepted as the resourceful practice that it is, so diverse that it can attract instead of repelling. Due to the acknowledgment of street art’s aesthetic and marketable value, the urban artists began to be invited to private gallery and museum exhibitions and their work acquired monetary value, resulting in more recognition and privilege within

⁶ See definition of writer in Glossary (Annex).

society. As a consequence, it enabled a shift in the dialogue between the artists and the public, causing displacement to another level with different rules, standards, and concerns (Bordieu apud Savarese, 2013). In this sense, the artistic and aesthetic view has proven to be a fundamental convergence tool to a variety of distinct universes, supporting the construction of a common image and narrative that defies the status quo (Romero, 2018).

Encompassing all those changes it is also possible to notice an increasing use of graffiti/street art by the public power within urban development policies as a means of reorganizing or even rebranding urban spaces. Some public institutions have even come to adopt 'prophylactic graffiti' on their walls to avoid unwanted and/or less 'artsy' manifestations. Additionally, street art has become an alternative form of tourist attraction, alluring enthusiasts through the aesthetic pleasure of contemplating this unique and democratic artistic manifestation (Yan et al., 2019). "These new art forms are an enhancement to contemporary urban living, a welcome growth in the living city, a disruption of the unexamined assumptions connecting urban visual culture and the existing social order" (Austin, 2010, p. 33).

There are definitely different levels of acceptance when it comes to graffiti and street art. And these levels can be bonded to the context and/or to a variety of human facets: it can depend on the age range, gender, the social subgroups and social strata, education, cultural norms, historic background, access to information, and spatial location, among other aspects. Essentially, it is also attached to the general life experience of the individual (or collective). Also, an increasing number of researchers combine the level of acceptance with social media in a more recent context. The fact that people are now able to register, post and comment on street art with a global and simultaneous reach can unquestionably be a positive angle towards 'normalcy' and consequent acceptance. Nevertheless, it is hard to pinpoint the origin of this transition: a very blurry barrier stands between denial and approval. Despite existing a few conditioning factors that influence – or that may even favour – this transition, it is not possible to 'standardize' it. The progressive line that some writers/artists surpass from anonymity to 'fame' remains a mystery. What sets them apart from the others (that are supposedly doing the same thing)? Why do some writers/artists go mainstream while others don't? Who becomes more accepted and why? Some theoretical approaches investigate the relation between acknowledgment and the content of the message, almost as an emotional attachment of what the artist wanted to convey. Since most of them perform in similar settings using similar tools and techniques, the differential element becomes the 'narrative', the story behind aesthetics. Thereafter, the internalization of such practices might arise due to its highlight of social desires thru a collective voice claiming to be 'heard' (or read, in that case).

3

INGENIOUS NARRATIVES IMPLICIT IN GRAFFITI

“Se o espaço público é por excelência um palco de construção identitária, a memória assume um papel determinante, não somente enquanto lugar de sociabilidades mas também de uma narrativa local própria. A sua especificidade arquitectónica, os elementos monumentais e a arte que exhibe contribuem para a elaboração de uma narrativa espaço-temporal.” (Sequeira, 2015)

According to Sara Selwood (apud Sequeira, 2015), artistic public displays can act as a developer for a dialogue between the community and its own history, either by educating people about their background or by enabling a local narrative’s perspective. In that sense, street art can have a very significant role in the contemporary setting, especially in larger cities, where it seems to have consolidated itself before society as a form of expression inherent to urban reality. Inherent to a living environment, a dynamic system of signs and their combinations in a permanent process of creation (Biedarjeva, 2016).

When observing street art beyond its paradoxical nature, some consider it to be an unmediated expression in the public realm that exercises our right to the city. Many different authors agree to this notion that graffiti conducts a theatrical right to the city, to the streets, and to the shared public spaces, enhancing the modern city life (Austin, 2010).

Much like literature and many other art forms, by being a combination of signs and symbols street art becomes a narrative, capable of reflecting, informing, and constructing our collective identities and the places we inhabit.

The content of the messages beheld by these aesthetic stimuli gain even more significance when placed in this contemporary scenery of easy reproductivity (Benjamin, 1935). The narratives begin to

⁷ Free translation by the author: “If the public space is par excellence the stage for identity construction, memory assumes a determining role, not only while the place of sociability but also as the place of its own local narrative. It is the public space’s architectural specificity, monumental elements and art that contribute to the creation of a temporal spatial narrative.” (Sequeira, 2015)

surpass a mere visual urge, fuelling a deeper sense of active engagement in place-making. Value and meaning are constantly created, reproduced and defended in space, as they are not by themselves inherent to places. Writers and artists augment and enhance concepts for themselves and for whoever sees their work, and thus graffiti serves as a conceptual frame through which observations and interpretations of the urban cultural landscape may be developed and explored.

In this exchange process, of generating and diffusing stories, the public audience should not be viewed as a passive receptacle, merely absorbing the content that surrounds them. People are affected by, interact with and experience actively the environment. As the city walls "talk" to people through graffiti and street art, the "dialogue" becomes a real possibility and it impacts the viewers' daily quotidian. For example, if a person takes the subway every day and, at the station's exit there is a graffitied phrase asking: "How was your day today?", it speaks and interacts with that one person, who while constantly facing the same question begins to reflect about it.

3.1. INSURGENT URBAN CLAIMS: THE POLITICAL BIAS

For a long time now, graffiti and street art have been used as a form of political expression, especially in places confronted with social challenges and neglect. In some cases, these artistic demonstrations engage so explicitly with political issues, that they end up building an alternative public sphere right there on the streets.

Political messages can emerge in distinct designs: while some claims can be less elaborate, resulting many times in sentences written with spray paint in a single colour to be faster and to prevent people from being caught red-handed, other matters may be displayed as an intricate and premeditated output, as illustrated on Images 8 and 9. Some patterns might indicate the existence of a relation between the issue addressed and the technique chosen to materialize the statement. If the topic reports broader issues and/or common urban concerns, such as police violence for example (Image 10) – which tend to happen globally and is not exclusive to certain locations – there is a tendency to see the displays performed with stencils or paste-ups, that are quick and easy in the street, but well-rounded and thought through at home or in another "safe place". Some major causes like feminism and equality also can be often found translated through paste-ups and stencils (see Image 10). It is important to note that, besides speed in execution, these techniques also allow the artist to make the same statement in many different places, not only within the same city, but also worldwide. Also, "spur-of-the-moment" thoughts – such as love declarations (see Image 11) – frequently gain life through simpler methods because the writer must resort to handy tools, be that a sharpie or a can of spray.



Image 8 – Single colour spray painted political message: probable use of a quick technique to avoid getting caught. The writing says “Nós mandamos o governo à merda e o governo manda em nós” meaning ‘We tell the govern to f#\$% off, and the govern rules us’.
Source: Photo by the author.



Image 9 – Political content paste-ups: Combination of elaborate and detailed design with quick performance on the streets. The middle image shows a continuing series, which indicates the development of a collection addressing the same theme.

Source: Photos by the author.



Image 10 – Stencils that convey universal causes. The example on the left illustrates a message against police and institutional repression, the one in the middle is about gender equality and freedom (“Besa a quien quieras” meaning ‘Kiss whoever you want’), and the one on the right is linked to feminism.

Source: Photos by the author.



Image 11 – Spray painted personal and private messages. The example on the left asks ‘Will you date me?’ while on the right we have a love declaration written in french (“Je t’aime” meaning ‘I love you’).

Source: Photos by the author.

The universe of graffiti and street art is vast and encompasses a wide variety of themes. A street piece can be inspired by any narrative, addressing individual issues as well as collective ones. There are no forbidden topics and anonymity can act as a facilitator for writers to express whatever they wish to. After all, one can decide if they want to sign their work or not in the streets, which enables them to be one or all of us.

3.2. THE METAPHORICAL MEANING: NARRATIVE CATEGORIES

Graffiti and street art approach certain subjects and bring them to light so they can be acknowledged and be present, even if remaining invisible to the official narratives and to city planning (Palmer, 2017). Urban narratives are discursive forms in which the main themes involve the urban spaces and their relationship with people. They encompass the possibility of producing spatiality in cities, that is, of how the city is represented.

For analytical purposes, the themes and narratives approached by street artists are going to be divided into categories, that will later help examine the existence of a relationship between spatiality and the content of the messages being translated and expressed. As Biedarieva (2016) stated, “artists translate an idea hidden behind the literal usage of the artwork into a metaphorical visual form, and the medium of an art installation into some other medium of the audience’s perception: a positional or a spatial narrative” (Biedarieva, 2016, p. 6).

During the literature review, no categorisation of urban narratives was found, especially related to graffiti and street art. Understanding that the urban narratives can be presented in different languages and means – and considering graffiti as one of those means – there was then an effort to identify and encircle the main subjects manifested in the public spaces. The dominant themes observed were connected to socio-political statements – both collective and individual –, marketing-related content and to personal stories. And, since the basis of this dissertation lays on spatial planning, the site-specific statements were also considered relevant. This exercise grounded the chosen division of the graffiti related urban narratives, that were subsequently separated in more specific categories, as presented: socio-political/active, spatial, commercial/promotional, individualist, and collective. Albeit, it is important to note that it was challenging to have a clear delineation between these categories, as the themes may relate or merge with one another, causing the narratives to be intertwined at times. Thus, inside each category, one can find developments that may unfold into one or more of the other categories. It is also pertinent to note that contestation is a factor that is present in almost all cases.

3.2.1. SOCIO-POLITICAL/ ACTIVE NARRATIVES

Narratives of socio-political bias are possibly the ones most found in urban public spaces. This political positioning is not restricted to politics itself, also involving environmental problems, matters related to religion (Image 12), capitalism, tourism (Image 13), and other related issues. Tourism, for instance, is a theme that can fall under many of the set categories, as it can directly impact and/or effect a place’s identity, society, culture, economy, and urban planning. Those narratives that carry political statements will be categorized here as active narratives since they carry arguments that privilege the effective practice of transforming reality, much as activism.



Image 12 – Religious bias: Socio-political narratives can be related to a variety of fields – such as religion – among others. The message written on the ground reads “Sionismo mata” meaning ‘Zionism⁸ kills’.

Source: Photo by the author.

8 The Zionism is a movement related to the establishment of a Jewish state in the Palestine region.



Image 13 – How locals see tourism in Oporto. The second and third photographs depict the logo of Oporto’s Municipal Chamber, but replacing the first letter (P) for an M, which changes the meaning of the word and transforms the name of the city “Porto” into the word “Morto” that means ‘Dead’. This indicates and reflects a discontentment towards the public institution’s conduct and actions regarding tourism and its overall impacts.

Source: Photos by the author.

3.2.2. SPATIAL NARRATIVES

The spatial narratives are linked to local contestation, neglected areas, gentrification, and other political-related concerns that are somehow reflected in the physical environment. They carry a site-specific narrative – matters related exclusively to a certain place, city, region or country. Inside this category, it is possible to find other narratives built-in within, but they are tied to that specific location.



Image 14 – Spatial narratives: themes connected uniquely with each specific location.

Source: Photos by the author.

The examples portrayed on Image 14 elucidate how the spatial narratives may work. The upper left photograph illustrates a witch known for poisoning a fruit, followed the message “*Capital da gastronomia, de olhos cheios e barriga vazia*” meaning ‘Capital (city) of gastronomy, with full eyes and empty bellies’. The image was captured in Viseu, a Portuguese city that was self-awarded as ‘the capital of gastronomy’ in 2019 by its own Municipality. The narrative on the stencil criticizes the Municipal Chamber’s positioning and indicates a demand to shift in public priorities. The upper right photograph shows flower vases and reads the message: “*Dê flores aos vivos*” meaning ‘Give flowers to the living’. In this case, the narrative can be considered spatial because the stencil was placed outside the Agramonte Cemetery (in Oporto), where vendors daily display flower vases on the sidewalks aiming to sell flowers for those who visit the graves. The bottom left photograph contains a sign that suggests a person stealing another person, with the words ‘Pick Pockets!’ beneath the sign. The picture was taken outside the Eiffel Tower, and that same sign could be seen in many other touristic attractions in Paris. That narrative relates to the sightseeing spots and manifests the vulnerability of tourists, that are specific targets when in certain places. The bottom right photograph shows a painted rock near the ocean where it reads: “*Praia limpa é saúde*” which can be translated to ‘A clean beach is a healthy beach’. This is located in Fortaleza, a coastal Brazilian city, and the narrative expresses the local community concern about pollution of the regional seashore.

The case illustrated on Image 13 also can be considered as a spatial narrative, since it discusses a situation particularly on Oporto, thus evidencing the overlapping of narratives mentioned at the end of section 3.2 of this dissertation.

3.2.3. COMMERCIAL OR PROMOTIONAL NARRATIVES

The commercial or promotional narratives are those with a marketing appeal, most likely commissioned by a private company and developed as part of an advertising campaign or strategy to reach a specific audience, like younger people, for instance (Image 15). And as artists earn their income with their graffiti designs, sometimes they may adjust their style to satisfy or attract customers.



Image 15 – Graffiti with commercial narrative: Created with a marketing appeal to promote a product or client.
Source: Mr. Dheo’s official website.

3.2.4. INDIVIDUALIST NARRATIVES

Individualist narratives are the ones that bring a personal aspect into it, sometimes even intimate, which makes them less obvious or relatable to people outside of the individual context, as previously illustrated on Image 11. A great example of this category is a love declaration written outside someone's doorstep or personal portraits and messages that have an aim: to surprise or honour a loved one. Uplifting and lovable unwritten messages – like those shown on Image 16 – can also be considered as part of individualist narratives, as they indicate the expression of personal feelings.



Image 16 – Individualist narratives express personal feelings.
Source: Photos by the author.

3.2.5. COLLECTIVE NARRATIVES

The last category, opposite to the individualist, contains collective messages, addressing globally acknowledged issues that impact a large part of the population or society as a whole. Such as graffiti that positions against the patriarchal status quo – including campaigns against sexual violence – which can be found all over the world. The main argument in this category is social justice, openness, and inclusiveness. As already mentioned in other categories, the collective narratives can also evidently show other categories built-in within.



Image 17 – Collective narratives address global issues. Stencil that reads: "No combate ao vírus, nem um direito a menos" which can be translated to 'On the fight against the virus, no forgotten rights'.
Source: Photo by the author.

As per the examples above, it becomes evident that the narrative categories are fluid rather than fixed. The complexity surrounding the themes and the content reflected in graffiti and street art messages are acknowledged, and the established division was suggested using empirical criteria with an aim to bring a didactic approach that will later complement the research.

3.3. IMPORT AND EXPORT: NO BOUNDARIES TO A GLOBAL SUBCULTURE

Street art is a global phenomenon and, as such, it is present everywhere, denoting the existence of a global subculture. The materials used can be found almost anywhere and the techniques have been exported, exchanged – and are currently well diffused, in a mildly balanced way – around the world. More recently, the same can be noticed about the content of the messages, the displacement of narratives.

The contemporary globalized world easily allows – and sometimes forces – people to migrate, and as they travel, they carry within a piece of their home countries wherever they go. As a form of expression ingrained in contemporaneity, graffiti, therefore, mirrors this displacement. It is possible to notice the presence of imported narratives and themes in many places worldwide. Immigrants bring with them their own personal claims and beliefs which, in a ‘misplaced’ context, are highlighted by the lack of relationship with the location.

It is common to find examples of these narrative importation cases, as the ones illustrated hereafter: Vindication for the impeachment of Brazil’s former president Michel Temer found in Buenos Aires (Image 18), a stencil of Dilma Rousseff – former Brazilian president – in Coimbra (Image 19), and an homage to Marielle Franco⁹ found in (Image 20). These are very common graffiti in Brazil (as illustrated on Image 21), but, as mentioned above, those are examples of narratives that become singled out by being displayed outside its original country.



Image 18 – Import / Export: Graffiti related to a Brazilian narrative found in Argentina. The messages read “Fora Temer”, a very common claim to impeach the former Brazilian president while he was serving his term.

Source: Photos by the author.

⁹ Marielle was a public national figure in Brazil – Brazilian sociologist and politician – that was murdered in 2018.

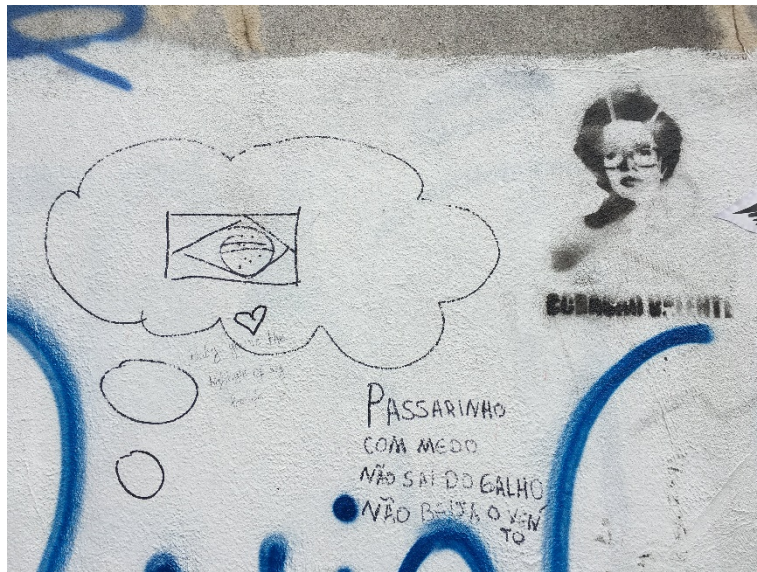


Image 19 – Brazilian narrative in Portugal: Stencil with an image of Dilma Rouseff (Brazilian former president), written “Coração Valente” underneath. That means ‘Brave Heart’ and it was on the lyrics of her campaign jingle.
Source: Photo by the author.



Image 20 – Homage to Marielle Franco at the Boa Vista roundabout, in Oporto.
Source: Photo by the author.

It is also relevant to note here that as history changes so do the narratives, and graffiti follows: even when imported, the graffiti themes and messages are updated to reflect the current events. The end result can then be considered as an international narrative, that can be found simultaneously placed around the world (Image 22).



Image 21 – The same narrative found in Buenos Aires also inserted in Fortaleza, Brazil.
Source: Photos by the author.



Image 22 – International narratives: The claim “Fora Bolsonaro”, demands the impeachment of the Brazilian president, and can be found simultaneously in Brazil and in several other countries, such as Portugal – that has a representative Brazilian community. It is also interesting to note how the current situation impacts graffiti (people in masks).
Source: Photo by the author.

Also included in this narrative displacement within the importation and exportation of themes are the internet memes. They have left the computer and onto the streets. Usually the memes are replicated using simple forms of graffiti, such as stencils and stickers. And, since the internet is a medium suited to cross-national and large-scale distribution, the memes on the streets have the same reach.

In the book *Memes in Digital Culture* (2014), Limor Shifman talks about how internet users have realized that the meme concept encapsulates several of the most fundamental aspects of contemporary digital culture. As a replicate of human behaviour, memes can be used as a form of political participation. “Politics – both in its broad sense as the societal construction of power and in its narrow sense as a system of governance – is deeply intertwined with the construction and consumption of Internet memes” (Shifman, 2014, p. 119). Since imitation and replication are ingrained in meme reproduction, this unoriginal factor can lead to biting¹⁰ or mimicking of existing graffiti, what eventually works against creativity.

¹⁰ See definition of writer in Glossary (Annex).

3.4. 'ARTIVISM': ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES OF POLITICAL NATURE

"In his presentation, Akay argued that regardless of planning, public space is always open to individual interpretation – a view which brings to mind Henri Lefebvre's contention that it is a supreme illusion to defer to architects, urbanists or planners as being experts or ultimate authorities in matters relating to space" (Bengtson, 2013).

As the relationship between arts and politics grows tighter in the contemporary setting, the concept of 'artivism' arises, encompassing the artistic activities of a political nature or vice-versa. According to Chaia (2007), the origin of 'artivism' can be split into two moments, assuming the form of artistic activism or cultural activism. The first moment was marked by the social movements taken place from the late 1960's, like civil rights struggles, manifestations against war, student mobilizations and the counterculture. The second moment, a more recent one, refers to the production of new technologies in the midst of the 1990's, amplifying the mass communication with the internet and potentializing revolutions in language and means of expression.

Those moments highlighted the urgency of societal action, imprinting a new meaning to art thus allowing it new possibilities. 'Artivism' tends to eliminate the artistic objective in favour of social intervention, developing concepts and practices based on an individual or collective critical conscience. The activist artist is situated within a social relationship based on the desire to fight, on responsibility or on the social vocation that recognizes the existence of conflicts in need to be faced immediately. The 'artist' recognizes the other and criticizes the conditions being produced in contemporaneity. As artists use urban spaces to fulfil their desires, they also build a history of their own making.

'Artivism' materialized through graffiti and street art involves the contestation of power inside urban space (Biedarieva, 2016). Therefore, it also entails the discussion of freedom of expression versus writing on private property. The reasons to make graffiti and the topics being expressed are varied, but these manifestations are fundamentally authentic expressions. In graffiti, there is an added dimension of visual interpretation that goes beyond the textual meaning. It has different contextual meanings which turn it into an attractive method for gathering thoughts and ideas (Tracy, 2005).

Graffiti 'artivism' is both a proactive attitude of social-political awareness and a persistent challenge of city order, often defying social and political norms while empowering certain clusters in a controlled public space (Ouaras, 2018). As a more subversive form of art, graffiti withholds a transient characteristic that pulls it away from protection and conservation. The content of the work often unveils an intention or desire of the artist, who aspires to communicate and connect with the spectators through the 'unspoken'. A wide range of themes and subjects are approached on graffiti, especially in

written ones. The meaning and complexity of each message relate to the artists capacity to express themselves, and the way it is absorbed and interpreted individually and socially. How and where the work is placed also interferes with the level of impact/empathy it causes on the audience (Image 23).



Image 23 – Graffiti that claims the right to the city (it reads “*Pelo direito à cidade!*”). Written on the ledge of the subway line, in a section where the metro circulates above ground.

Source: Photos by the author.

Another great dimension enclosed by street art is the possibility of being participative, meaning that anyone can intervene and interact with it, erasing (or buffing¹¹), repainting, destroying, adding something or completing it. Thus, even the public can become an active part of a street art work, either strengthening a demand or being opposed to it, but interacting and participating nonetheless (Blanché, 2015). There is also some sort of connection – even if not always direct – between the artists/writers themselves, called crossing¹¹. “Graffiti is often layered like a palimpsest with new work responding to the work beneath it with transformed meanings and partial erasures” (Dovey, Wollan and Woodcock, 2012, p. 30).

As transgressive personal acts of expression of creative urban clusters, street art and graffiti have been mainly fuelled by subcultural recognition. The ‘artists’ themselves are a group that is constantly growing and evolving. Taking the two original moments highlighted by Chaia (2007), this flock was most likely initially formed by men, coming from a specific stratum and age range. Nowadays, this ‘artist’ cluster is becoming more and more diverse, embracing a wider age range, different sexual orientations, people coming from various backgrounds and from all social stratus. There does not seem to be limitations anymore, neither regarding who ‘writes’ the claims, nor about the topics or demands being displayed, since graffiti is a practice that embodies a critical stance towards society. ‘Artivists’ are ‘street influencers’ in a contemporary, participative, global, digital era. And they aim towards the *affective* dimensions of the activity in the hope that the words of writers become a visible and productive presence in urban space (Halsey and Young, 2006).

¹¹ See definition of writer in Glossary (Annex).

4

SPATIAL CONNECTIONS AND PLACEMENT OF A UNIQUE EXPRESSION

"At the point of convergence and tension, the point of juncture of the material and the immaterial – public space and the public sphere – a public domain appears, which is the territory of shared attention and the field of the distribution of immediate and mediated visibilities." (Mubi Brighenti, 2010)

Beyond the relationships created between graffiti and the audience, there is also a connection between graffiti and the place it is inserted. Urban morphology mediates complex field opportunities and its materiality is linked to the expression and visibility of graffiti. The 'graffiti artists' seek recognition, so they need people to see their work: in this sense graffiti is mediated by the field of public visibility and drawing attention.

Street artists take possession of a certain public space – with a special focus to neglected ones – for a temporary period and, with their artistic expression, are able to draw attention to that spot, thereby reinterpreting its possible meaning. This way, graffiti can generate value by appropriating and transforming under-valued spaces in the cities.

In order to comprehend the influence that street art and graffiti can have in the place's identity and/or the urban character of a certain space, it is necessary to understand the various ways that 'character' or that 'identity' is experienced and perceived by the population. The character can be described, in general terms, as a 'sensation' or the 'atmosphere' of a specific place.

Considering some of the hitherto hidden aspects of graffiti culture, it can directly impact the ways in which urban landscapes are produced and how these landscapes influence social practices. It is almost like a retro-feeding system that gives and takes at the same time.

Some people may relate street art expressions as violations of the urban character while others may take in the works as contributing to enhancing the place identity. On this note, it is very important to

emphasize that neither character nor identity are fixed stable concepts. Spaces can be seen through an objective perspective, as an urban environment, or subjectively, as places wherein experiences happen. Graffiti can be read as vandalism if it is 'out of place' – when inserted in unexpected locations such as the frontal façade of a house – or in cases that its content is depreciative or inappropriate. But then again, this 'feeling of misplacement' involves a very subjective field of personal impressions and constructions. As Lefebvre stated, "the individual's orientation to abstract space is accomplished socially" (Kerr, 1992, p. 288). Space is both product and mode of production as it is as socially constructed as sociality is spatially constructed. Quite frequently, there seems to be a feeling of ambivalence or duality in which people label graffiti as a problem at the same time they see it as contributing to local character.

One must take two aspects of urban landscape into account in order to understand the spatial behaviours: its geography and regulatory regimes, which together shape a writers' sense of place (Van Loon, 2014). Despite being labelled as 'good' or 'bad', as 'art' or 'vandalism', it is rather consensual that the presence of graffiti directly influences and changes the features of the place. It is tangled with urban morphologies, as well as social identities.

Graffiti writing is inherently linked to two dimensions: respect and territoriality (Mubi Brighenti, 2010) At its core, graffiti is about the question of who has the right to (co)design the urban landscape, considering the hybrid personalities of graffiti writers and the spatiality of their actions (Van Loon, 2014).

4.1. PLACE AND TYPOLOGIES

A basic common sense – present in most studies and literature on graffiti – is the notion that specific unwritten rules exist on this subculture. These 'street codes' establish certain boundaries, that go from not painting over someone else's work to the appropriateness to put graffiti on certain places. It is remarkable how stable the main elements of graffiti subculture are, as well as how international its main rules and characteristics seem to be. There is, for instance, a unspoken wide agreement about not inserting graffiti on monuments, religious buildings, private homes, vehicles, and statues – although this last example has 'suffered' some, as demonstrated on Image 24. On this set of graffiti's 'best practices', the presence of a hierarchy in the suitability of places is not central, but it is implied that many places are highly appreciated – which is mainly related to the difficulty to paint. The more challenging the spot is, the higher the praises to the artist who 'conquered' it (Van Loon, 2014).



Image 24 – Graffiti on a statue - Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Source: Photos by the author.

If a writer aims to be ‘up’ in a recognisable style, then the work needs to be placed on a noteworthy surface, which influences how it is seen by others (Iljadica, 2016).

It is noticeable that some types of graffiti (presented in chapter 2) seem to have a somewhat special connection to certain places. For instance, one can systematically find tags and throw-ups in trains and metro carriages, in highway’s noise barriers, and at tunnels, bridges and viaducts (Image 25). Those spots tend to be bombed¹² with tags and and/or throw-ups instead of complex pieces precisely because of their speed of execution and simplicity. “Place also informs style to a certain extent. For example, if a writer wishes to place a work on a rooftop above a busy street (where visibility is high) the style of the work may need to be simplified” (Iljadica, 2016, p. 27).



Image 25 –Tags and throw-ups. Upper left: Train carriage in Cascais; upper right: Funicular in Lisbon; bottom left: Sound barriers in highway A25; bottom right: Subway tunnel entrance near social housing building in Oporto.

Source: Photos by the author.

¹² See definition of writer in Glossary (Annex).

On the other hand, murals and pieces are almost never done in those premises and are more frequently found in buildings' blind gables (Image 26). The material of the surface can also ‘facilitate’ the production of certain types of graffiti: a flat sizeable painted wall can be more suitable for colorful pieces, whereas a small unpainted surface can be more inviting for tags or stencils (Van Loon, 2014). Therefore, these patterns indicate the existence of a relation between the place and the technique/typology of graffiti. “One of the key effects of graffiti is to awaken the city to spaces it has forgotten about and in so doing to redefine the limits and purpose of city-space” (Halsey and Pederick, 2010, p. 96).



Image 26 – Piece on a blind gable - São Paulo, Brazil.

Source: Photo by the author.

4.2. PLACE AND NARRATIVES

Graffiti and street art are simultaneously connected in spatiality – “graffiti that is on top of graffiti that is bordered by more graffiti” (Palmer, 2017, p. 3681) – and temporally: with the history and the past, present, and future narratives. In that sense, one can argue that there are some preferred locations, depending on who is the artist or what is the concept or idea being conveyed.

As the streets are a space of democratic excellence, it is where people will be confronted with messages, with the dialogues of the public arena. “The good places to intervene depend a lot on the work. Sometimes I choose sites that may even be hidden, even derelict, precisely because of the image I want to portrait. Sometimes I look around searching for places that have meaning, that will make

sense for the phrase. For example, I did a ‘Freedom Fall’ upside down in a house without a roof (Image 27), so when you turn it upwards you can see the sky below, so there are times that you really look for the place to have more meaning, more impact” (Miguel Januário, Mais Menos, on interview realized on May 8th, 2020).



Image 27 – ‘Freedom Fall’, by Mais Menos.
Source: Mais Menos Instagram account.

Taking yet other examples in the city of Oporto, there is the case of a street called *Miguel Bombarda*, that houses most of the city’s art galleries. In that same street, the frequency of graffiti and other artistic manifestations outside the galleries, displayed on the public space, is notorious. It is almost like a democratic art exhibit from the inside going out. This is a place where the art attracts more art, although the art exposed in the private space and the art featured in the public space have very different characteristics and purposes (Image 28).



Image 28 – Graffiti (mostly paste-ups) in Miguel Bombarda street.
Source: Photos by the author.

Following this same theory, it is also noticeable that public spaces with high historical and/or political loads – such as the Berlin wall or the Palestinian wall – are targeted as preferable locations for expressing related narratives.

Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1973) believed that cities were the product of an invisible mental structure, a kind of underlying order beyond our reach that would insinuate itself over spaces and express itself in either a symbolic or real way "a bit like unconscious concerns take advantage of sleep to express themselves".

It is important to emphasize that, when the content is the lead actor, the skills are less relevant and it does not make much difference if you are well known and in the scene for a long time or if you are just a toy¹³ getting started. What one is trying to say is what is taken into consideration. The instagram project @narrativaspossiveis registers these not-so-skilled yet very meaningful messages existing throughout the city of Fortaleza, in Brazil.

The specific location of these artistic interventions in the public urban space emerges as an enabler of new forms of dialogue between the artist and the spectator/audience (Sequeira, 2015). "An interstitial practice that creates its own specific way of using walls: it is a "longitudinal" rather than a "perpendicular" style, which transform the wall into a fragment of a "prolongable" series, a part of a continuing conversation" (Mubi Brighenti, 2010, p. 315).



Image 29 – Relationship between place and narrative: Graffiti on the door of an abandoned building, which says "Espaços vazios convocam histórias" ('Empty spaces summon stories').

Source: Photo by the author.

¹³ See definition of writer in Glossary (Annex).

This tie between place and narrative can be quite varied, as each location – and each place within the said location – can carry its own narrative. Though it is important to emphasize that ‘place’ (or location) here can refer to various spatial scales, either national, regional, municipal, or local – to a specific location within the city – as aforementioned. And since graffiti is often an activity that reflects the places’ ‘atmosphere’, it has the ability to capture each particular portrait. In the city of Oporto, for instance, one can find many examples of that ‘tie’ in different locations. There are specific narratives (and graffiti) for empty/abandoned places (as seen on Image 29), some related to urban issues such as real estate speculation (Image 30), graffiti linked to football – as one of the players of greatest international reference is Portuguese (Image 31), and graffiti to attract people and tourists inserted on strategic locations (Image 32), just to cite a few.



Image 30 – Insurgent graffiti: Written on the siding of a construction site, it disapproves of the real estate situation, affirming it makes the city 'hollow'. Here it is also interesting to note the parenthesis, which says "Apagam, volto a escrever" (Delete it, I'll write again), essentially communicating that any effort to 'hide' the situation will be pointless.

Source: Photo by the author.



Image 31 – Piece that portrays a man holding five golden balls. Cristiano Ronaldo, Portuguese football player, has won five times the 'Golden Ball' FIFA award. This is painted near the bridge that connects Oporto and Gaia.

Source: Photo by the author.



Image 32 – “Street Art Porto - Caixas EDP”: This is the result of the creativity of the artists challenged by Oporto’s Municipal chamber to painting the electrical distribution boxes that exist on the streets. This box is one of the many existing in Rua das Flores, a street highly frequented by tourists, which can be considered as strategic placement.

Source: Photo by the author.

By looking at the examples above it is possible to infer that the narratives are as much a part of the place as the place is a part of the narratives. It is similar to the relationship established by Lefebvre (Kerr, 1992) between society and space, where one influences, feed, and helps create the other. One can also argue that some of the content that graffiti carries do not necessarily belong to the narrative itself, it is sometimes linked to a more critical positioning (usually through sarcasm) towards a certain story. And that viewpoint – the critical, sarcastic one – can be directly bonded to the ‘artist’ perspective previously presented in section 3.4. Also, it is possible to observe that there are ‘desired’ narratives as well – like the ones aimed for tourists – which are created (and sometimes forced) and intend to evoke an appealing tale to make places more attractive, interesting and unique.

Furthermore, it is important to explore the ‘man-place’ relationship. The ancient Roman ‘*Genius loci*’ concept defends the notions of the spirit of a place, denoting all the features that give life to places. The experience of different places and distinct ‘atmospheres’ is a major human interest. Being located in space and exposed to a certain environmental character is an inherent part of life (Norberg-Schulz, 2013, p. 280). People orientate themselves within places and identify with the (urban) environment, and the insertion of a remarkably visual feature such as graffiti can have a great impact on place making and identity.

5

EXPLORING URBAN ART PROJECTS IN PORTUGAL AND BRAZIL

Urban and street art projects have been increasing in numbers and gaining notoriety in many locations around the world. Those kinds of events have a real and direct impact on the places that host them, changing ephemerally or permanently the urban visual structure and environment. So much so that one can argue that they somewhat work as selective participative planning, as they act as a tool for spatial transformation by adding new layers of colour and meaning.

“At present, issues relating to placement and visibility have been thrown into sharp relief by the rising popularity of street art” (Iljadica, 2016, p. 28). Some project’s organizers compare the interventions made to an ‘open-air museum’, considering the graffiti displays to be works of art that are democratically available for all. The validation and acceptance of this form of artistic expression expanded, having reached a level of recognition that prompts its commissioning, regularization, and incorporation into scenarios where it was previously excluded from.

Even the public entities – be that the municipality or the government in a larger scale – have begun to acknowledge the presence of graffiti/street art as an added value to the urban environment. As a strategy, the government tends to include graffiti to the urban planning agenda with a prophylactic intent, aiming to controlling these manifestations through a public program of cultural and/or artistic promotion, thus preventing freestyle, unwanted and disorganized displays. This section will present some examples of these programs, festivals and other events, examining their action plans as well as general acceptance and success in a local perspective.

5.1. INTRODUCTION TO CASE STUDIES: URBAN ART PROJECTS IN PORTUGAL AND BRAZIL

As graffiti begins to have a tangible impact in people and in the cities, and with the increasing interest that it has been provoking amidst the national population and the tourists, related events start to appear

in different European countries, including Portugal. A similar trajectory also took place in Brazil, where the development of exhibitions, festivals and public programs featuring graffiti and street art is progressively growing.

5.1.1. PORTUGAL

Portugal has demonstrated a significant opening to graffiti related projects, such as the Urban Art Gallery – GAU (*Galeria de Arte Urbana*) that promotes graffiti and street art in ‘authorized’ environments in Lisbon, being that it is a project developed by the Municipality.

The country also has a strong scene of graffiti events, festivals, and initiatives – such as collectives and stores – among which stand out (Teixeira, 2015):

- WOOL – Covilhã’s urban art festival: Regular events that organize pieces that relate to the theme of wool, to be displayed in the walls of the city of Covilhã. Its last edition counted with the participation of renowned national artists as well as international artists, such as Bordalo II (PT), Add Fuel (PT), Bosoletti (AR), and Gijs Vanhee (BE) – Image 33. This festival counts with the support of the local municipality, among other entities.



Image 33 – Wool festival. Piece by Gijs Vanhee, a belgian street artist.

Source: ‘Center of Portugal’ website.

- PUTRICA – an annual festival performed in *Freamunde*: It is an acronym that stands for Temporary Urban Proposals for Rehabilitation and Cultural and Artistic Intervention. It started in 2013 as part of the *Sebastianas* Party program, and its main objective is to raise awareness of the integration of art in the urban space (Image 34). The last edition – 7th Edition – in 2019 counted with the presence of some renowned Portuguese artists as Fedor, Godmess, Mesk, and Third. This festival also counts with the support of the local municipality, among other entities.



Image 34 – PUTRICA, in Freamunde. Piece by Frederico Draw.

Source: Projeto PUTRICA Facebook Page.

- Underdog – a platform that connects street arts and the market (buyers) in Lisbon;
- CIRCUS – a cultural structure located in Oporto that promotes street art and illustration.



Image 35 – Exhibits on Circus Network and Underdog, respectively.

Source: Circus Network and Underdog's official websites.

As the most prominent cities in Portugal, Lisbon, and Oporto can be highlighted when it comes to housing and supporting events, programs, projects, and other initiatives involving street art.

In Oporto there is a public company called Ágora – former *PortoLazer* – that coordinates culture, sport and entertainment for the Municipality¹⁴. In 2014, the extinct *PortoLazer* organized the Invicta urban art program, ignited by a great exhibition called ‘Street Art AXA’, planned to transform a building in *Avenida dos Aliados* in a street art destination¹⁵. This exhibition had a significant adhesion, which demonstrated a wave of consensus between the municipality and the public regarding the development of urban art in the city. The following action plan was the commissioning and execution of several murals throughout the city, but only a few were actually accomplished. The main flaw pointed out by the artists was the lack of legalized walls, either permanent or ephemeral, that allowed creative not-conditioned artistic experimentation. This generated disappointment and disbelief among the artists and the government's intentions were questioned. The municipality defends itself claiming

¹⁴ Available at: <http://www.agoraporto.pt/?p>

¹⁵ Available at: <https://streetartaxaporto.wixsite.com/streetart>

lack of understanding by the artistic community regarding planning and logistics associated with such a program: the licensing procedures are time-consuming as bureaucracy stands in the way. Artists also complain that it is easier to work and be recognized outside their own city and/or country than within¹⁶. Currently, the Ágora municipal company has a platform called Plaka, which brings together projects that embody a municipal policy to support contemporary artistic practices in Oporto, giving shape to several initiatives¹⁷.

As already mentioned above, Lisbon’s municipality runs an institution called Urban Art Gallery (GAU) under the Department of Cultural Heritage of the Lisbon City Council. Its main mission is “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, in opposition to the illegal acts of vandalism that attack the city”¹⁸. With twelve years of existence – it was created in 2008 – the institution is well-rounded and consolidated and is present and available in all digital platforms, having a website, a Facebook page, an Instagram, an Issuu page and a YouTube channel. GAU’s website includes an extensive photo gallery of Lisbon’s graffiti and street art, where it is possible to filter the search by projects, artists or year, for example. One can also find maps showing various routes that indicate pieces done in previous editions of the MURO Urban Art Festival – editions from 2016 to 2019 (as illustrated on Image 36), as well as traversing urban arts nucleus inside Lisbon. The differential highlight of the website is an exclusive section that points out several exhibition spaces dedicated to urban art in Lisbon, some of them open, and thus can be accessed by any artist freely, and others to which artists can apply, presenting their portfolio/project¹⁹.



Image 36 – Example of routing map available on GAU’s website.

Source: GAU official website.

¹⁶ Available at: <https://jpn.up.pt/2017/04/13/arte-urbana-no-porto-um-programa-ainda-nao-convence/>

¹⁷ Available at: <http://plaka.porto.pt/pt/colectivos-plaka/>

¹⁸ Available at: <http://gau.cm-lisboa.pt/gau.html>

¹⁹ Available at: <http://gau.cm-lisboa.pt/onde-pintar.html>

5.1.2. BRAZIL

If compared to Portugal, one can say that Brazil is a bit behind when it comes to public support to projects and initiatives related to graffiti. On the other hand, the country has a strong graffiti scene, being home for greatly recognized and internationally renowned artists such as *Gêmeos* (Image 37).



Image 37 – Castle painted by Os Gêmeos in Scotland. The twin artists have gained international fame for their work.
Source: Os Gêmos official website.

As Brazil has large territory and is formed by twenty-six states plus the federal district, the number of festivals, events, and other initiatives are greater than Portugal, as one would expect. Currently, it is possible to find annual editions of relevant festivals in all five Brazilian regions – both in larger cities such as São Paulo and in less obvious states such as Acre. Some examples are:

- RB Graffiti, in Rio Branco (AC) – North Region: Promoted by the *Aquiry Crew* group, the event promotes artistic creativity and social conscientization through cultural interventions in the city. The third edition, in 2019, counted with more than one hundred national and international artists between graffiti writers, street artists, and local rappers. The last edition held a special invitation to female artists, which was an innovative initiative (Image 38). The municipality was present at the opening of the festival and supports it by legalizing the interventions being done during the event, but both the organization and funding are private.



Image 38 – RB Graffiti held a special invitation to female artists on the last edition (2019).

Source: RB Graffiti Facebook Page.

- Festival Concreto, in Fortaleza (CE) – North-eastern Region: It is an international festival promoted by the IACIS Institute in partnership with Flexos Arts and Amplitude Urban Art School, with institutional support from several local public entities, including the municipality and some art-related organizations. The event includes workshops, lectures, exhibitions, musical performances, theatre and graffiti urban interventions (Image 39). The festival has been happening since 2013 and since then has had altogether the participation of 76 international artists, 107 national artists, and 383 local artists. This year’s edition, 2020, introduces a partnership with a Mexican association called WAD²⁰, that aims to “make each city, town or route an art destination while generating an active sense of art in different destinations and in society.”



Image 39 – Festival Concreto, in Fortaleza. Mural by Speto, made on the 2017 edition.

Source: *Diário do Nordeste* newspaper oficial website.

²⁰ <http://wearewad.com/somos-wad/#1464409793158-74d9df78-ad51>

- MATOGRAFF, in Sinop (MT) – Midwest Region: It is an international festival introduced to the urban agenda in 2019, promoted by CUFA Sinop (a non-governmental organization) in partnership with the Municipality of Sinop through the Department of Culture and Education. The event promoted graffiti interventions in addition to task forces for revitalizing public spaces in the city and counted with several national and international artists that created pieces on the theme “Amazon” (Image 40). It is important to emphasize that graffiti is considered art in *Mato Grosso* and is recognized as a cultural activity via Law 9.184 of the Legislative Assembly, and the Sinop Law 2.548 of April 26, 2018, institutes the ‘Municipal Week of Urban Art and Graffiti’ in the city.



Image 40 – Matograff festival. The 2019 edition's theme was “Amazon” (as in the forest).
Source: *Noticiário Periférico*.

- Graffiti Biennial, in São Paulo (SP) - Southeast Region: This is a broad event in relation to styles and techniques and prioritizes mega formats such as large-scale murals (Image 41). In addition to the pieces, the event also offers activities such as lounges, a multifunctional patio, educational film shows, discussion panels, workshops, and performances. The last edition, in 2019, brought an innovative aspect with the development of QR codes that showed the artists' profile and bio. A stronger female participation among the artists (25%) was also a new feature and altogether, eighty international artists were involved.



Image 41 – Large mural painted during Bienal do graffiti (Graffiti Biennial), in São Paulo.

Source: *Arte fora do museu* website.

- *Arte Com Festival* or Community Urban Art Festival in Florianópolis (SC) - South Region: *Arte Com* is a voluntary project created by PSF Architecture e *Alta Arquitetura*, with support from the Community Association of the Oriental Centre of *Florianópolis*, and several other private actors. The projects' main objective is to develop art, culture and citizenship activities in the community through the resignification of public space (Image 42). The first edition, in 2019, counted with twelve national artists that created fifteen murals that were painted with the help of the local community.



Image 42 – Arte Com Festival, in Florianópolis. One of the event's aims is to resignify public space.

Source: *Floripamanha.org* official website.

But even with the exponential growth of the graffiti scene nationwide, the lack of more cooperation and acceptance by the public entities is still perceived as a drawback. Yet, it is noticeable, that this has been gradually changing.

5.1.3. NORMS AND LEGISLATION – THE INSTITUTIONAL BIAS

An anonymous graffiti writer gave the following statement for a book writer: “Graffiti breaks every rule but within itself still has rules” (Iljadica, 2016, p. 287).

It is argued that the diversity of graffiti — in terms of its authors, styles and significance — poses a number of problems for agencies attempting to classify graffiti as ‘crime’ or ‘art’, and to control its occurrence, oscillating between ‘eradication’ and ‘permission’. The stereotypical view of graffiti artists as immersed in cycles of vandalism and/or gang violence is, oftentimes, outdated and the complex and creative aspects of graffiti culture need to be brought into light. It is possible for regulatory bodies to engage with and promote graffiti culture and this engagement must go beyond authorising a profusion of graffiti related activity across communities (Halsey and Young, 2002).

The relationship between the public power – and its representative institutions or public entities – and graffiti has been somewhat uncertain over the years. Even though graffiti has been growing in recognition and acceptance, it is still a delicate subject when it comes to regimentation and planning. As already mentioned in previous chapters, the government tends to have a ‘prophylactic’ approach towards graffiti and street art, where there is more interest to keep the interventions under control than to really explore the potential of a more balanced partnership.

To bring this discussion to a tangible level, the laws and norms surrounding graffiti were analysed for both Portugal and Brazil, in addition to a few examples of publicly supported projects and programs involving graffiti being currently held on those countries.

In Portugal, Law nº 61/2013 “establishes the regimen applicable to graffiti, display, perforation, and other forms of alteration, even if temporary, of the original features of the external surfaces of buildings, pavements, sidewalks, walls, and other infrastructure” (Assembleia da República Portuguesa, 2013). Section 3 of the aforementioned law states that “it is a responsibility of the City Hall to license graffiti interventions in previously identified sites, upon submission of a project followed by the expressed authorization from the owner of the relevant surface”. Section 4 goes on and says that “Municipalities can promote **temporary and controlled** use of public spaces, which should be determined considering the exposure of graffiti, perforation and or display, namely for the promotion of associative dynamics and community.” Between the many Portuguese public entities assisted under the legislation is GAU, in Lisbon – previously mentioned on item 5.1.1 – which main mission is “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, in opposition to the illegal acts

of vandalism that attack the city”. As stated by Miguel Januário – also known as Mais Menos on the streets – in his interview, GAU’s main goals are “to control the interventions and to capitalize on the graffiti’s artistic potential.”

The law aims to keep control of the interventions within the public instruments and to protect private property owners, by imposing a set of bureaucratic steps to a practice that should be a lot more spontaneous and obliging the ‘actor’ (street artist, in this context) to pay fines from a €100 to a €25 000, varying according to the ‘infraction’. It is of interest to note here that it is established in the law that 60% of the fine paid goes to the State.

In Brazil, Law nº 9.605/1998 – known as the Federal Law for Environmental Crimes – divided the graffiti-related urban interventions in two: “*pichação*”²¹ and graffiti. “*Pichação*” was considered to be a crime punishable with three months to one year in prison plus fine, whilst graffiti was allowed under controlled circumstances and with previous authorization, as in Portugal (Casa Civil da Presidência da República do Brasil, 1998). Thirteen years later, Law nº 12.408/2011 alters Section 65 of Law nº 9.605, “to decriminalize the act of graffiti, and provides for the prohibition of the sale of paints in aerosol-type packaging to children under eighteen years” (Casa Civil da Presidência da República do Brasil, 2011).

It is important to highlight that, in Brazil, state laws and municipal laws also exist, and they work under the federal law's guidelines. But since the state laws are normally more detailed, they end up being more effectively used and enforced than the federal – and broader – ones. In Rio de Janeiro, for instance, Municipal Law nº 38.307/2014 even guarantees the preservation of graffiti for two years, provided that “weather conditions, accidents or fundamental urban works do not harm or interfere with the aspect of artistic work” (Prefeitura Municipal do Rio de Janeiro, 2014). On the other hand, in São Paulo, the interventions are regulated by the Law nº 14.223/2006 or “*Lei Cidade Limpa*” (Clean City Law), which allows graffiti in public spaces provided that it is jointly authorized by the Commission for the Protection of the Urban Landscape and the sub-municipalities – meaning with controlled permission, as most commonly seen in various other cities’ regulations (Prefeitura Municipal de São Paulo, 2006).

São Paulo has an initiative called MAAU-SP²², an acronym that stands for Outdoor Urban Art Museum, which consists of thirty-three graffiti pieces painted on the pillars that support an elevated section of the municipal metro line in the North Zone of the city (Image 43). This area was one of the first targeted by graffiti in the 1980s, so it is significant historically. The project was elaborated when

²¹ For contextualization purposes, the term “*pichação*” in Portuguese is more often related to tags and throw-ups, as graffiti relates to what is considered to be more artistic interventions, such as murals.

²² <https://museuabertodearturbana.wordpress.com/>

some street artists were arrested while painting at the site and then decided to get together and presented a proposition to the Secretary of State for Culture, the president of the metro company, and the director of the City Planning Secretariat. The project was approved and generated a partnership between the Metro Company, the Secretary of State for Culture, *Paço das Artes* – an institution that opens space for the production, promotion, and diffusion of young artistic practice – and *Galeria Choque Cultural* – a referenced private art gallery focusing on urban art and new contemporary languages. This is an interesting example of how public and private entities can come together to form a stimulating alliance where both the city – and thus the public power – and the artists can benefit. Although it is important to point out that the initiative came from the artists as it normally happens, not the public power.



Image 43 – Museu Aberto de Arte Urbana (Outdoor Urban Art Museum).
Source: MAAU-SP official website.

5.2. FROM THEORETICAL TO EMPIRICAL: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RESEARCH

The methodology applied in this work consisted of several steps, beginning with a bibliographic revision to create a theoretical backup on the subject, leading up to the final step that consisted in the development and analysis of a series of interviews (see Annex) to add a practical standpoint to the research.

Since the overall methodology and the structure of the dissertation were already indicated in the first chapter, this session will address only the different moments of practical data collection and the organization of the line of reasoning behind the research.

Nonetheless, before further exploring the aspects in this chapter the author feels it is important to highlight that, during the development of the research, there was a unique public health situation in place. In the first months of 2020, a pandemic situation emerged in Europe and later globally, and it led to the consequent declaration of a state of emergency in Portugal. Once the restrictions took place

and the quarantine period started, it was not possible to collect live data anymore, what became an impediment to carry out interviews face to face. This had a considerable effect on obtaining the results since the majority of the people that were contacted via virtual means didn't respond, being them artists or public/governmental entities. Contact was attempted using different means, such as telephone calls, emails, and messages on social media, but since almost everything was shut down – private establishments, commerce, public departments – it was difficult to get a hold of the relevant people. Some of the artists, however, end up providing feedback that they weren't going to be available to help with the interviews because of the timing and all that was happening: being working parents, being caretakers, being sick, having people on the family getting infected with the virus, and relatives and friends who passed away were some of the situations mentioned. Therefore, in order to complement the research in light of the constraints, it was decided that data obtained indirectly would also be added to the research – information based on interviews given by artists and public entities in other contexts and not directly for this thesis, but involving the same themes and issues addressed in this work.

5.2.1. THE PICTORIAL DATABASE

The image collection and the creation of a photographic database took place in parallel to the theoretical research, in order to subsidize and illustrate the argumentation. The method of gathering the images was a combination of directed sampling and accidental encounters while traversing some cities and urban centres, giving emphasis to the walking methodology developed by João Teixeira Lopes in 2008 (in Fortuna and Proença Leite, 2012) that presupposes walking through the city as a methodological option which allows not only to observe the city from within, but to awaken in the researcher a reflective thinking about the object, which refers to Bourdieu's proposal of participatory objectification (Sequeira, 2015). Those walks initially took place as 'flânerie', associated with a sort of a detached strolling as a practice that helps the observer to acutely comprehend and absorb the rich variety of the city landscape. It acts almost like taking a 'moving photograph' of the urban experience through unobtrusive observations.

At the start, the author took photographs of graffiti as she found it while walking down the streets, applying this intuitive exploration method that happened mainly in central locations. Eventually, the sampling method became more directed by a process of questioning and following the recommendations of locals and artists – a sort of snowball approach for finding areas that were particularly saturated with graffiti or that had distinct examples related to the thesis theme.

5.2.2. THE INTERVIEW STRUCTURE

An interview is a technique used to collect data, whose main objective is to understand the meanings that the interviewees attribute to specific questions and/or situations.

On the other axis of data collection, the interview guide and its different elements were structured, in order to better understand the representations and perspectives on the production of street art by its different actors. Some of these actors – mainly street artists but also public entities and street art related collectives – were then identified, selected and approached to be interviewed, both in Portugal and in Brazil to enable a comparative review.

The structure of the interview was defined to help explore the objectives surrounding the theme addressed in this thesis, as already presented in Chapter 1:

- **What are the writers'/artists' motivations when selecting the content of their work?**
– The main goal was to obtain a better understanding in regards the facts that drive the artists' creativity and what is the criteria behind the selection of a piece's theme.
- **How do the public space and its dynamics influence the writers/artists regarding their choices on what to paint and where to do it?** – The question raised here aimed at comprehending the influence and impact that the public space and public events have on the selection of the issues addressed within graffiti. To understand to what extent the public and urban dynamics impact the artists' expressiveness.
- **How the writers/artists choose the places to intervene?** – The focus here was to identify the spatial relationship the artists have with determined locations and capture their individual sense of place.
- **How do graffiti messages come to have a socio-political connotation?** – This intended to grasp the interconnections (and probable overlay) between the graffiti artistic expressions, the urban narratives, and the activist positioning.
- **How does the government see these forms of expression?** – This questioning sought to perceive the institutional bias and positioning towards graffiti, especially the non-commissioned, more spontaneous, and insurgent ones.
- **How does the relationship between public power and writers/artists and graffiti unfold?** – Here we expected to delineate the artists' viewpoint towards the public institutions (and their orientation concerning graffiti).

A series of points of interest were outlined and screened, resulting in the following questions, which were defined in alignment with the main issues presented above. The aim of those ten questions was to base the interview that would be conducted with the relevant people.

1. How did the idea / option of using the streets, the urban public space, come to support your work?
How does the public space influences what you do?
2. What does it mean to be able to create on the streets (or for the streets)? What possibilities does it bring? What motivates you and drives you most? Do you seek validation and/or recognition?

3. Regarding your artistic work in general: what techniques have you tried, and which do you prefer (tags, throw-ups, stencils, paste-ups, murals ...)? Do the techniques change according to the place? What is your reaction towards 'blank' surfaces?
4. How do you choose the places to insert your work at? What, in your opinion, is an ideal place to intervene? What characteristics should this place have?
5. To what extent is your work influenced by local and/or public issues?
6. In what cities have you had the opportunity to do graffiti/street art? Does the geographic location (city, country) influence the content of your work?
7. Do you use the streets as a means of expression? Do you use street art to interact with people? Does your work carry a message for its viewers? If so, how do you choose that message? What topics do you address and why?
8. How do you see the relationship / perception of people (public spaces' users) with the street art embedded in their daily lives?
9. How do you see the relationship between the public power (municipalities, government) and graffiti/street art? And between the artists and the public power (government)?
10. How do you see the evolution of urban art itself – from illegal, to more and more visible and legitimized? In your opinion, what are the thresholds dividing 'art' from 'vandalism'? Do you think there is a transgressive instinct linked to graffiti/street art?

With the progress of the research and considering the challenges faced on the initial approaches due to the global health situation (Covid-19 pandemic) in place at the time, the strategy had to be shifted amidst. Since the health crisis prevented the researcher from personally conducting the interviews, which had a considerable impact on the amount of feedback obtained through the months. The interview template was then turned into an online questionnaire with multiple-choice questions as an alternative endeavour to reach a wider spectrum of people while facilitating the participation, thus enable obtaining more results. The interview template and the online questionnaire template are available in the Annex section. It is important here to emphasize that both files were produced to translate the author's objectives into instruments of support and complementation of the theoretical research, considering the need to shift the analysis of the practices themselves to the relationships they establish with the city (Magnani apud Sequeira, 2015).

5.3. THE INTERVIEWS: GETTING TO KNOW REAL EXAMPLES

The results and conclusions were achieved through an empirical trajectory, after a crossing of all information, enabling confrontations between real-life examples and the theoretical backup content.

Before conducting the interviews, as previously mentioned in section 5.2.2, some artists were pre-selected and contacted to find out their availability and interest to participate in the research. Not all pre-selected artists were available, especially due to the extenuating circumstances in place on the period when the practical part had to be conducted. The list of people who were contacted is available in the Annex. As a result, only 6 artists participated being four Brazilian artists (from the city of Fortaleza) and two Portuguese artists (from the city of Oporto). The individual answers – either transcribed from a Skype meeting or received by email – are available in the Annex section.

The artists were initially classified in groups according to age, sex, background, and technique used, and this classification acted as facilitator element in detecting the relationship (or lack thereof) between these aspects and the artists' approach/interventions. The participants were mainly male (66%), of ages between 29-39 years old, and the majority were Brazilian (also 66%). Between the Brazilians, 25% were female. All the interviewees had bachelor's degrees or higher levels of education, and regular middle-class upbringing with good access to arts and culture in general. The technique most chosen was stencil (50%), followed by murals (34%) and freehand pieces (16%). As it happens in many studies on graffiti, all the interviewees claim to have started with graffiti in their teenage years. On a side note, it was curiously observed that a considerable number of the graffiti artists interviewed are working as tattoo artists in parallel, what indicates a relation between these different forms of art.

For contextualization purposes, it is relevant to demonstrate the overall career path for each of the artists that answered to the interview and questionnaire. By looking at their trajectory it is possible to notice the presence of 'artist' behaviour.

- **Miguel Januário** – Miguel created and has been conducting the 'Mais Menos' project since 2005. The project was initially designed as a part of the research for Miguel's graduation thesis, but it gained a life of its own afterward. The majority of the interventions related to 'Mais Menos' have a claiming and insurgent character and the messages usually have a critical aspect towards socio-political and economic issues. Stencils are the flagship typology, nonetheless, the project encompasses a wide variety of techniques (Image 44).



Image 44 – “Quem és Porto?” (“Who are you Oporto?”) Intervention by Mais Menos in Oporto city centre, using hand painted white and blue tiles (a local symbol).

Source: Mais Menos official Instagram account (@maismenos).

- **Felipe Yarzon** – Felipe is a copywriter working with advertising and marketing, but his graffiti ‘career’ started years before his days in the agencies. He started writing in his teenage years, doing mainly tags and throw-ups, and as he finished school and got older he began to create these ‘catchy’/sarcastic phrases and to hand carve them into old x-rays to imprint his thoughts out on the streets. He says his main goal with that is to incite critical thinking, frequently touching on current public subjects (Image 45).



Image 45 – “Preto na TV”(“Black on TV”). Piece created by Yarzon to reprehend racism.

Source: Yarzon’s Instagram account (@yarzon_).

- **Ian Thomé** – Ian is also a copywriter, so his work focusses mainly on phrases. He started by creating personal and individual messages, that then evolved into wider reflections. Ian says he intends to make the viewers relate to the graffiti content, as he considers that people are more alike than they'd like to admit, especially in about feelings (Image 46).



Image 46 – "Seja o paraíso de alguém" (Be someone's paradise). Stencil created by Ian Thomé. Source: Ian's Instagram account (@ianthomé).

- **Otávio Rodrigues** – Otávio is a graphic designer (Image 47) that decided to take his art into the streets, under the nickname 'Criativo'. He decided to be on the streets to be exposed, but (in his own words): "exposed in a more visceral, less glamorous way than in art galleries". He does mainly pieces and murals and he considers that any activity outside of what is seen as normal or standard by a society may already sound like rebellion or vandalism and to re-signify these values is what makes it attractive. To draw the viewers to dialogue and/or to artistic contemplation.

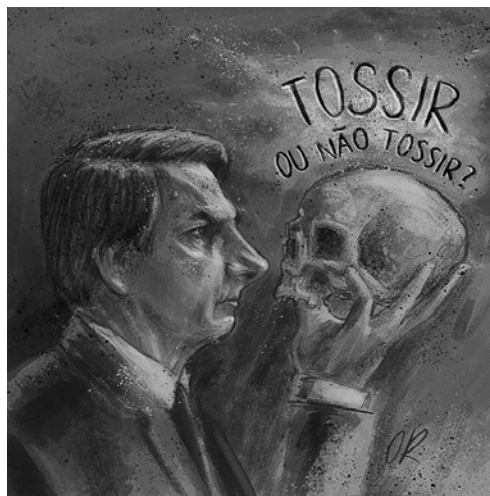


Image 47 – "Néscio" ('Foolish'). Digital illustration created by Otávio Rodrigues, criticizing the Brazilian president's posture towards the coronavirus pandemic. Source: Otávio's Instagram account (@criativo).

- **Tereza de Quinta** – Tereza is a street and tattoo artist, that supports herself entirely from her artistic work. She creates and paints mostly murals, and she is quite often invited by public institutions – both national and international – to develop work for them. She is a prominent name on Fortaleza’s female graffiti scene and oftentimes brings cultural, racial and gender issues into her drawings.



Image 48 – Tribute to Simão Salvador: a sailor from Cape Verde who helped save people from drowning after a shipwreck. Mural commissioned by the Brazilian embassy on Santiago Island.

Source: Tereza’s Instagram account (@terezadequinta).

- **Ana Muska** – Ana is one of the envisioners of ‘Circus Network’, a place by artists and for artists. She is not on the streets so presently, but she works every day with street artists and has a broad overview of the Portuguese graffiti scene. Ana’s master's dissertation on Multimedia approached the Portuguese scene in exploratory research about its relationship with the cities. The ‘Circus’ is a very active place linked to graffiti, where exhibitions are organized and held, supplies like spray paint cans are sold and many street artists’ work is commercialized.



Image 49 – Circus Network: agency and gallery focused on street art.

Source: Circus’ official Instagram account (@circusnetwork).

The crossing of information helped to delineate the analysis between place and other aspects, such as the content of the messages and the notion of transgression, recognition, and validation. Thus, the intention of the interviews was to address four major groups:

- 1) to understand how and why the artists choose the themes they expose/portray;
- 2) how and why they turn the individual voice into a collective claim (‘artivism’);
- 3) how and why they pick specific places to become their ‘canvas’; and
- 4) how they perceive graffiti’s (or street art’s) trajectory from vandalism to art, from rejection to acceptance, from being an urban problem to being recognized and included in spatial planning as an element of added value.

Table 1 – Interview responses’ review: Exploring the relationship between place, narratives, and implicit graffiti aspects

How and why the themes are chosen?	Turning the individual voice into collective (‘artivism’)	How does a place/surface become a ‘canvas’?	Trajectory from ‘vandalism’ to ‘art’
There are things that are transversal, meaning they are timeless. But the work is often inspired by the current events, which base the intervention.	The street artists sometimes ‘invade’ communities to absorb their needs and to reflect that in paint. Major things, like social exclusion. Artists use street/local icons as inspiration.	A good place to intervene depends a lot on the work. Sometimes the sites chosen may be hidden or less obvious, precisely because of the image one wishes to convey.	Grabbing a can and making a line on a wall already carries artistic value, as it indicates a desire to transform the space. Contradicting the norm, as innocently as it may be, is an artistic attitude.
Sometimes the work is influenced by internal questionings.	Street art is one of the most accessible means of artistic dialogue for both those who produce it and those who see it. The concepts can be very diverse and address collective issues such as racism and privileges.	Places that attract the most attention (avenues, main streets and squares) are a target. And roads where public transportation lines pass. After all, this way one can have more than 60 viewers at once.	Graffiti is this cry for space or voice, expressed and contemplated in many ways. Sometimes this cry comes from vandalism, from a transgression or from the instinct that we carry within because it is in our nature: to communicate.
The themes are chosen to intervene, to shout against, to exchange with people and with the place I live in.	Graffiti entails questioning, it oftentimes comes to bothersome, and to validate clusters which seem not to fit in. Create for the streets is creating	Places/surfaces usually reach me, they call me. And obviously, a surface that facilitates application / intervention is always a good canvas.	This has to do with perception, so it’s a very difficult barrier to qualify. Some people still see every intervention as vandalism while others

for the world.

consider even tags as art.

5.4. A QUALITATIVE APPROACH: ASSESSING THE SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES

The first aspect that was approached in the analysis is the comprehension of how and why the artists choose the thematic of their work. When asked about the influence that current and local events have on their creativity and the pieces they produce, most of the artists referred that it is highly influenced. Some mentioned that "... the idea is to leave messages to provoke a bit of critical thinking, sometimes there is a lot of ambiguity in what I write precisely to make people think about what did that mean, things are often more or less, precisely, to leave that space open for thought. And my messages almost always have a political background." (Miguel Januário) And also that "For instance, at election time, I've developed the 'Vote is not tithing' stencil (Image 50), trying to warn of the dangerous link between religion and the state" (Ian Thomé). Thus, one can infer that most of the interventions and messages are political and intend to incite critical thinking and dialogue.



Image 50 – "Voto não é dízimo" ('Voting is not tithing').

Source: Ian's Instagram account (@ianthomé).

The artists also have reported that this urban (silent) dialogue is one of their main inspirations: "My motivation is to provoke people, to make them think, and what attracts me is to be able to put a message to the public, to 'dialogue' with people." (Tereza de Quinta) Felipe Yarzon revealed that sometimes "to intervene, to shout against, is a means to make an interchange and interact with the place I live in".

Regarding the fact that their individual voice can reach a wider spectrum and become a collective voice, some examples were demonstrated: "I see that urban art is one of the most accessible means of

artistic dialogue for both those who produce it and those who see it. The concepts I address are very diverse, but at the moment I've been working on the issue of blackness and privileges" said Otávio Rodrigues, pointing out that both topics reach a large percentage of the population, especially in Brazil, and that people can relate to and be represented by graffiti with said content. Some problems are transversal in the world and many of them are transversal in all societies and once these subjects are displayed in the streets it generates a wave of interconnections that might be characterized as a collective claim, and thus as 'artivism'.

In relation to the places and locations to intervene, the interviewees share specific rules about the appropriateness to put graffiti on certain places, and these rules are also generally in line with what is described in the international literature. The artists seem to have developed their own way of reading the urban landscape, continuously evaluating surfaces to judge if they are suitable for a certain type of graffiti. And to do so, writers and artists take into account all kinds of aspects related to the characteristics of a place and its regulatory regime. Although every individual writer develops his/her unique sense of place, there are indications that a shared, collective perspective exists. One artist referred to the place-graffiti relationship by saying that sometimes it is almost like the intervention was already within the place, in its imaginary. All of the respondents mentioned that one of the advantages of graffiti was that it had given them the possibility to travel and work in different cities, countries, and cultures and that these opportunities were enriching experiences: "Each time I travel I do specific research about the place and with each new research we can come up with ideas or techniques that may be worth adding to our repertoire, so I am always open to new experiences" (Otávio Rodrigues). Besides that, most of them indicated that there is an intricate relationship between the place where one intervenes and the content of the message. On that, Miguel Januário provided powerful demonstrations: "I've been at some international events, and festivals, and I can tell you that the place definitely influences. For example, this one from Stavanger... it is a city in Norway – which is the country with the largest oil production in Europe – and Stavanger is the centre of oil extraction and production, so I did a play or two there to do with it specifically, with the issue of oil (Image 51). I did a Real in Brazil ... I went to the favelas too, some communities, to paint specific things, such as social exclusion, so the work is very technographic in certain places. Once more in Norway, the first time I went there, I did (an intervention) on the issue of them not joining the European Union, a work specifically about them not being part of the European Union. So, there is a certain relationship with the sites and with the summary of what is happening there. When I was in Mexico I worked on the elections, because there was going to be elections. In Italy the same thing. In London about Brexit, in Brazil, as I told you, about the financial issue and about social exclusion, so I always try to find a relationship with the place. It doesn't always happen, for example when I was in Denmark it was a

more generic work, which could have been done there like anywhere else in the world, but there are other places that I go and do works specifically related to that place”.

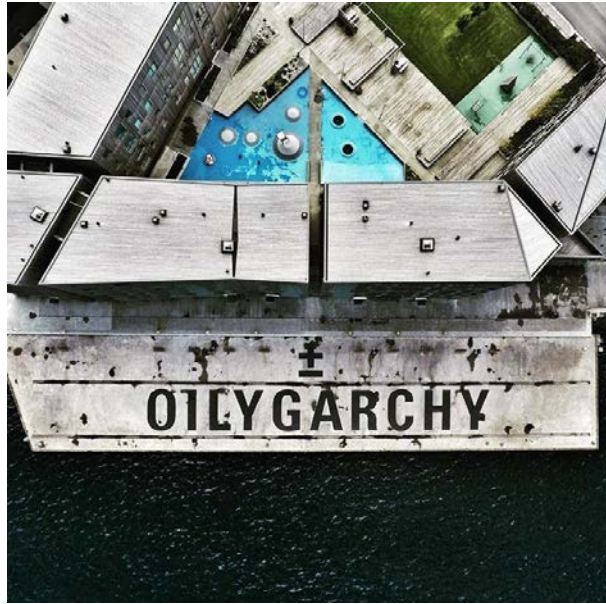


Image 51 – Intervention criticizing the oil production in Norway.
Source: Mais Menos official Instagram account (@maismenos).

Furthermore, Miguel has noted that the different aspects involved – meaning place, technique and narrative – can all be intertwined at once in a determined situation, expanding the relational pattern studied: “For example, recently there have been cases of censorship in Oporto, coming from the Porto Chamber in relation to culture... and I made some stencils with phrases about Oporto and I censored myself with blue ink, some of my words (Image 52). Because of the blue pencil thing, which was the censorship pencil, and that pencil ... the censors cut off what they were supposed to censor with the blue pencil here in Portugal. But there is also something else, another dimension to it, is that Oporto's symbol is blue, that's it. So, sometimes, the technique also depends a lot on where you want to get to (with the narrative)”.



Image 52 – Self-censored stencil by Mais Menos.

Source: Photo by the author.

About the search for validation, none of the interviewees claimed to seek recognition– or even fame, for that matter – affirming that “things happened in a natural way, the interest of the media, the interest of people” (Miguel Januário) or that “Recognition is a mere consequence” of the work (Ian Thomé). The findings tend to go against what is the norm on graffiti-related studies, where the majority state that the dominant motivation for doing graffiti is fame and recognition. However, most of them admit that the internet and social media draw more attention to their work and end up acting as a means to propagating what they do, entailing recognition and consequently some ‘fame’ among certain clusters. This is yet another example of how globalization and the internet have a strong influence on the changes graffiti is going through, which in its early years happened solely on the streets and has now also migrated to the realm of social media, gaining a potentially wider reach.

Lastly, a review took place about the artists’ perception regarding graffiti’s trajectory from vandalism to art, from rejection to acceptance, from being an urban problem to being recognized and included in spatial planning as an element of added value. Most of them reckon that the relationship between public space users and the graffiti scene has progressively grown over the years and street art has been increasingly appreciated by the audience/spectators. The interviewees also agree that there is still a part of the community that remains reluctant to the interventions – even large colourful murals that tend to be most easily accepted – and those people seem to be taking “matters to their own hands” as graffiti gets more celebrated and they end up erasing the work themselves, not waiting for the public power to act. One of them said that situations like these are “doubly interesting, both a bad reaction and a good one, because it affects people somehow”.

The relationship between public power and graffiti though demonstrated to be a bit more sensitive subject. Some of the artists consider it to be a relationship of interests where the public power uses street art to fill out cultural gaps or as branding, as a means of capitalizing and attracting people and/or investments. Others suggested that the public power only aims to control interventions and to ‘domesticate’ of street art, using it mainly as a correction tool (prophylactic graffiti) or as a decorative feature, whether to hide ‘urban wounds’ or to gentrify by increasing the value of urban spaces. On the other hand, there were contrary points of view, from artists that consider it to be an increasingly symbiotic relationship where both (artists and the public power) gain a little from it. Also, as artists have to obtain permission to produce legal graffiti their relation to the public entities and to wider society begins to be based on cooperation instead of conflict.

Touching on the duality between legal and illegal and all other comparisons that it can entail, it was established that there are different ways of looking at this and all are valid. “Some writers consider graffiti to be illegal and others accept money to do so. None is wrong.” All forms of expression bare

authenticity and creativity, thus they are artistic expressions. The vandalism bias is more closely related to the individual perception than with the actual worth of the piece of work. So, it is really a subjective evaluation that depends very little on evidence and relies greatly on mutable elements such as culture, taste, and background.

The presence of the transgressive instinct imbued on street art and graffiti was undoubtedly confirmed.

Table 2 – Synthesis table

General aspects investigated	Results
Degree of influence that current and local events have on creativity	Highly influenced
Use of graffiti as a means to 'dialogue' with viewers	Recurrently
Inspiration drawn from local icons/figures	Somewhat inspired
Use of graffiti as a means to represent a collective voice / to express collective issues, demands and concerns	Mostly
Connection between typology and place (physical location of the surface)	Moderate*
Relationship between message content and place (geographical location)	Strong
Use of graffiti as a tool for urban 'activism'	Mostly
Interconnection between the different aspects investigated: place, technique, and narrative	Heavily intertwined
Search for validation / recognition (fame)	Occasional / weak**
Public perception (public spaces' users) regarding graffiti	Increasingly accepted
Relationship between the public institutions (municipalities, government) and graffiti	Relationship of interest / Controlling (prophylax)
Dichotomy 'vandalism' X 'art' (Refusal X Acceptance)	Contradictory / controversial
Trajectory from illegal to legal	Progressively legalized
Presence of transgressive instinct	Evident

* This link has been weakened mainly due to globalization and internet influence.

** Definitely not the main motivation.

6

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER QUESTIONINGS

Trying to find order and patterns in the complexity inherent to cities is a central concern of urbanism. Despite being labelled as 'good' or 'bad', as 'art' or 'vandalism', it is rather consensual that the presence of graffiti directly influences and changes the features of the places. And in the contemporary scenario, it has become an undeniable aesthetic feature. Still, it is noticeable that there is no consensus regarding graffiti and street art: about its history and chronological frame, about its concepts, about its typologies, about its legality (or illegality), amongst other aspects. Almost all that involves street art can be considered as somewhat hazy and its acceptance is included.

6.1. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As the graffiti scene progresses from a subculture to a culture increasingly recognized, it is important to acknowledge that it is indeed a multifaceted and historically fluid culture. Moreover, it is fundamental to consider the various interconnections that this street culture has with other present-day aspects, such as globalization. Globalization and the internet have changed the world as we knew it and graffiti is also being highly impacted. It has been undergoing a core transition, especially with the influence of social media and the massification of the dissemination of graffiti. This street feature has now the capability to reach a considerably wider audience, and people do not even need to go outside to become a viewer. The most recognized and successful graffiti artists usually have websites where they display their work, oftentimes also putting it for sale. And even anonymous writers can now be on someone's web page or social media – as unexpected as it may be if one considers that this probably was not their primary motivation for doing an intervention. There is no need to be on the streets anymore. Graffiti can now be only a click away. Graffiti was already a truly global phenomenon even before globalization – as it emerged in many different locations with similar characteristics within a coincident timeframe – but it was still geographically limited. Nowadays, graffiti's relation to the sites has become somewhat misrepresented as it is digitally spread. These are

indications towards a distortion on the direct relationship between place and graffiti, impacting the spatial outcome of that particular behaviour – considering both the relation between typologies and the surface's location, and the connection between the interventions and their spatial (and geographic) localization.

Street artists are driven by creativity and that aspect is frequently influenced and impacted by common aspects present in urban dynamics. Evidence points to the existence of a personal criteria which supports the selection of themes to address. The expressiveness of writers and street artists seem to be related to several characteristics, such as the technique used, the sense of place and the implicit connotation within the messages. The analysis suggested an overlay of elements, denoting a remarkable behavioural complexity related to writers and street artists.

Graffiti has a great potential to act as a tool for activism and urban contestation and many artists create based on ideals, or relevant current events, mostly assuming a political stand ingrained on the narrative and message content – even when the work is not textual. Some problems are transversal in the world and many of them are transversal in all societies, and once these subjects are displayed in the streets it generates a wave of interconnections that might be characterized as a collective claim, and thus as 'activism'.

However, it was evident that the institutional bias towards graffiti is a pressing issue, especially when it comes to regulation and directive instruments concerning planning. This should be looked at as an opportunity to better explore the possibilities of partnership and closest interaction between public institutions, spatial planners and street artists as this has the potentiality to bring numerous benefits to the urban environments.

To finalize, the development of this thesis presumed a closer look into the graffiti world and that opened a panorama to further questionings, that are here raised: Is the graffiti scene entering a new era, where it would be fully tangled up with internet and social media, given even wider visibility? When is graffiti becoming a fully digital feature? What is the female artists' main contributions to the graffiti settings and when these waves of change will be felt? How can public entities shift and improve their relationship with graffiti and street art, in order to build a more balanced exchange that could benefit all involved?

6.2. STUDY LIMITATIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

During the development of this research, there was a unique public health situation in place. In December of 2019 a new viral disease was discovered in China and in the first months of 2020 it became a pandemic situation in Europe and later globally. This led to the consequent declaration of a

state of emergency in Portugal, which raised numerous restrictions, including the establishment of a quarantine period that lasted until May. Thus, it was not possible to collect live data anymore, what became an impediment to personally carry out the interviews. This had a considerable impact on the amount of feedback obtained throughout the months since the attempts of virtual contact considering the health concerns proved to be less efficient. There was an intention to conduct interviews with professionals from public entities in Portugal and Brazil but considering that all public institutions were closed both the contact attempts with Oporto Municipal Chamber and with Fortaleza's Town Hall failed. Contact was attempted using different means, such as telephone calls, emails, and messages on social media, and still there wasn't much response from the relevant people. Considerate of the situation, a shift in approach was suggested by the supervisor, so the interview template was turned into a multiple-choice questionnaire as an alternative attempt to reach a wider spectrum of people and thus get more answers. This was only developed and sent in Portuguese.

Even considering all limitations during the development of the research and case studies, the results suggest that these findings could be applicable to other cities with active graffiti scenes.

dizer que também era intenção entrevistar técnicos da Câmara Municipal do Porto e no Brasil, mas que com a pandemia não foi possível.

6.3. FUTURE WORK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the closure of this study, the author expects to continue exploring the subject matter, considering an extension of this work directed to a sociological analysis in a doctorate investigation. Moreover, there is an aspiration to collaborate with other students and with professors in the same line of research in order to develop a collection of articles that could potentially become a book.

Furthermore, as the claims expressed on urban surfaces by graffiti can also be conceptualized as activist positioning, researchers could further engage with the discussion regarding how to explore this activism tool in the benefit of society and urban relations.

The growing participation of female artists and their unique contribution is another subject to study, by linking the general 'activist' aspect directly to feminism (or to a feminist point of view).

Considering the still unclear but evident relationship arising between graffiti and the internet, investigations around this theme could be useful to explore the possibility of street art becoming a fully digital feature and what this transition would entail both for viewers and for artists. Its side impacts on graffiti regulation, the economic aspects and the reflections on urban planning could be included in such investigation.

In addition, future research could focus on the frictions between public entities and street artists, with an aim to develop regulatory instruments capable of encompassing graffiti in urban projects and spatial planning with a broad, holistic perspective. The ability to single out the applicable features to stimulate spatial benefits should be considered as an attribute to transform the relationship beyond controlling, developing partnerships, for example, by critically engaging with urban politicians who marginalize graffiti. A comprehensive understand of the typologies and narratives could provide insights on how to favour from street art instead of rejecting or denying it, helping improve policy surrounding graffiti.

In sum, it is essential to study the ways the urban environment is produced, how it is written and re-written over and over, in a palimpsest of social and political practices that directly influence urban landscapes and people's sense of place.

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A

GLOSSARY

3D Three dimensional letters. Technique invented by *Phase 2*.

Background The space surrounding the output. It is especially important in larger displays and murals.

Bite Graffiti that mimics or imitates a previously existing one. Synonymous with plagiarism, it is very frowned upon and criticized in the subculture.

Block Letters Square and big-sized lettering (See Image 7).

Bubble Letters Round letters, shaped like bubbles (See Image 2).

Bomb Spreading a tag or throw up to as many locations as possible.

Buff Erasing an existing graffiti.

Cap Name given to the diffuser device in a spray can. There are several types intended to have different effects.

Crew A band or cluster of writers.

Cross Covering up an existing graffiti with another. This is usually done by different artists/writers, where one covers the other's work.

Meme An idea, behavior, style, or usage that spreads from person to person within a culture. An amusing or interesting item (such as a captioned picture or video) or genre of items that is spread widely online especially through social media.²³

Skill Synonymous with technique. Name used to describe a technique used by an artist.

Toy A beginner, someone who doesn't have developed a set of skills yet. An apprentice.

Wildstyle An intricate construction with intertwined letters. It is a difficult skill to master, and it is poorly legible for someone outside the graffiti community.

Writer A person who does graffiti, especially in its basic forms of tags and throw-ups. Synonym with to "graffiter" or graffiti artist.

²³ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/meme>

B

IMAGES SOURCES AND REFERENCES

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Image 42: Arte Com Festival, in Florianópolis. Mural painted on the siding of a house. (2019) Florianópolis, Brazil. Available at: <http://floripamanha.org/2019/10/festival-arte-com-vai-criar-museu-a-ceu-aberto-no-alto-centro-de-florianopolis/>.

Image 43: Museu Aberto de Arte Urbana. Graffiti by crew ZNLOVERS. (2019) São Paulo, Brazil. Available at: https://museuabertodeartebana.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/20150523_154226.jpg.

Image 44: “*Quem és Porto?*” (‘Who are you Oporto?’) (Master) Piece created by Mais Menos project / Miguel Januário. (2015) Oporto, Portugal. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/maismenos/?hl=pt>.

Image 45: “*Preto na TV*” (‘Black on TV’). Stencil created by crew Felipe Yarzon. (2020) Fortaleza, Brazil. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CAYJPH8nTFm/>.

Image 46: “*Seja o paraíso de alguém*” (‘Be someone’s paradise’). Graffiti stencil created by Ian Thomé. (2017) Fortaleza, Brazil. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/ianthome/?hl=pt>.

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Image 52: Self-censored stencil by Mais Menos. ‘Censored’. Picture taken by the author Mariza de Alencar e Paiva. (2020) Oporto, Portugal.

C

INTERVIEW & QUESTIONNAIRE TEMPLATES

C.1. INTERVIEW TEMPLATE – ENGLISH VERSION

Name (or artistic nickname/alias):

Age:

Place of Birth:

City where you live:

1. How did the idea / option of using the streets, the urban public space, come to support your work? How does the public space influences what you do?
2. What does it mean to be able to create on the streets (or for the streets)? What possibilities does it bring? What motivates you and drives you most? Do you seek validation and/or recognition?
3. Regarding your artistic work in general: what techniques have you tried, and which do you prefer (tags, throw-ups, stencils, paste-ups, murals ...)? Do the techniques change according to the place? What is your reaction towards 'blank' surfaces?
4. How do you choose the places to insert your work at? What, in your opinion, is an ideal place to intervene? What characteristics should this place have?
5. To what extent is your work influenced by local and/or public issues?
6. In what cities have you had the opportunity to do graffiti/street art? Does the geographic location (city, country) influence the content of your work?
7. Do you use the streets as a means of expression? Do you use street art to interact with people? Does your work carry a message for its viewers? If so, how do you choose that message? What topics do you address and why?
8. How do you see the relationship / perception of people (public spaces' users) with the street art embedded in their daily lives?
9. How do you see the relationship between the public power (municipalities, government) and graffiti/street art? And between the artists and the public power (government)?
10. How do you see the evolution of urban art itself – from illegal, to more and more visible and legitimized? In your opinion, what are the thresholds dividing 'art' from 'vandalism'? Do you think there is a transgressive instinct linked to graffiti/street art?

Finally, is there any aspect that has not been addressed through the questions above that you would like to add?

C.2. INTERVIEW TEMPLATE – BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE (BR) VERSION

Nome (ou pseudônimo artístico):

Idade:

Nacionalidade:

Residência (cidade onde mora):

1. Como surgiu a ideia/opção de usar a rua, o espaço público urbano, como suporte do seu trabalho? Como o espaço público influencia o que você faz?
2. O que significa criar na rua (ou para a rua)? Que possibilidades acarreta? Qual sua motivação e o que te atrai mais? Você busca validação ou reconhecimento?
3. Relativamente ao seu trabalho artístico no geral: que técnicas prefere? Que formas de fazer experimentou (tags, throw-ups, stencils, paste-ups, murais...)? Utiliza técnicas diferentes de acordo com o lugar? Qual é a sua reação a superfícies "em branco"?
4. Como você escolhe os locais onde irá executar/concretizar seu trabalho? O que é para você um bom local para intervir artisticamente? Que características deve ter?
5. Em que medida o seu trabalho é influenciado pelos acontecimentos locais / públicos?
6. Em que diferentes cidades você já teve oportunidade de criar? A localização geográfica (cidade, país) influencia o conteúdo do seu trabalho?
7. Você usa as ruas como meio de expressão? Usa o grafite (street art) como ferramenta de interação com outras pessoas? Considera que o seu trabalho carrega uma mensagem para quem o vê? Se sim, como escolhe essa mensagem? Que temas aborda e por quê?
8. Como vê a relação/percepção das pessoas (usuários do espaço público) com a arte urbana inserida em seu cotidiano?
9. Como vê a relação do poder público com a arte urbana? E dos artistas com o poder público?
10. Como considera a própria evolução da arte urbana – do grafite "ilegal" ao cada vez mais visível, aceito e legitimado? No espaço público (nas ruas), o que considera "vandalismo" e o que considera "arte"? Você acha que existe um instinto transgressor vinculado ao grafite e arte de rua?

Para finalizar, há algum aspecto que não tenha sido abordado através das questões e que gostaria de acrescentar?

C.3. INTERVIEW TEMPLATE – PORTUGUESE (PT) VERSION

Nome (ou pseudónimo artístico):

Idade:

Nacionalidade:

Residência (cidade onde moras):

1. Como surgiu a ideia/opção de usar a rua, o espaço público urbano, como suporte do teu trabalho? Como o espaço público influencia o que tu fazes?
2. O que significa criar na rua (ou para a rua)? Que possibilidades acarreta? Qual a tua motivação e o que te atrai mais? Tu procuras validação ou reconhecimento?
3. Relativamente ao teu trabalho artístico geral: que técnicas preferes? Que formas de fazer experimentaste (tags, throw-ups, stencils, paste-ups, murais...)? Utilizas técnicas diferentes de acordo com o lugar? Qual é a tua reação a superfícies "em branco"?
4. Como escolhes os locais onde irás executar/concretizar o teu trabalho? O que é para ti um bom local para intervir artisticamente? Que características deve ter?
5. Em que medida o teu trabalho é influenciado pelos acontecimentos locais / públicos?
6. Em que diferentes cidades já tiveste oportunidade de criar? A localização geográfica (cidade, país) influencia o conteúdo do teu trabalho?
7. Usas as ruas como meio de expressão? Usas o graffiti (street art) como forma de interagir com outras pessoas? Consideras que o teu trabalho carrega uma mensagem para quem o vê? Se sim, como é feita a escolha dessa mensagem? Que temas abordas e porquê?
8. Como vês a relação das pessoas (utilizadores do espaço público) com a arte urbana inserida no seu cotidiano?
9. Como vês a relação do poder público com a arte urbana? E dos artistas com o poder público?
10. Como consideras a própria evolução da arte urbana – do graffiti "ilegal" ao cada vez mais visível, aceite e legitimado? No espaço público, o que para ti distingue "arte" de "vandalismo"? Achas que existe um instinto transgressor vinculado ao graffiti e arte de rua?

Para finalizar, há algum aspeto que não tenha sido abordado nas questões e que gostarias de referir/salientar?

C.4. ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Note: Since the global health situation (Covid-19 pandemic) prevented the researcher from personally conducting the interviews, and this had a considerable impact on the amount of feedback obtained through the months, this questionnaire was created following a suggestion of the advisor as an alternative attempt to reach a wider spectrum of people and thus get more answers. This was developed and only sent in Portuguese.

Nome (ou pseudónimo artístico):

Idade:

Cidade de residência:

1. Como surgiu a ideia/opção de usar a rua, o espaço público urbano, como suporte do teu trabalho/arte/graffiti?
 - a. O espaço público como uma "mídia", ele amplifica a visibilidade/repercussão do trabalho.
 - b. O espaço público é de todos e está "disponível", por isso uso a rua como suporte.
 - c. Outros (campo aberto para resposta discursiva)
2. Em que medida o teu trabalho é influenciado pelos acontecimentos locais / públicos? (Em uma escala de 1 a 5).

1 Nada, meu trabalho é mais relacionado com assuntos pessoais.
5 Extremamente, tudo que faço está relacionado com o contexto urbano atual.
3. Que temas abordas e porquê? (Possibilidade de escolher mais de uma resposta)
 - Temáticas políticas (críticas ao modelo social, econômico, de gestão pública, etc).
 - Temas individuais/pessoais (como expressões relacionadas à sentimentos).
 - Temas relacionados à situação local (site-specific).
 - Temas comerciais/promocionais (marketing), comissionados por alguém.
 - Temáticas globais (temas que têm impacto/fazem sentido em qualquer lugar do mundo).
 - Outros (campo aberto para resposta discursiva)
4. Qual a tua motivação e o que te atrai mais? (Possibilidade de escolher mais de uma resposta)
 - Minha motivação é provocar as pessoas, fazê-las pensar.
 - O que me motiva é a possibilidade de dar voz ao coletivo, de representar muitas pessoas.
 - O que me atrai é poder colocar uma mensagem para o público, "dialogar" com as pessoas.
 - O que me motiva é a transgressão das normas.
 - Minha motivação é transformar o espaço público num local mais agradável esteticamente.
 - Outros (campo aberto para resposta discursiva)
5. Tu procuras validação ou reconhecimento?
 - a. Sim
 - b. Não, reconhecimento é mera consequência.
6. Que técnica/tipologia preferes ou utilizas mais?
 - a. Tags
 - b. Throw-ups
 - c. Stencils
 - d. Paste-ups
 - e. Murais
 - f. Outros (campo aberto para resposta discursiva)
7. Utilizas técnicas diferentes de acordo com o lugar? (O trabalho se adapta ao local ou superfície onde está inserido?)
 - a. Sim
 - b. Não

- c. Outros (campo aberto para resposta discursiva)
8. O que é para ti um bom local para intervir artisticamente? Que características deve ter?
 - a. Um local com bastante movimento, se possível, em esquinas. E com bastante visibilidade.
 - b. Uma superfície que facilite a aplicação/intervenção.
 - c. Um lugar reservado e menos movimentado, com menor possibilidade de ser "apanhado".
 - d. Outros (campo aberto para resposta discursiva)
9. Em que diferentes cidades já tiveste oportunidade de criar? (Resposta aberta não obrigatória)
10. Os temas são adaptados à localização geográfica (variando de acordo com a cidade ou o país onde fazes uma intervenção)?
 - a. Sim
 - b. Não
 - c. Outros (campo aberto para resposta discursiva)
11. Como vês a relação das pessoas (utilizadores do espaço público) com a arte urbana?
 - a. É uma relação que tem crescido com o passar dos anos e a arte urbana vem sendo cada vez mais apreciada.
 - b. As pessoas são indiferentes.
 - c. As pessoas reagem mal e rejeitam o graffiti e a street art.
 - d. Outros (campo aberto para resposta discursiva)
12. Como vês a relação do poder público com a arte urbana?
 - a. É uma relação de interesses, o poder público usa a arte urbana como branding, como meio de capitalizar e atrair pessoas e/ou investimentos.
 - b. O poder público só visa o controle das intervenções (domesticação da arte urbana).
 - c. Outros (campo aberto para resposta discursiva)
13. Como consideras a evolução da arte urbana – do graffiti “ilegal” ao cada vez mais visível, aceite e legitimado?
 - a. A base do graffiti/arte urbana é a ilegalidade e o instinto transgressor.
 - b. O graffiti/arte urbana era mal visto inicialmente, mas progressivamente tem tido mais aceitação.
 - c. É uma realidade contraditória, onde tanto a aceitação e a rejeição estão bastante presentes.
 - d. Outros (campo aberto para resposta discursiva)
14. No espaço público, o que para ti distingue “arte” de “vandalismo”?
 - a. Tags são vandalismo, o resto é arte.
 - b. Qualquer intervenção ilegal é vandalismo.
 - c. Todas as formas de expressão são autênticas e criativas, portanto não deixam de ser artísticas.

D

INTERVIEWS WITH ARTISTS

D.1. MAIS MENOS = MIGUEL JANUÁRIO

Interview via Skype on May 8th, 2020

Nome (ou pseudónimo artístico): Miguel Januário (maismenos)

Idade: 39 anos (1981)

Nacionalidade: Português

Residência (cidade onde moras): Porto

1. Como surgiu a ideia/opção de usar a rua, o espaço público urbano, como suporte do teu trabalho?
Como o espaço público influencia o que tu fazes?

Vem um bocadinho de trás, eu já fazia graffiti, portanto eu já tinha uma relação especial com o espaço público. E quando concretizei o "mais menos" em 2005 (projeto para tese de conclusão de curso em Design pela Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto), fui desenvolver a parte mais teórica e senti que fazia sentido que (o projeto) tivesse esse lado prático e que o suporte fosse a rua, porque era onde estava a publicidade, é onde estão as pessoas, é um espaço democrático por excelência, portanto fazia sentido por vários motivos que se fosse para esse espaço urbano.

2. O que significa criar na rua (ou para a rua)? Que possibilidades acarreta? Qual a tua motivação e o que te atrai mais?

É um bocadinho as duas coisas, criar para e na (rua). Por que muitas vezes tu vais para rua para criar e na rua surgem-te ideias... ou seja, em confronto com a realidade no local muitas vezes surgem ideias também, porque olhas para o espaço, porque pensas como a coisa pode ser vista, como é que pode dialogar com as pessoas... Para mim a rua é o que eu disse há pouco, é um espaço de excelência democrático, é onde as pessoas vão ser confrontadas com as mensagens, o diálogo é a arena pública por isso, para mim, é o espaço mais importante de todos.

E você acaba atingindo toda a gente, literalmente...

Sim, porque depois tem a questão das redes sociais, tens as fotografias... E é onde está toda a gente, é onde está a publicidade, é onde as pessoas circulam.

Tu procuras validação ou reconhecimento?

Não, no início não... e acabaram por vir mais atrás do próprio projeto do que propriamente... porque eu fui fazendo o projeto de uma forma muito natural, ou seja, eu precisava de extrapolar o projeto para a rua. Portanto, depois as coisas aconteceram de uma forma natural, o interesse dos média, o interesse das pessoas. Foi mais um bocadinho ao contrário, ou seja, vieram foi atrás de tentar perceber o que era o "mais menos", mais do que propriamente eu ir atrás dessa validação. Eu fui em termos práticos, porque como isso fez parte do final do meu curso de licenciatura, era o projeto final e tinha uma parte mais científica, eu fui atrás das pessoas passado um mês ou dois para fazer inquéritos e perguntar às pessoas se conheciam, o quê que tinham visto, pronto, e aí sim fui atrás de uma espécie de validação, mas uma validação mais científica, para dissertação que eu estava a escrever. Mas foi isso, foi muito mais o interesse das pessoas de querer descodificar o que era o "mais menos".

No "mais menos" você sempre assina. E antes, quando você estava na rua a fazer outros tipos de graffiti, você também assinava?

Também assinava, sim. Tinha tags, tinha os meus nomes, sim. Era Caos, Naif, assim uns nomes... mas era graffiti mais graffiti. Apesar que houve uma altura que fazia mais stencil – antes do "mais menos" comecei a fazer stencil – e as vezes não assinava... tinha uma mensagem na rua... ou então assinava com Naif (pseudónimo), mas era assim uma coisa muito anónima.

3. Relativamente ao teu trabalho artístico geral: que técnicas preferes? Que formas de fazer experimentaste (tags, throw-ups, stencils, paste-ups, murais...)? Utilizas técnicas diferentes de acordo com o lugar? Qual é a tua reação a superfícies "em branco"?

O "mais menos" tem uma grande base de stencil, mas tem outras coisas, instalação, prints (paste-ups). Gosto muito das frases, para mim é o core central do trabalho, gosto muito de brincar com as palavras, e o stencil é algo que gosto de fazer. Fora do "mais menos" eu gosto muito de pintar à spray mão livre, não faço muito no "mais menos", só uma coisa ou outra, fiz por exemplo no Brasil, no Rio de Janeiro, quando desenhei um Real (cédula de dinheiro) muito grande, zerado, e aí pintei à mão livre, sem stencil. Mas é de vez em quando. Mas isso é o que mais me agrada mesmo, é pintura livre.

Utilizas técnicas diferentes de acordo com o lugar? Qual é a tua reação a superfícies "em branco"?

Sim, as vezes tem a ver com o próprio trabalho, ou seja, com a intervenção em si. As vezes são frases simples e independentemente do sítio onde é... eu procuro as vezes é o sítio mais especial para a imagem, para quem vier e para a fotografia, para ter um enquadramento mais dramático ou mais destruído... mas por exemplo, agora recentemente houve casos de censura no Porto, da Câmara do Porto em relação à cultura, isso foi agora... antes disso tudo, praí em Janeiro. E eu fui fazer uns

stencils pra rua com frases sobre o Porto e eu próprio me censurei com tinta azul, algumas das minhas palavras. Por causa da coisa do lápis azul, que era o lápis da censura, e esse lápis... os censores cortavam aquilo que deviam censurar com o lápis azul. Mas aqui tem outra coisa também, que é o facto de o símbolo do Porto ser azul, é isto. Portanto às vezes a técnica também depende muito de onde é que queres chegar.

4. Como escolhes os locais onde irás executar/concretizar o teu trabalho? O que é para ti um bom local para intervir artisticamente? Que características deve ter?

O bom local pra intervir, mais uma vez, depende um bocado do trabalho. As vezes eu escolho sítios que até mesmo podem estar escondidos, já devolutos, precisamente por causa da imagem que quero tirar. As vezes eu ando a procura dos sítios para ter significado para a frase. Por exemplo eu fiz uma "Freedom" ao contrário numa casa sem telhado, portanto ao virar ao contrário vê-se o céu embaixo, portanto há coisas que se procura mesmo o sítio para ter mais significado, mais impacto.

As vezes escolho assim e as vezes escolho porque vou descobrindo o local, por exemplo aqui há uns tempo fiz aqui no Cinema Batalha – que agora está em obras mas teve um ano e tal parado – havia uma frase do vereador da cultura do Porto, que faleceu há coisa de dois anos, e ele dizia que a cidade era líquida, e eu fiz um stencil a dizer que "A cidade líquida", sem o acento, e fui por no Batalha. Havia uns sem abrigos a dormir na porta do Cinema Batalha, portanto as vezes escolho assim os locais de acordo com a força e o significado que esses locais acarretam.

Há coisas que nunca fiz, porque são difíceis, e esta d' "A cidade líquida" por acaso antes de fazer no Batalha andava a ver outro sítio que achava que era muito indicado pra isso, ali do outro lado da cidade, mas pronto... ou seja, as vezes há locais ou sítios que são mais indicados pra certas intervenções, como se a intervenção fizesse parte daquilo no imaginário.

5. Em que medida o teu trabalho é influenciado pelos acontecimentos locais / públicos?

No geral, é sempre. Há coisas que são transversais, tipo que eu faço hoje e pode não estar relacionada a um acontecimento de agora, mas faço. E há outras que não, há outras que muitas das vezes a inspiração é daí que vem, um acontecimento que te inspira a ir fazer uma intervenção nesse sentido.

E uma temática como essa, de agora (pandemia global), você já pensou alguma (intervenção) pro Covid?

Sim, algumas coisas. Ainda apesar da circunstância especial que estou a viver na minha vida agora (ele tem uma filha de alguns meses, nasceu no final do ano passado), não ando com tanto tempo... e depois entram outros trabalhos que tenho pra fazer, mas tenho algumas ideias e agora tenho que começar a materializar, sim. Tenho que começar a fazer.

6. Em que diferentes cidades já tiveste oportunidade de criar? A localização geográfica (cidade, país) influencia o conteúdo do teu trabalho?

Já tive n'algumas... Londres (UK), Roma (IT), São Paulo (BR), Rio de Janeiro (BR), Stavanger (NW). Já estive assim em alguns eventos, festivais, e influencia. Por exemplo, esta de Stavanger, que é uma cidade na Noruega – que é o país com a maior produção de petróleo da Europa – e Stavanger é o centro da extração e produção de petróleo, portanto fiz uma peça ou duas lá a ver com isso, especificamente, com a questão do petróleo. O Real no Brasil... fui pra os morros também, algumas comunidades, pintar coisas específicas, como a exclusão social, portanto o trabalho é muito tecnográfico nos locais. Mais uma vez na Noruega, da primeira vez que lá fui, fiz (uma intervenção) sobre a questão de eles não entrarem na União Européia, um trabalho especificamente sobre eles não fazerem parte da União Européia. Portanto existe uma certa relação com os sítios e com essa soma com o que está a acontecer lá. Quando estive no México trabalhei sobre as eleições, porque ia haver eleições, em Itália a mesma coisa, em Londres sobre o Brexit, no Brasil, como te disse, sobre a questão financeira e sobre a exclusão social, portanto procuro sempre encontrar uma relação com o local. Nem sempre acontece, por exemplo quando estive na Dinamarca foi um trabalho mais genérico, que poderia ter sido feito ali como em qualquer lugar do mundo, mas há outros locais que vou e faço especificamente sobre aquele local.

Alguns problemas são transversais no mundo, né? Muitos deles são transversais em todas as sociedades.

Mas há coisas que influenciam mesmo, por exemplo, aqui há uns anos fui a Paris pra um evento num prédio que era uma torre, um bocadinho muito alta, que ia ser destruída para construir... tavam a gentrificar o bairro, ou seja, aquele bairro ia se transformar num bairro rico. Era um bairro pobre, mesmo pobre, e ia se transformar num bairro rico. E aquela torre ia ser destruída. E nós tivemos lá a trabalhar em toda a torre, antes dessa destruição houve um evento lá, organizado por um tipo de Paris que convidou artistas para pintarem os pisos todos por dentro e fez uma espécie de exposição meio ilegal. O que que acontece, eu peguei nessa tema, da gentrificação, e no facto de a custa das pessoas serem expulsas dali, havia sem abrigos a viver a volta, ou seja, a volta do prédio, e havia todo esse processo de gentrificação a acontecer e eu trabalhei sobre isso, sobre a questão de as pessoas estarem sem casa, sobre a questão de estarem a ser expulsas, portanto aquilo... eu fui pra lá sem nenhuma ideia específica, mas percebi o que estava a acontecer aí e trabalhei sobre isso. Como estive lá uma semana, dez dias, desenvolvi um trabalho ali a volta de uma temática que estava a acontecer.

E numa viagem dessas você leva todo seu material com você?

Não. Levo algumas coisas... normalmente ando sempre um alfabeto atrás de mim, tenho vários alfabetos de várias medidas, em cartão e em stencil... levo o alfabeto comigo e levo meia dúzia de materiais básicos, tipo chizatos, colas e coisas assim, depois lá resolvo, lá tenho como resolver. Por exemplo fiz uma peça com uma corda e uma gravata e essa peça fiz lá a primeira vez, portanto, é isso, acabas por desenvolver assim.

7. Usas as ruas como meio de expressão? Usas o graffiti (street art) como forma de interagir com outras pessoas? Consideras que o teu trabalho carrega uma mensagem para quem o vê? Se sim, como é feita a escolha dessa mensagem? Que temas abordas e porquê?

Sim, claramente. Sem dúvida a ideia é mesmo deixar as mensagens para provocar um pouco o pensamento crítico, as vezes há muita ambiguidade naquilo que escrevo precisamente para deixar as pessoas a pensar o que que queria dizer aquilo, as coisa muitas vezes são mais ou menos, precisamente, já para deixar esse espaço em aberto para o pensamento.

As mensagens têm quase sempre um fundo político.

8. Como vês a relação das pessoas (utilizadores do espaço público) com a arte urbana inserida no seu cotidiano?

Acho que é as duas coisas, é interessante, é mais ou menos também. Porque há pessoas que gostam muito, tiram fotografias e partilham e levam mesmo em consideração aquilo que tu fazes. E depois vejo nas redes sociais as pessoas a usarem as fotos, a partilharem e por aí fora, e depois há outras pessoas que se sentem ofendidas, que se sentem-se ameaçadas e apagam as frases... e assim que podem elas próprias apagar, no caso tive frases apagadas por pessoas do espaço, ou seja, num foi por ninguém da Câmara Municipal ou nenhum agente, foi alguém, um morador ou uma pessoa que se sentiu ofendida por aquilo de alguma forma e foi e apagou. O que para mim é duplamente interessante, tanto uma reação má como uma boa, aquilo atinge de alguma forma as pessoas.

As pessoas participam de alguma forma do meu processo criativo. As vezes de uma forma mais direta as vezes de uma forma mais indireta, por exemplo, já discuti frases com amigos e as vezes foi até mais ideia deles e eu digo: "Olha, posso escrever isto?", portanto, já fiz isso também e já, na rua, mais ou menos. Pode acontecer uma ou outra relação mas é muito rápida, eu quando vou à rua escrever prefiro estar sozinho e se passa alguém há pessoas que as vezes possam mandar algum bitaite mas nunca aconteceu porque na rua eu vou, escrevo e vou-me embora, num fico ali muito tempo, são dois minutos ou três, é muito rápido.

É isso a força que eu acho que tem a intervenção no espaço. É essa forma de as pessoas se relacionarem, de se aproximarem da rua, com essa relação com a arte urbana.

E o projeto das letras de esferovite?

Isso foi um projeto específico de um festival que era o Future Places, em que eu fui convidado dois anos pra fazer, e então a ideia foi tirar as letras da parede e dá-las as pessoas para elas escreverem, então a mensagem era: "Escreve o futuro" e então a ideia era que as pessoas escrevessem mensagens sobre o futuro. Foi muito interessante, porque isso fui convidado dois anos para fazer esse projeto, dois anos seguidos, e no primeiro ano, que foi 2010, a crise ainda não tinha batido a sério em Portugal, portanto as mensagens eram muito banais, tipo "Manel loves Maria" e coisas

desse gênero e no ano a seguir, em 2011, a crise bateu aí a fundo e então as mensagens eram super políticas, as pessoas estavam super politizadas no ano a seguir. Pronto, e foi interessante. E depois havia uma certa poética ali, que era o facto de teres trezentos caracteres espalhados em mensagens ao acaso e chegar gente nova que queria escrever a sua mensagem e tinha que tirar da mensagem dos outros para construir a sua, quase como se o futuro duns... as peças do futuro das pessoas estão todas interligadas, nós não construímos o nosso futuro sem nenhum pedacinho do futuro dos outros.

9. Como vêes a relação do poder público com a arte urbana? E dos artistas com o poder público?

É uma relação cada vez mais simbiótica, acho que ambos ganham um pouco com isso. O poder público neste momento, como falamos a pouco, usa muito da street art enquanto ferramenta política, e portanto, como ferramenta de correção, seja para esconder feridas urbanas, seja para gentrificar – para aumentar o valor dos espaços urbanos, para criar decoração, portanto eles jogam um pouco com essa coisa da street art, para preencher lacunas culturais até, ou seja, para partilhar ideias culturais. Os artistas ganham também porque neste momento encontraram algumas formas de subsistência que antigamente não existiam, porque estamos a falar de uma forma artística mais ilegal, portanto há uma aceitação maior agora do poder político/poder público, portanto há aqui uma relação que se cria. Agora há aqui também essa utilização, uma certa domesticação daquilo que é arte urbana por parte do poder político... são relações que se criam. Há vantagens e há desvantagens, é isso, eu gosto de ver o espaço com arte urbana só que também sei que aquela arte urbana ali tem segundas intenções, muitas vezes servindo de ferramenta, usando a arte enquanto ferramenta para interesses específicos.

Quando é uma peça comissionada pelo poder público, eles interferem na mensagem?

Depende, não sei. Na minha não, se interferem não faço. Já tive uma ou outra situação em que dialogamos para chegar a um acordo, mas tranquilo porque estavam todos abertos a isso, mas há outras coisas que não... assim, eu quando vou fazer uma coisa, as pessoas também já sabem o que é que eu vou fazer, é por isso que não sou muito contratado para fazer peças. Porque também é um trabalho muito específico e não é tão ilustrativo ou figurativo e normalmente a malta gosta de coisas mais figurativas e coloridas, e que não encaixa tanto esse tipo de situação no meu trabalho. Mas não, é tranquilo, por exemplo eu tenho um mural – é um dos poucos que tenho aqui no Porto – que é de azulejos, o “Quem és Porto?” e esse mural tem mensagens políticas lá no meio, muitas até, aliás o mural todo em si é uma mensagem política e aquele foi comissionado pela Porto Lazer, a empresa pública de cultura no Porto.

E em relação à Ágora (prévia Porto Lazer) no Porto e Galeria de Arte Urbana (GAU) em Lisboa. O que pensas sobre o poder público ter essa vertente ou ramificação especificamente direcionada para a arte urbana? Se abriu um espaço no poder público pra essa forma de arte? Um espaço que mesmo controlado e domesticado, antes não existia?

É um controle e também é uma mais valia, porque o público gosta de ver (arte urbana). A Galeria de Arte Urbana nasce um pouco até para controlar o graffiti. A proliferação do graffiti que existia no Bairro Alto e na cidade tinha uma ação muito destruidora, de inscrição ilegal, portanto ela (GAU) nasce um pouco para controlar isso e um pouco para capitalizar também o potencial da street art, porque há aí mais uma vez uma relação simbiótica, que por um lado controla e se consegue domesticar a arte urbana e por outro lado também há público, o público gosta, o público quer, consome, portanto também há esse lado de dar aos artistas, que também precisam de viver e sobreviver e de ter trabalho e de oferecer às pessoas que gostam e vão. Há pessoas que viajam para fora para ir consumir arte urbana, há todo um mercado a volta disso. Portanto é também... ou seja, a relação não é toda em si só má e mais dinheiro, há também um lado positivo nisso porque as pessoas também querem.

No Porto passa-se uma coisa muito interessante que é... existem equipas de manutenção que apagam graffiti, e essas equipas de manutenção escolhem que graffiti é que devem apagar e que graffiti é que devem ficar, portanto há graffiti que ficam bem na imagem da cidade e há graffiti que ficam mal e tu vês muitas paredes onde apagam certas coisas e deixam outras. E há uma espécie de "curadoria" por parte das equipas de manutenção do Porto. Para minha tese de doutoramento eu andei uns dois meses com essas pessoas há três ou quatro anos atrás, andamos com eles na rua para perceber como é que eles escolham... faziam a curadoria dos graffiti. O que era bonito ficava e o que não era bonito, apagavam, portanto o critério era este: que é bonito e o que não é bonito.

10. Como consideras a própria evolução da arte urbana – do graffiti "ilegal" ao cada vez mais visível, aceite e legitimado? No espaço público, o que para ti distingue "arte" de "vandalismo"? Achas que existe um instinto transgressor vinculado ao graffiti e arte de rua?

Acho que, para mim, tem a ver com a percepção. Porque há muitas coisas que são tags e assinaturas e que têm um valor artístico por trás, mas aparentemente é vandalismo porque tá a destruir equipamento público. Portanto há aí uma barreira muito difícil de qualificar. É complicado. É muito difícil, eu próprio não sei muito bem. Quase nada para mim é vandalismo porque o próprio ato de vir, pegar numa lata e fazer uma linha em cima numa parede já tem em si um valor, uma certa ação artística, tá uma intenção ali por trás, há uma vontade de transformar o espaço, por muito inocente ou impensada que seja, em si já é quase um ato político de transgressão contra o que é e contra a norma, portanto contrariar a norma, isso já tem em si uma atitude artística muitas vezes inocente. Portanto para mim é muito difícil pensar que é vandalismo.

Claro que há um instinto transgressor, a adrenalina faz parte do instinto de escrever, mesmo que hoje seja mais fácil fazer.

Aqui no Porto como não havia graffiti, nem havia esse vandalismo, ou seja, não havia uma relação ódio perante o graffiti por parte da comunidade nem das autoridades, tu pintavas à vontade porque era tudo novo, percebes? E essa coisa transgressora até vem depois, quando começa a aparecer

muito graffiti, quando começa a saturar e a encher as pessoas e as autoridades... portanto esse discurso de relacionar os tags ao vandalismo veio depois. E aí sim a adrenalina aumenta. Mas agora já volta a ser mais fácil outra vez porque as pessoas acham giro outra vez, portanto é mesmo assim. Mas sim, esse instinto transgressor faz parte, sem dúvida nenhuma, aliás acredito que há muita gente que vá pintar vá pura e precisamente por essa intenção da transgressão. É a vontade de fazer sem poder.

Para finalizar, há algum aspeto que não tenha sido abordado nas questões e que gostarias de referir/salientar?

O graffiti tem sido até uma ferramenta para a gentrificação, por exemplo, ou para reestruturação... para esconder as vezes até feridas urbanas. Em Lisboa isso aconteceu muito, de convidarem artistas de graffiti para pintar prédios devolutos para dar um “bom ar” ao prédio, porque ele não ia sair dali, portanto pintou-se. E isso tem a ver com o planeamento urbano, é uma ferramenta quase.

D.2. ANA MUSKA

Questionnaire answered on May 22nd, 2020

Nome (ou pseudónimo artístico): *Ana Luísa Fernandes de Castro/ "Ana Muska" (Circus Network)*

Idade: *29*

Nacionalidade: *Portuguesa*

Residência (cidade onde moras): *Porto*

1. Como surgiu a ideia/opção de usar a rua, o espaço público urbano, como suporte do teu trabalho/arte/graffiti?

Decidimo-nos focar na arte urbana por ser uma arte emergente, culturalmente diversa e extremamente é interessante.

2. Em que medida o teu trabalho é influenciado pelos acontecimentos locais / públicos?

(Escolha de 1 a 5, sendo 1 = Nada, meu trabalho é mais relacionado com assuntos pessoais e 5 = Extremamente, tudo que faço está relacionado com o contexto urbano atual)

Resposta: 3

3. Que temas abordas e porquê?

(não respondeu)

4. Qual a tua motivação e o que te atrai mais?

Minha motivação é transformar o espaço público num local mais agradável esteticamente.

5. Tu procuras validação ou reconhecimento?

Sim.

6. Que técnica/tipologia preferes ou utilizas mais?

Murais.

7. Utilizas técnicas diferentes de acordo com o lugar? (O trabalho se adapta ao local ou superfície onde está inserido?)

Sim, diferentes artistas, técnicas e cores de acordo com o espaço envolvente.

8. O que é para ti um bom local para intervir artisticamente? Que características deve ter?

Uma superfície que facilite a aplicação/intervenção.

9. Em que diferentes cidades já tiveste oportunidade de criar?

Porto, Matosinhos, Guimarães, Braga

10. Os temas são adaptados à localização geográfica (variando de acordo com a cidade ou o país onde fazes uma intervenção)?

Não.

11. Como vês a relação das pessoas (utilizadores do espaço público) com a arte urbana?

É uma relação que tem crescido com o passar dos anos e a arte urbana vem sendo cada vez mais apreciada.

12. Como vês a relação do poder público com a arte urbana?

É uma relação de interesses, o poder público usa a arte urbana como branding, como meio de capitalizar e atrair pessoas e/ou investimentos ou O poder público só visa o controle das intervenções (domesticação da arte urbana). É um pouco dos dois. É uma questão que depende do local, da relação da autarquia com esta arte, dos artistas que vivem nessa cidade...

13. Como consideras a evolução da arte urbana – do graffiti “ilegal” ao cada vez mais visível, aceite e legitimado?

A meu ver tem sido uma evolução apesar que muito lenta em Portugal. Contudo, existem diferentes formas de ver este assunto e todas são válidas. Alguns writers consideram que o graffiti tem que ser ilegal e outros aceitam dinheiro para o fazer. Nenhum está errado.

14. No espaço público, o que para ti distingue “arte” de “vandalismo”?

Todas as formas de expressão são autênticas e criativas, portanto não deixam de ser artísticas.

D.3. CRIATIVOSO = OTÁVIO RODRIGUES

Interview via Skype on April 23rd, 2020

Nome (ou pseudônimo artístico): **Otávio Rodrigues**

Idade: **39**

Nacionalidade: **brasileira**

Residência (cidade onde mora): **Fortaleza**

1. Como surgiu a ideia/opção de usar a rua, o espaço público urbano, como suporte do seu trabalho?
Como o espaço público influencia o que você faz?

Os trabalhos em grandes formatos sempre me chamaram mais atenção pelo o desafio da produção. O espaço urbano acabou sendo consequência de uma rotina de trabalho voltado a arte visual. O inesperado dessa experiência é a forma como ela dialoga com a sociedade e a comunidade de artistas, e como gosto de jogar uma conversa fora, conhecer pessoas e histórias, tudo isso abriu novas portas e possibilidades criativas no meu trabalho.

2. O que significa criar na rua (ou para a rua)? Que possibilidades acarreta? Qual sua motivação e o que te atrai mais? Você busca validação ou reconhecimento?

Estar na rua é estar exposto. Exposto da uma forma mais visceral, menos glamurosa como costuma se pensar que são as galerias de arte. Qualquer atividade fora do que se é visto como normal ou padrão de uma sociedade já pode soar como rebeldia ou vandalismo. Resignificar esses valores pra mim já é atrativo. Chama aqueles que estão na rua a um diálogo ou uma contemplação artística.

Já a validação e o reconhecimento nunca foram motivadores nos meus trabalhos. As vezes um trabalho pode ser questionador e venha pra incomodar, pra esses tipos de trabalhos, não posso esperar muito ser validado ou reconhecido, mas eles podem estar em momentos na produção, nunca de início. É importante pra mim a validação de uma comunidade onde eu pareça não me encaixar inicialmente, por exemplo, procuro me atentar a esses detalhes por não gostar de tirar o espaço de fala de outros artistas locais. Do reconhecimento, penso que isso deve ser mais como uma consequência do trabalho.

3. Relativamente ao seu trabalho artístico no geral: que técnicas prefere? Que formas de fazer experimentou (*tags, throw-ups, stencils, paste-ups, murais...*)? Utiliza técnicas diferentes de acordo com o lugar? Qual é a sua reação a superfícies "em branco"?

Não me apavoro muito com o branco. Técnicas, se eu puder experimentar, eu experimento, vai muito mesmo da superfície ou da ideia. No momento, o que me atrai mais são murais, lugares que eu possa usar mais os gestuais, que seja algo mais solto ou esboçado.

4. Como você escolhe os locais onde irá executar/concretizar seu trabalho? O que é para você um bom local para intervir artisticamente? Que características deve ter?

Os lugares ou superfícies costumam chegar a mim. Mas prefiro hoje não gastar o pouco que me sobra da juventude estando exposto demais ao sol, por exemplo. Isso se eu puder escolher. Quase sempre não se pode escolher muito.

5. Em que medida o seu trabalho é influenciado pelos acontecimentos locais / públicos?

São bastante influenciados, só o tempo de resposta ou diálogo que não é sempre imediata. Atualmente venho dando voz a questões internas, em um momento vou acabar internalizando um acontecimento em busca de maturar uma ideia, mas não é regra. As vezes algo sim pode mexer comigo de uma forma que logo estou falando sobre, só busco entender um pouco do tempo das coisas e me atentar na pertinência das ideias antes.

6. Em que diferentes cidades você já teve oportunidade de criar? A localização geográfica (cidade, país) influencia o conteúdo do seu trabalho?

Murais, que eu lembre, somente em Fortaleza e Crato. Convites foram vários. Já fiz trabalhos comerciais pro México e Moçambique, nessas experiências eu fiz pesquisas que saiam das minhas referências habituais. A cada nova pesquisa podemos topar com ideias ou técnicas que possam valer a pena agregar ao nosso repertório, então costumo estar sempre aberto a novas experiências.

7. Você usa as ruas como meio de expressão? Usa o grafite (*street art*) como ferramenta de interação com outras pessoas? Considera que o seu trabalho carrega uma mensagem para quem o vê? Se sim, como escolhe essa mensagem? Que temas aborda e por quê?

Não somente. Mas vejo que arte urbana é uma dos meios mais acessíveis de diálogo artístico tanto pra quem produz como pra quem a vê. Nem sempre meu trabalho precisa dialogar ou ser didático. Os conceitos são dos mais diversos. Nomento anda trabalhando a questão sobre negritude e sobre privilégios.

8. Como vê a relação/percepção das pessoas (usuários do espaço público) com a arte urbana inserida em seu cotidiano?

Geralmente acho muito bem-vinda. Alguns temas são questionados, incomodam, mas isso faz parte. Não cheguei a ter uma experiência que poderia chamar de negativa.

9. Como vê a relação do poder público com a arte urbana? E dos artistas com o poder público?

Vem melhorando. É preciso dar mais voz a outros nomes, diversificar mais, pois somos muitos. Sinto uma falta de um diálogo mais efetivo que não fosse apenas por editais, por exemplo. Assim talvez facilitaria essa comunicação dos artistas com o poder público.

10. Como considera a própria evolução da arte urbana – do grafite “ilegal” ao cada vez mais visível, aceito e legitimado? No espaço público (nas ruas), o que considera “vandalismo” e o que considera “arte”? Você acha que existe um instinto transgressor vinculado ao grafite e arte de rua?

Arte urbana é esse grito por espaço ou voz, se expressa e se contempla de diversas formas. Já invadiu galerias e levou as galerias as ruas. Esse grito precisa as vezes vir de um vandalismo, uma transgressão ou instinto que nós carregamos desde quando vivíamos em cavernas e vamos seguir fazendo isso porque é da nossa natureza se comunicar.

Para finalizar, há algum aspecto que não tenha sido abordado através das questões e que gostaria de acrescentar?

Recentemente fiz uma curadoria de arte urbana em um festival de hip-hop/rap e nele busquei igualar nomes femininos e masculinos, foi um pouco difícil de início porque queria trazer mais gente de comunidade, percebi também certas preocupações particulares para as meninas, mas prefiro que essa demanda seja dita de uma voz feminina. Elas tão ganhando mais voz e força, mesmo que ainda seja um ambiente predominante de homens, vale se pensar sobre a influência feminina sobre a arte urbana hoje.

D.4. FELIPE YARZON

Interview answered by email on April 21st, 2020

Nome (ou pseudônimo artístico): Yarzon

Idade: 34 anos

Nacionalidade: Brasileiro

Residência (cidade onde mora): Fortaleza

1. Como surgiu a ideia/opção de usar a rua, o espaço público urbano, como suporte do seu trabalho? Como o espaço público influencia o que você faz?

Eu sempre estive ligado à rua. Pichei durante a adolescência e esse contato com o spray e o muro acabou virando um vício. Como fiquei maior e não dava mais pra pichar, migrei pro stencil, aumentando ainda mais essa conversa com a rua. Hoje, mais do que nunca, vejo como o espaço público é a principal influencia no meu trabalho. Tenho utilizado ícones da rua para criar. Um exemplo é a intervenção "DUVIDO". Colei um sticker duvidando e ao mesmo tempo escondendo o número dos cartazes charlatões que vendem, de forma criminosa e irresponsável, o amor. Outro exemplo é a intervenção que fiz há algum tempo nas faixas de pedestres. Em Fortaleza, os motoristas têm o péssimo hábito de não respeitar as faixas. Mas, surpreendentemente, eles respeitam a faixa da Av. Beira-Mar. Sabendo disso, fiz um stencil com a seguinte frase "DESCULPA, MAS SÓ PARAMOS NA DA BEIRA-MAR" nas faixas de outras ruas.

2. O que significa criar na rua (ou para a rua)? Que possibilidades acarreta? Qual sua motivação e o que te atrai mais? Você busca validação ou reconhecimento?

Criar para a rua é criar para todo mundo, já que o ir e vir ainda é feito dessa forma. (Ok, temos 16 bilionários no Ceará, mas nem todos encaram o frio na barriga de subir em um helicóptero). E é levando seu trabalho para toda a cidade que o alcance dessa ideia aumenta. Hoje, minha motivação é provocar quem vive em Fortaleza, mas não vive realmente a cidade. O que me atrai? Saber que criei algo novo. E o cheiro da tinta, claro. Buscar validação é utópico, já que a arte urbana ainda carrega em si alguns preconceitos. Reconhecimento? Sim, é sempre bom saber que uma ideia atingiu seu objetivo.

3. Relativamente ao seu trabalho artístico no geral: que técnicas prefere? Que formas de fazer experimentou (tags, throw-ups, stencils, paste-ups, murais...)? Utiliza técnicas diferentes de acordo com o lugar? Qual é a sua reação a superfícies "em branco"?

Como redator publicitário, minha facilidade para escrever é inversamente proporcional ao talento para o desenho. Por isso, optei em simplificar meu trabalho e escolhi o stêncil como forma de me expressar. Desde 2012, testei algumas outras técnicas, como lambe-lambe, sticker e até mesmo a criação de um minijardim. Minha relação com a superfície em branco é a melhor possível. Esse desafio de surpreender faz a gente sair da inércia rapidinho. O único "em branco" que me assusta é o do voto.

4. Como você escolhe os locais onde irá executar/concretizar seu trabalho? O que é para você um bom local para intervir artisticamente? Que características deve ter?

Geralmente, tento utilizar os lugares que chamam mais atenção (principais avenidas, ruas e praças). Ah, e uma coisa importante: vias que passem ônibus. Afinal, são mais de 60 pessoas em um coletivo tendo acesso ao que você quer falar.

5. Em que medida o seu trabalho é influenciado pelos acontecimentos locais / públicos?

O exemplo da intervenção "DUVIDO" vai bem em cima disso. Os cartazes de "TRAZ A PESSOA AMADA" são uma praga em Fortaleza. Intervir nisso, gritar contra, é fazer essa troca com o local que vivo.

6. Em que diferentes cidades você já teve oportunidade de criar? A localização geográfica (cidade, país) influencia o conteúdo do seu trabalho?

Nas viagens dentro do Estado, sempre tive o hábito de carregar meus stencils e spray. Então, posso dizer que pintei na serra, no mar e no sertão do Ceará. Já em viagens interestaduais e internacionais, eu sempre dei bofeira e não carregava comigo meus equipamentos. Sobre a localização, meu trabalho é todo influenciado pela localização. Os costumes, o jeito de falar, os problemas, tudo.

7. Você usa as ruas como meio de expressão? Usa o grafite (street art) como ferramenta de interação com outras pessoas? Considera que o seu trabalho carrega uma mensagem para quem o vê? Se sim, como escolhe essa mensagem? Que temas aborda e por quê?

Quem trabalha com publicidade sabe: a maioria das boas ideias acabam ficando na gavate. E para que elas não morram ali, uso as ruas como forma de me expressar. Pintar na rua é uma forma de interagir e conhecer muita gente. Conheci muita gente em encontros e festivais de arte urbana aqui no Ceará. Já tive feedbacks de que um stencil meu transformou o dia de alguém. Isso, além de gratificante, é instigante. Por isso, tento escolher mensagens que consigam somar ou

instigar as pessoas. Geralmente, escrevo sobre relacionamento, amor e crítica ao modelo da nossa sociedade.

8. Como vê a relação/percepção das pessoas (usuários do espaço público) com a arte urbana inserida em seu cotidiano?

É uma relação que cresceu absurdamente nos últimos anos. Porém, ainda tem muita gente que não olha para a cidade. E olhar para a cidade é olhar também para as pessoas, para as paredes. Essa relação pode transformar muito mais do que os olhares, mas também o nosso jeito de se enxergar como sociedade.

9. Como vê a relação do poder público com a arte urbana? E dos artistas com o poder público?

A relação está começando a dar os primeiros passos, mas ainda esbarra em pequenos preconceitos. Uma coisa é certa: os artistas têm muito mais a oferecer ao poder público do que o contrário.

10. Como considera a própria evolução da arte urbana – do grafite “ilegal” ao cada vez mais visível, aceito e legitimado? *A evolução foi a melhor possível. E esse é o papel real da arte: ser apreciada, aplaudida.* No espaço público (nas ruas), o que considera “vandalismo” e o que considera “arte”? *Pensando agora em algo que se encaixe no conceito de vandalismo, acho que não recolher o cocô do cachorro é um bom exemplo. Arte? Bem, todo tipo de manifestação que queira conversar com alguém ou com algo.* Você acha que existe um instinto transgressor vinculado ao grafite e arte de rua? *Sim. Em alguns casos, ele é verdadeiro e pulsante.*

Para finalizar, há algum aspecto que não tenha sido abordado através das questões e que gostaria de acrescentar?

D.5. IAN THOMÉ

Interview answered by email on April 29th, 2020

Nome (ou pseudônimo artístico): Ian

Idade: 36

Nacionalidade: Brasileiro

Residência (cidade onde mora): Fortaleza - Ceará

1. Como surgiu a ideia/opção de usar a rua, o espaço público urbano, como suporte do seu trabalho?
Como o espaço público influencia o que você faz?

Como redator, meu trabalho diário é criar textos para os mais diversos clientes. E seguindo os passos de um grande amigo que também fazia stencil (abraços, Yarzon), comecei a pegar algumas frases que não tinham serventia para a publicidade e resolvi colocar em espaços públicos na cidade. Pra mim, o 'espaço público' é uma mera mídia, o local onde eu quero colocar minha mensagem. Claro que não é todo 'espaço público' que deve ter alguma mensagem, mas a grande maioria ajuda a divulgar essas frases.

2. O que significa criar na rua (ou para a rua)? Que possibilidades acarreta? Qual sua motivação e o que te atrai mais? Você busca validação ou reconhecimento?

Significa se colocar para o julgamento de todos que transitam e prestam atenção nas mensagens. Tem gente que gosta, que não gosta, que não se importa, que vai tirar alguma coisa boa, que vai lembrar de alguém, que vai ter um pensamento negativo, etc, etc, etc. Mas sigo a velha máxima: "Leu? Ganhei.". Uma das motivações era colocar alguns pensamentos que não eram aproveitados na propaganda na rua. No fundo, no fundo, eu buscava um passatempo divertido para se fazer dando uma volta pela cidade. Reconhecimento é mera consequência.

3. Relativamente ao seu trabalho artístico no geral: que técnicas prefere? Que formas de fazer experimentou (tags, throw-ups, stencils, paste-ups, murais...)? Utiliza técnicas diferentes de acordo com o lugar? Qual é a sua reação a superfícies "em branco"?

Minha técnica é simples. Faço a frase, imprimo, coloco num papel mais grosso e faço o stencil. Pego as tintas e saio pela cidade pintando 'espaços públicos' que dão visibilidade e que não atrapalha ninguém.

4. Como você escolhe os locais onde irá executar/concretizar seu trabalho? O que é para você um bom local para intervir artisticamente? Que características deve ter?

Um local com bastante movimento, se possível, em esquinas. E com bastante visibilidade.

5. Em que medida o seu trabalho é influenciado pelos acontecimentos locais / públicos?

Boa parte é coisa pessoal. Mas em alguns casos, sim. Como na época das eleições, com o stencil 'Voto não é dízimo', tentando alertar a perigosa ligação entre religião e estado.

6. Em que diferentes cidades você já teve oportunidade de criar? A localização geográfica (cidade, país) influencia o conteúdo do seu trabalho?

Por enquanto, apenas no Ceará. Mas, sim, a localização influencia e muito no conteúdo. Até porque sua mensagem precisa estar ligada com os costumes e com a cultura local.

7. Você usa as ruas como meio de expressão? Usa o grafite (street art) como ferramenta de interação com outras pessoas? Considera que o seu trabalho carrega uma mensagem para quem o vê? Se sim, como escolhe essa mensagem? Que temas aborda e por quê?

Mais como meio de expressão do que de interação. Eu penso assim: a mensagem está aí. A interpretação é sua. Tanto que a resposta (na internet) para alguns stencil que já fiz é muito além do que eu tinha imaginado. Não tem bem um tema fechado. Às vezes vai pro lado sentimental, às vezes pro lado crítico, às vezes é só uma frase pra refletir. Varia bastante.

8. Como vê a relação/percepção das pessoas (usuários do espaço público) com a arte urbana inserida em seu cotidiano?

9. Como vê a relação do poder público com a arte urbana? E dos artistas com o poder público?

10. Como considera a própria evolução da arte urbana – do grafite “ilegal” ao cada vez mais visível, aceito e legitimado? No espaço público (nas ruas), o que considera “vandalismo” e o que considera “arte”? Você acha que existe um instinto transgressor vinculado ao grafite e arte de rua?

Para finalizar, há algum aspecto que não tenha sido abordado através das questões e que gostaria de acrescentar?

D.6. TEREZA DE QUINTA

Questionnaire answered on May 21st, 2020

Nome (ou pseudônimo artístico): *Tereza de Quinta e Robézio Marques (Acidum Project)*

Idade: *29. E o Acidum Project tem 14 anos.*

Nacionalidade: *Brasileira*

Residência (cidade onde moras): *Fortaleza-CE*

1. Como surgiu a ideia/opção de usar a rua, o espaço público urbano, como suporte do teu trabalho/arte/graffiti?

O espaço público é de todos e está "disponível", por isso uso a rua como suporte.

2. Em que medida o teu trabalho é influenciado pelos acontecimentos locais / públicos? (Escolha de 1 a 5, sendo 1 = Nada, meu trabalho é mais relacionado com assuntos pessoais e 5 = Extremamente, tudo que faço está relacionado com o contexto urbano atual)

Resposta: 3

3. Que temas abordas e porquê?

Temas individuais/pessoais (como expressões relacionadas à sentimentos), Temas relacionados à situação local (site-specific), Temáticas globais (temas que têm impacto/fazem sentido em qualquer lugar do mundo).

4. Qual a tua motivação e o que te atrai mais?

Minha motivação é provocar as pessoas, fazê-las pensar., O que me atrai é poder colocar uma mensagem para o público, "dialogar" com as pessoas.

A maior motivação é minha casa, a rua, as pessoas. Acordo e já subo pro ateliê pra fazer um café e isso já me inspira bastante. Gosto muito da vida urbana, sou bem boemia, adoro tomar uma cerveja com amigos, conversar sobre a vida e arte. Fotografar lugares, cores e texturas. A inspiração vem de todos os lugares, tudo que estou vendo, vivendo, sentindo e usando essas referências para fazer meus desenhos.

5. Tu procuras validação ou reconhecimento?

Não, reconhecimento é mera consequência.

6. Que técnica/tipologia preferes ou utilizas mais?

Uso tudo que estiver ao meu alcance. Pincéis, spray, rolinho, tintas acrílicas, aquarela, bordado, papeis, máquinas, xilogravura, lambe-lambe, stencil, fotografia...

Tipologia mais utilizada: Murais.

7. Utilizas técnicas diferentes de acordo com o lugar? (O trabalho se adapta ao local ou superfície onde está inserido?)

Sim.

8. O que é para ti um bom local para intervir artisticamente? Que características deve ter?

Uma superfície que facilite a aplicação/intervenção.

9. Em que diferentes cidades já tiveste oportunidade de criar?

Juazeiro do Norte, Cabo Verde, Eugene (USA), Berlim, França.

10. Os temas são adaptados à localização geográfica (variando de acordo com a cidade ou o país onde fazes uma intervenção)?

Sim.

11. Como vês a relação das pessoas (utilizadores do espaço público) com a arte urbana?

É uma relação que tem crescido com o passar dos anos e a arte urbana vem sendo cada vez mais apreciada.

12. Como vês a relação do poder público com a arte urbana?

É uma relação de interesses, o poder público usa a arte urbana como branding, como meio de capitalizar e atrair pessoas e/ou investimentos.

13. Como consideras a evolução da arte urbana – do graffiti “ilegal” ao cada vez mais visível, aceite e legitimado?

Sim, acreditamos que está bem aceito na maioria hoje em dia.

14. No espaço público, o que para ti distingue “arte” de “vandalismo”?

Todas as formas de expressão são autênticas e criativas, portanto não deixam de ser artísticas.

Para finalizar, há algum aspecto que não tenha sido abordado através das questões e que gostaria de acrescentar?

Fiz minha primeira viagem internacional a convite do Governo do Estado do Ceará para Feira da Palavra no Cabo Verde - África. O Acidum foi convidado para a Feira do Ceará no Cabo Verde em 2013 e divulgamos nosso primeiro livro “Entregue as moscas” e também fizemos pinturas pela cidade. Foram 15 dias que mexeram comigo até hoje. Existiu uma transformação silenciosa dentro de mim: percebi um mundo de outra forma, sai da minha zona de conforto, vivi outras realidades, fiz amigos para vida toda. De lá pra cá já fomos mais duas vezes para capital Praia e na vez passada, em dezembro de 2016, o momento mais especial foi realizar o Laboratório Acidum – um projeto de pesquisa e produção em arte urbana no Centro Cultural Brasil no Cabo Verde a partir do convite da Embaixada do Brasil no Cabo Verde, a qual também fizemos a pintura da faixa do prédio oficial. Bom, já deu pra sentir que existe um pedacinho da gente lá no Cabo Verde.

De lá pra cá temos realizado projetos que nos marcaram profundamente como o #AcidumEUROTRIP em 2015 onde fizemos intervenções em diferentes cidades da Europa como: Colonia, Evry, Berlim, Paris, Amsterdã. No ano seguinte participamos do projeto 20x21mural Project na cidade de Eugene – Oregon. Fomos os primeiros artistas convidados a iniciar o projeto dessa cidade que estará até o ano de 2021 promovendo grandes murais com artistas de várias nacionalidades.

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DATA BASE FOR INTERVIEWS

Name / nickname (or artistic alias)	Location (City/Country)	Contact	Contacted via (Interview format)
Ian Thomé	Fortaleza / BR	+55 85 97973434 ianthome@gmail.com	Telephone & Email
Felipe Yarzon	Fortaleza / BR	+55 85 97589452 / 992026006 yarzon@gmail.com	Telephone & Email
Criativo	Fortaleza / BR	+55 85 988379233 otavio.filho@gmail.com	Telephone & Email
Luz	Fortaleza / BR	grafiteluz@gmail.com	Email
Acidum Project	Fortaleza / BR	@acidumproject +55 85 99737-3461	Whatsapp, Email & Instagram
Tereza de Quinta	Fortaleza / BR	@terezadequinta terezaquinta@gmail.com	Instagram & Email
Festival Concreto	Fortaleza / BR	@festivalconcreto	Instagram
Estela Miazzi	São Paulo / BR	@estelamiazzi contato@estelamiazzi.com	Instagram & Email
Vambra	São Paulo / BR	+55 11 998060873 @vambra	Telephone & Instagram
Kobra	São Paulo / BR	contato@studiokobra.com.br @kobrastreetart	Instagram & Email
Os Gemeos	São Paulo / BR	@osgemeos producao@osgemeos.com.br	Instagram & Email
Hazul	/ PT	hazulluzah@gmail.com @hazul	Instagram & Email
Mr Dheo	/ PT	@mrdheo info@mrdheo.com	Instagram & Email
Odeith	Lisbon / PT	projets@odeith.com @odeith	Instagram & Email
Vhils (Alexandre Farto)	/ PT	info@vhilstudio.com press@vhilstudio.com	Instagram & Email
Bordalo II (Artur)	Lisbon / PT	bordalo2nd@gmail.com @b0rdalo_ii	Instagram & Email
Carolina Piteira	/ PT	info@carolinapiteira.com @carolinapiteira	Instagram & Email
Mesk	Porto / PT	@mesk85 mesk85@gmail.com	Instagram & Email
Costah (Nuno)	Porto / PT	@costahstreet	Instagram & Email

		costahtattoo@gmail.com	
Fedor	Porto / PT	@fedor.rua fedorgraffiti@gmail.com / @colectivorua	Instagram & Email
Mais Menos (Miguel Januário)	Porto / PT	mais.menos@gmail.com	Instagram & Email
Frederico Draw	Porto / PT	fredericodraw@gmail.com @fredericodraw	Instagram & Email
Godmess	Porto / PT	thegodmess@gmail.com @thegodmess	Instagram & Email
Third	Porto / PT	@thirdrua	Instagram
Samina	Lisbon / PT	joao.m.samina@gmail.com @j_samina	Instagram & Email
Pura Poesia	/ PT	@_pura_poesia	Instagram
Circus Network (Ana Muska e André Carvalho)	Porto / PT	@circusnetwork	Instagram
Underdogs Gallery	Lisbon / PT	@underdogs_gallery	Instagram
The Caver	/ PT	@_thecaver_	Instagram
Banksy	“International”	@banksy	Instagram
Remed	“International”	@remed_art	Instagram
Basquiat	“International”	@basquiat_archive thebasquiatarchive@gmail.com	Instagram & Email
Blek le Rat	“International”	@blekleratoriginal blekleratprint@gmail.com	Instagram & Email
Blu	“International”	@bluwalls	Instagram
Invader	“International”	@invaderwashere contact@space-invaders.com	Instagram & Email
Shepard Fairey	“International”	@obeygiant info@obeygiant.com	Instagram & Email

PUBLIC ENTITIES

Name	Location (City/Country)	Contact	Contacted via (Interview format)
Câmara do Porto ÁGORA Cultura e Desporto	Porto / PT	@agoraporto + 351 22 619 98 60 geral@agoraporto.pt	Telephone, Email & Instagram
Câmara Municipal de Lisboa – Galeria de Arte Urbana	Lisboa / PT	@galeria_de_arte_urbana +351 21 817 09 00 gau@cm-lisboa.pt	Telephone, Email & Instagram
Porto Iracema das Artes	Fortaleza / BR	@portoiraemadasartes secretariaescolaportoiracema@gmail.com imprensaportoiracemadasartes@gmail.com	Instagram & Email

Note: From the public entities listed here just *Galeria de Arte Urbana* replied via email saying that they would be glad to answer the questions, but once requested to schedule a date for the interview, they stopped answering the emails and messages.

Talking Walls: Exploring Graffiti as “Artivism” in Public Spaces

Mariza de Alencar e Paiva

SEDE ADMINISTRATIVA

FACULDADE DE ENGENHARIA

FACULDADE DE ARQUITECTURA

