

## For a Nuanced Appreciation of Urban Creativity: Unveiling the Social Subversion in Street Art and Graffiti

Andrea L. Baldini<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Arts, Nanjing University, 210093 Nanjing, PR China; E-Mail: andrea.baldini@fulbrightmail.org

\* Corresponding author

### Abstract

Why should we have a journal dedicated solely to graffiti and street art? This essay defends the rationale for establishing GSA. Since the rise to prominence of street artists such as Banksy and Shepard Fairey, there has been renewed interest in urban creativity. In many major cities around the world, city walls have been transformed into canvasses for artistic expression. However, these works do not fall into the same category. Graffiti and street art belong to a specific kind. I argue that graffiti and street art are forms of art whose primary function is to challenge the dominant order of visibility in urban spaces. They embody the art of social subversion. Often, for various reasons, works of official public art are miscategorized as street art. But rather than being subversive, official public art aims at establishing a new order of visibility. It is the art of social change. My interest in developing an account distinguishing between graffiti and street art, on the one hand, and official public art, on the other hand, is not purely theoretical; it is also practical. I'd like to develop a distinction that can help us better appreciate different types of urban art while also securing discursive and critical spaces that are unique to each kind. Throwing everything into the same pot risks losing some of the unique characteristics of these various art forms. A more nuanced account, instead, may have a positive effect on cultural and urban policies regulating creative expression in the city.

### Keywords

Street art, graffiti, public art, definition, subversiveness, social norms, urban creativity

### 1. Introduction

In the last few decades urban landscapes have returned to serve as canvases for creativity and expression, blending in with the rhythms of urban life. Superstars like Banksy and Shepard Fairey have reignited interest in urban creativity. Contemporary festivals of wall painting are becoming more popular. However, in addition to having a positive impact on citizens' daily lives, such an heterogeneous injection of colour on the concrete walls of our global megacities has caused a great deal of conceptual confusion. Both specialised and generalist commentators frequently overlook the significant differences that distinguish the various types of art that are regenerating our cities' urban landscapes. In this paper, I will discuss some of the theoretical issues that arise when considering the diverse nature of contemporary urban creativity.

In a pertinent sense, this essay is a defence of the rationale for establishing GSA. In particular, though all forms of urban creativity can be subsumed under the category of public art, as we shall see, graffiti and street art differ essentially from other kinds, and in particular what I label official public art, for the following reason. Street art and graffiti, on the one hand, and official public art, on the other hand, can in effect be conceptualized as different responses to the dominant order of visibility in urban spaces. It is my view that street art and graffiti constitute an art kind whose primary function is subverting such an order. They represent the art of social subversion. On its part, official public art is an art kind aiming at establishing a new order of visibility. It is the art of social change.

My interest in developing an account distinguishing between street art and official public art is not purely

theoretical; it is also practical. I'd like to make a distinction between graffiti, street art, and official public art that can help us better appreciate different types of urban creativity while also securing discursive and critical spaces that are unique to each type. Throwing everything into the same pot risks losing some of the unique characteristics of these various art forms. A more nuanced account, instead, may have a positive effect on cultural and urban policies regulating creative expression in the city. Lopes (2014) developed a theory of art that is consistent with the idea that theories about art kinds guide and influence aesthetic appreciation. Lopes' model serves as the foundation for my viewpoint.

I develop my analysis by examining a case study: Andrea Ravo Mattoni's *Classicism Project*. This project, which is influenced by a wide range of art forms and styles, provides valuable insights into the reasonable distinction between street art, graffiti, and official public art. Ravo's *Classicism Project*, in my opinion, is official public art rather than graffiti or street art, in the sense that it aims to create a new order of visibility in the city.

Section 2 delves into a fundamental concern about the media used by urban artists. I demonstrate that Ravo's *Classicism Projects* cannot be identified as graffiti or street art simply because they use media such as spray paint on walls. Section 3 begins to develop a taxonomy of public art, which I define as a category of art within the larger super-category of the art of built space. Section 4 broadens the taxonomy, arguing that street art and official public art are two distinct art kinds that fall under the category of public art, and that graffiti is a subgenre of street art.

## 2. Spray-Paint, Medium Profile, and Art Kinds

Ravo's *Classicism Project* primarily focuses on the creation of large murals reproducing works painted by great artists from the past, such as Caravaggio's *The Supper at Emmaus* (1601) and *The Nativity* (1609). The artist carefully selects

works that have a significant relationship with their location of installation, which becomes "part of the project" (*Il Fanciullo Di Angera*, 2016).<sup>1</sup> These murals occupy urban space, such as an overpass pillar or the side of a building. Ravo creates those works through unconventional means, including the use of spray paint as the pigment of choice.

Critical discussions of Ravo's *Classicism Project*, like Kuruvilla (2017), frequently refer to it as street art. Different commentators point to different reasons for this decision. For some, such a categorization may be dependent on the use of walls as installation surfaces, a choice that is certainly common among street artists. Some may find Ravo's experience as a graffiti writer, particularly his use of spray paint, relevant. In effect, works from this project are completed using this technique, which is commonly associated with graffiti writing. The relationship between writing and street art is contentious (Baldini, 2022a, pp. 2–4). The most conservative viewpoints regard the former as the forefather of the latter (Blanché, 2015). As we will see in Section 4, my revised account considers graffiti to be the original and most radical form of street art. In any case, there is some art-historical continuity between the two. The use of spray-paint, then, serves as "the common thread" (Kiki, 2017), connecting his current work to his past as a writer.

Arguably, all these reasons share something in common: they rely on the belief that an art form or art kind, such as street art, is partially individuated by its medium, or, more precisely, "by a medium profile, where a medium profile is a non-empty set of media" (Lopes, 2014, p. 140). Despite being a medium optimist, that is, one who endorses the view that media are relevant to individuating art kinds, I believe Ravo's *Classicist Project* should not be classified as street art.<sup>2</sup> Accepting a categorization based on his use of media commonly associated with urban art is not justified. In the remainder of this section, I will use argument to defend this claim.

---

1 All translations are done by the author.

2 One could suggest that Ravo's works are not street art for they are legal. Here, I do not pursue this issue. For a discussion of legality and street art's demarcation see Baldini (2018, 2022a).

To demonstrate why Ravo's *Classicist Project* is not street art, let me introduce some preliminary concepts. Baldini (2018, 2022b) argues that street art is an art kind, in the sense introduced by Lopes's (2014) in his innovative *buck passing theory of art*. His framework replaces aestheticians' traditional grand project of developing a general theory of art with a more modest attempt to theorise about specific art forms or kinds with distinct values and medium profiles. These kinds can be grouped into larger categories and super-categories. Styles, genres, traditions, and oeuvres that do not have distinct medium profiles are generally subsumed under art kinds. I choose this approach with a specific goal in mind: to develop a theory of street art that does not collapse it into seemingly similar art kinds, particularly visual arts such as painting. As mentioned, the primary aim of this paper is in effect to demonstrate that approaching street art as if it were murals or other forms of urban art is profoundly misleading and jeopardises the appreciation, evaluation, and criticism of such works. I hasten to emphasise that in saying this, I do not mean to imply that genres like new muralism or other varieties of aerosol painting have no value. These merely don't fit my concept of street art. Regarding this, I disagree with Abarca (2016), who does not find value in modern muralism and analogous artistic practices in the public domain, despite his reasoning coming from a similar distinction to mine.

For Lopes, an art form or kind is an appreciative kind (Lopes, 2014, pp. 125–144). Appreciative kinds are sets of particulars<sup>3</sup> that share a specific value. We evaluate a particular belonging to a given appreciative kind “by comparison with arbitrarily any other [particulars] in that kind” (Lopes, 2009, p. 17). Furthermore, determining the goodness of a particular in a given appreciative kind is dependent on considerations about that kind's essential value. For example, if the essential value of photographs is their ability to reveal the character of a scene, a good photograph is one that does so effectively. Appreciative kinds thus essentially link a kind's identity to matters of

value.

However, Lopes adds that media also contribute to the identification of art kinds. To make this claim plausible, he describes media in a rather inclusive way: He views media as “technical resources” (Lopes, 2014, p. 138). Those include a wide range of particulars, including material stuff like paper, paint, and marble. They can, however, be tokens of symbolic systems such as words, events such as an E-flat sound, or actions such as pirouettes. These resources are used in specific ways by employing certain techniques. For example, prints are created using various media, such as paper, and a set of techniques. This set of media forms the “medium profile” of prints as an art kind (Lopes, 2014, p. 140).

The claim that medium profiles are important in distinguishing art kinds does not imply that technical resources must be unique to a specific art kind. Lopes emphasises that sharing media is not only theoretically possible, but also that “practically, it is inevitable” (Lopes, 2014, p. 140). W. J. T. Mitchell compares media – or, in Lopes's jargon, medium profiles – to recipes in cooking. Different recipes may contain the same ingredient without losing their specificity (Mitchell, 2005, pp. 260–261). Similarly, medium profiles of different art kinds may share some resources and techniques.

The preceding discussion of shared technical resources demonstrates the conceptual error of those who classify Ravo's *Classicism Project* based on the use of media such as walls or spray-paint. Feasible medium optimism rejects the notion that art kinds have a unique medium profile, interpreted as a modal claim. Different medium profiles can actually share technical resources. The fact that Ravo creates these works on walls and with spray-paint is insufficient to claim that the *Classicism Project* is street art – or graffiti.

So far, I've questioned the widespread belief that Ravo's

---

3 Throughout the paper, I use the noun “particular” in a minimal sense to refer to spatiotemporal entities. A particular can be a specific action, event, or object.

*Classicism Project* is street art. Before I offer a positive argument to support my claim that the *Classicism Project* is official public art, I'd like to clear the air. On the one hand, a technical resource, whether a material or a technique, does not unambiguously identify an art kind; on the other hand, an art kind cannot be reduced to a technical resource. Street art or graffiti entail more than just the use of a specific material or technique: they entail a unique (subversive) relationship with public space, which underpins their essential value. To capture these unique characteristics, the following section proposes a (partial) taxonomy of public art.

### 3. A Taxonomy of Public Art

In this section, I begin to formulate a proposal for a taxonomy of public art. Because of space constraints, such a taxonomy is incomplete. It focuses on distinctions that are directly relevant to the subject at hand, namely, a principled defence of distinguishing graffiti and street art from other forms of urban creativity, particularly official public art. Of course, the conceptual framework proposed below is neither necessary nor unique. Other taxonomies are definitely possible. And some distinctions among practices of urban creativity have already been presented (Blanché, 2015). The value of the model presented here is determined by its ability to deepen, guide, and illuminate our understanding of the art kind(s) it focuses on.

According to Lopes (2014), rather than Kristeller's (1951) art forms, the top level of a taxonomy of the arts could very well include super-categories such as narrative art, depictive art, performing art, and the art of built space (p. 134). Super-categories are not art kinds: we do not appreciate their members with arbitrarily any other works in that group. Poems are not appreciated in contrast with arbitrarily any novels, though they all belong to the super-category of narrative art. However, super-categories have a medium profile. Narrative art, for instance, uses language and symbolic systems as its primary technical resource.

I suggest that we consider public art as a category nested in the super-category of the art of built space alongside (among others) architecture, which deals primarily with functional buildings and structures.<sup>4</sup> In effect, public art employs space as an essential technical resource for creating artistic meaning. Arts in this super-category share a value based on their ability to affect space: Call this *spatial value*. The centrality of space is obvious in core cases of public art such as Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*, which was designed to manipulate the spatial dimension of Federal Plaza in New York (Senie, 2002). In this sense, public art's medium profile includes certainly space.

Theorists of the spatial turn correctly emphasise that space – and its uses and functions – is always contested (de Certeau, 1984; de Certeau & Giard, 1998; Harvey, 2008; Lefebvre, 1991; Lefebvre et al., 1996). This is especially true when it comes to public space, which is central to public art. In effect, the borders, uses, and functions of a public space are constantly negotiated and re-negotiated through political struggle. This conflict essentially connects public spaces with public discourse, which – in normal circumstances – is the primary field of political disagreement (Brighenti, 2007). Through dialogue and political deliberation, the nature of public spaces is constantly assigned and reassigned. These interactions generate a variety of meanings, including artistic, political, and ethical meanings.

Theorists have long recognised the intimate connection between public art and discourse, which appears to be part of the medium profile of public art (Baldini, 2014, 2019; Baldini & Pietrucci, 2017; Deutsche, 1988; Finkelpearl, 2001; Hein, 1996; Kester, 2004; Knight, 2008; Korza et al., 2005; Musarò & Iannelli, 2017). Many people agree that dialogic responses are important for appreciating public art (Baldini, 2014; Blair et al., 1991; Danto, 1998b, 1998a; Kester, 2004; Knight, 2008). That is, there is something about the meaning of a public artwork that cannot be understood if the discussion that surrounds it is ignored. This ability to generate dialogue underpins the value that works of public art possess: *dialogic value*.

---

4 I am not interested in the distinction between public art and architecture. For a discussion of architecture and public art, see Graham (2006).

While its specimens have a common value, public art is not an art kind because we do not appreciate its examples in comparison to arbitrarily any other works of public art. For instance, we do not appreciate a memorial in comparison with a tag or a dance performance in a park, which are all arguably examples of public art. However, at least two kinds of art fall under the category of public art: street art and official public art, which I will discuss in the following section.

#### 4. Street art and Official Public Art as Art Kinds

In my account, street art and official public art are two distinct art kinds that fall under the same category of public art. Both art kinds share common features. As examples of the super-category of the art of built space, both street art and official public art use space and spatial manipulation techniques of as technical resources in their medium profiles. By also being subsumed under the category of public art, they also exploit public discourse to create artistic meaning. They instantiate values that I refer to as spatial and dialogic value. These commonalities frequently lead to categorization errors between examples of those two kinds, as evidenced by Ravo's *Classicism Project*.

As I previously stated, street art differs from official public art in its unique approach to what I refer to as the city's order of visibility. This concept is similar to what Rancière (2004) calls the "distribution of the sensible" (*le partage du sensible*), which identifies, among other things, the social norms regulating what can be seen, or visibility, in public spaces. Street art engages with those norms in a unique way: it subverts them, which means it violates them and demonstrates their lack of necessity. On the other hand, official public art replaces or reinforces existing norms. Let me explain in detail what this distinction entails.

Street art subverts the city's order of visibility insofar as it transgresses social norms regulating uses and functions of urban space (Austin, 2010; Bacharach, 2015; Baldini, 2022b; Brighenti, 2010; Irvine, 2012; Iveson, 2007; Keith, 2005; Kindynis, 2018). The dominant order of visibility favours commercial communication and profitable uses of the urban landscape. I refer to this set of norms as "the

corporate regime of visibility," or just *corporate regime* (Baldini, 2022b, p. 5). The corporate regime has commodified public space uses, reducing them to economic transactions. Street art, as a "gift" (Baldini, 2018, p. 7, 2022b, p. 6; Irvine, 2012, p. 252) created by freely using urban space, refuses the logic of profit that drives modern metropolises and one of their foundations, namely private property.

Transgressions committed by street artists while creating their works are not intended to establish a new order of visibility. Street artworks are simply disruptive in ways similar to carnivalesque forms of resistance (Baldini, 2015, 2022b; Pan, 2014; Tunali, 2018). Carnivalesque interventions do not offer an alternative to the status quo, but rather "make strange" (Foucault, 1988) what is familiar using tactics such as appropriation, irony, and satire. In doing so, they demonstrate the lack of necessity for dominant orders. Street artists' ephemeral interventions leave tangible – but highly volatile – marks that allow us to imagine alternative ways to understand and practise urban space, which may very well be more spontaneous and less commodified (Baldini, 2015, pp. 249–250; Baldini & Pietrucci, 2017, p. 120). Subversiveness is therefore the capacity of street art to turn the corporate regime of visibility upside-down (Baldini, 2018, pp. 30–33, 2022b, pp. 11–14). I regard this aesthetic-political value as the most essential value of street art as an art kind.

Before we go on to official public art, let me first analyse the link between graffiti and street art in further depth. As mentioned above, I uphold the view that graffiti writing is the most authentic and radical form of street art. This claim stems from my understanding of subversiveness. Examples of graffiti writing penetrate the urban landscape with an undiluted rebellious charge: as Austin (2010, p. 42) also indicates, graffiti, like street art, freely appropriate the city's surfaces, producing an inverted universe in which people barred from expressing themselves in public have their voices heard. And here let me add a point about graffiti being the most radical form of street art: tags, throw-ups, and pieces are still viewed as very aggressive, but works of street art à la Banksy are increasingly accepted – and often even welcomed. In view of this common value, I see no reason – as some argue – to discriminate between

graffiti and street art, which both manipulate public space in subversive ways.

The most prominent reasons for distinguishing between street art and graffiti focus on the socioeconomic origins of practitioners, the intended audience, and political relevance. All of these arguments appear to be faulty (Baldini, 2022b). When we look closely at the backgrounds of writers and street artists, we cannot really discover a solid divide between the two groups (Halsey & Young, 2006). Though other graffiti writers constitute a privileged audience of spray-can knights, it is clear that their creations are also intended for the broader public, at least to some level. Finally, many graffiti authors express explicit political aim. Consider the legendary American couple Utah and Ether: "With our art," they claim, "we hope to create a dialogue with our audience and to challenge their conventional viewpoints concerning graffiti, whether it's [sic] concepts of public versus private property, or the blurred lines of what constitutes as legal and illegal, etc." (Zio, 2015).

Official public art presents a different situation. Examples of this art style do not include transgression in the same manner as street artworks do. Official public artworks, I think, attempt to construct or reinforce, rather than undermine, a specific order of visibility, or the set of standards that govern what may be seen in public settings. Take for example Susan Lacy's *Full Circle* (1992-93). Lacy constructed one hundred statues overnight, each commemorating the life of a significant local woman and her contribution to Chicago's history. Her gesture did more than merely defy the societal conventions that allowed for the lack of public images of women. She hoped to challenge the status quo by inspiring a community shift in expectations about what may be viewed and celebrated in public areas.<sup>5</sup> Official public art does not merely demonstrate that things can be different; it already provides an alternative.

To help readers comprehend the contrast between street art and official public art, let me first define transgressors

and trendsetters. Such a distinction is based on Cristina Bicchieri's research on social norms. A transgressor violates social taboos in order to show disrespect for "the norms of the society in which [one] lives" (Bicchieri, 2017, p. 83). However, such a revolt is not designed to establish a new system, but rather to signify a rejection of the status quo. Trendsetters, on the other hand, seek to alter established norms. They "deviate from an established practice," (Bicchieri, 2017, p. 164), which they regard as detrimental, and are "willing to change the practice for the benefit of the group" (Bicchieri, 2017, p. 169).

On this account, street artists are considered transgressors. Their rejection of the corporate regime demonstrates their disrespect for such societal standards. The subversive power of their actions stems from their ability to demonstrate the contingency of such an order of visibility, while also offering up possibilities for alternate thinking. Such a transgressive purpose is achieved by the deployment of carnivalesque tactics, which frequently include breaching the law. These are specific to the media profile of street art. If you want a slogan, one may say what follows: street art – and graffiti, of course, as one of its styles – is the art of social subversion.

Official public artists, on the other hand, are trendsetters who want to achieve a new system of visibility. The value that they pursue resides in this potential, which I refer to as trendsetting value. That is, official public art installations seek to establish (or reinforce) social norms that govern visibility. They advocate a certain viewpoint on how we should utilise public areas and what their purposes should be. Even when transitory, such as Lacy's *Full Circle*, official public artworks attempt to have a long-term influence on the distribution of the sensible.<sup>6</sup>

*Full Circle* did more than merely dispute the hierarchy of visibility in Chicago. It intended to establish a new one. To do this, it used techniques aimed at altering (rather than simply criticising) the social norms that govern public areas in the area. Lacy used public engagement strategies to

---

5 Lacy's effort raised awareness about underrepresentation of women in Chicago's public spaces. See <http://www.idabwellsmonument.org/> and <https://www.monumentalwomenproject.com/about-us/>.

6 For a discussion of temporality and official public art, see Baldini 2019: 16–20.

highlight women's historical contributions to the city. Such tools are technical resources tailored to the media profile of official public art. To put it another way, official public art is the art of social change (Fig. 4). In the next part, I utilise the newly constructed taxonomy of public art to examine Ravo's *Classicism Project*.

### 5. Nuanced Classification: Ravo's *Classicism Project* as Official Public Art

When analysing Ravo's works from the *Classicism Project*, it is evident that their purpose is to promote a specific order of visibility. His murals' trendsetting value, along with their unique medium profile, make them official public art rather than street art. His murals are not subversive reactions that challenge the status quo. The remainder of this section discusses Ravo's specific technical resources as instruments for influencing social norms. This is meant to present a real-world application of the account that I defended above, as well as to demonstrate that street art and graffiti are fundamentally different from other kinds of urban creativity, such as official public art.

Consider Ravo's usage of a specific material, spray paint. Though a popular option among street artists and graffiti writers, this sort of paint serves a totally different purpose in the *Classicism Project* and contributes to the realisation of a distinct value. This paint is deployed in effect via several techniques. Street artists and graffiti writers use spray paint methods as tactical adaptations to carry out rebellious deeds (Baldini, 2021; Iveson, 2010). Aerosol cans are small and concealable, yet they are particularly effective at covering large areas quickly. On the contrary, Ravo's expert use of spray paint aims to attract his audience while also illustrating that traditional art can be modernised.

Spray paint is here utilised to create a connection between traditional and contemporary art. Ravo isn't concerned in hiding his cans; throughout his artistic activity, they are prominently shown. In this project, contemporary spray paint is used to influence the general public's perspective of museum art. Rather than being relics from a distant past, paintings like Caravaggio or Guido Reni may still speak to

the people and be significant – if not even trendy – today owing to this new approach.

Spray paint, in this view, is not a tool for carrying out a subversive action, but rather a method of changing popular opinions regarding museum art. This, in turn, helps to construct a visible hierarchy in which traditional art is not only acceptable but also integral to the look of public areas. Call that order of visibility the *museum system of visibility*, which wishes to “exalt the role of museums, to give them new exposure” (*Il Fanciullo Di Angera*, 2016).

In his *Classicism Project*, Ravo employs various techniques that are widely regarded useful in moulding societal expectations (Bicchieri, 2017, p. 143). Among these tactics, legal measures, media campaigns, and discussion play important roles. At a broad level, those characteristics are unique to the medium profile of official public art, and I believe they are what distinguishes that art form from street art and graffiti writing. Street artists and graffiti writers are interested in ways to disrupt rather than shape social expectations (Baldini, 2016, p. 189). It is important to note that the success of these social change tactics is heavily dependent on their implementation in the public arena. When “other people are watching or listening to the message's content” (Bicchieri, 2017, p. 143), people are more likely to modify not only their personal opinions but also their societal expectations.

Legal interventions may be extremely effective vehicles for social transformation. Ravo makes full use of their potential in his *Classicism Project*. All interventions related to such a project are thoroughly studied and authorised by local authorities, who then allow the development of such works. Ravo takes use of laws' ability to enable the transformation of social norms. The *Classicism Project's* desire of societal transformation distinguishes it from street art and graffiti.

Legal changes do not always result in alterations in societal standards. Laws become effective vehicles for social change when they meet a number of additional criteria. The perceived distance from actual societal standards is likely the most important determinant of a law's success in shifting expectations (Stuntz, 2000, p. 1872). Ravo's site-specific method, I believe, ensures that the public

perceives a consistency between the rules that allow for his interventions and societal standards. In practise, the content of a work is chosen, among other things, for its “link with the territory where it is reproduced” (*Il Fanciullo Di Angera*, 2016). The audience’s familiarity with the reproduced artworks creates appropriate conditions for norm shift. For instance, the installation of Caravaggio’s *Nativity in Sicily*, near to its original site in Palermo, strays surely not too far from societal norms concerning visibility that locals prefer to embrace. It does not have to look as a completely foreign element. This continuity with local visual culture is critical for maximising the impact of legal interventions as social change tools.

Ravo’s *Classicism Project* also relies on media campaigns, which “may include broadcast media such as radio, film, and television, newspapers or pamphlets, billboards, the internet, and even public events” (Bicchieri, 2017, p. 147). These efforts should be mainly conceived as vehicles for norm change, rather than just advertising methods. These aspects of his work are instead frequently disregarded or reduced to promotional antics. On the contrary, I contend that they are technical resources that contribute to the development and meaning of his works. These public engagement strategies are critical for creating a narrative in which Ravo’s interventions are in line with the site’s history and nature.

## 5. Conclusions

In this essay, I criticised a general casualness in classifying examples of urban creativity as street art and graffiti. It is true that definitional rigour is frequently regarded as a relic of previous grand theories of art, which not only failed but also introduced unacceptable exclusionary tendencies. However, I believe that by abandoning the demarcation project entirely, we have lost the good with the bad. Fine-tuned distinctions, as I have suggested, do not have to be empty theoretical exercises; rather, they can help us appreciate the diversity of expressions of our ingenuity in the city and develop more inclusive spatial control policies. In this regard, I welcome the addition of GSA to the list of academic journals dealing with urban creativity, and I hope that it includes the most radical versions. Trendsetters make way for the transgressors!

## Conflict of Interests and ethics

The author declares no conflict of interests. The author also declares full adherence to all journal research ethics policies, namely involving the participation of human subjects anonymity and/ or consent to publish.

## References

- Abarca, J. (2016). From street art to murals: What have we lost? *Street Art and Urban Creativity Scientific Journal*, 2(2), 60–67.
- Austin, J. (2010). More to see than a canvas in a white cube: For an art in the streets. *City*, 14(1–2), 33–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810903529142>
- Bacharach, S. (2015). Street Art and Consent. *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 55(4), 481–495. <https://doi.org/10.1093/aesthj/ayv030>
- Baldini, A. L. (2014). *Public art: A critical approach*. Temple University Libraries.
- Baldini, A. L. (2015). An Urban Carnival on the City Walls: The Visual Representation of Financial Power in European Street Art. *Journal of Visual Culture*, 14(2), 246–252. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470412915592883>
- Baldini, A. L. (2016). Street art: A reply to Riggles. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 74(2), 187–191.
- Baldini, A. L. (2018). *A Philosophy Guide to Street Art and the Law*. Brill.
- Baldini, A. L. (2019). The Public-Art Publics: An Analysis of Some Structural Differences among Public-Art Spheres. *Open Philosophy*, 2(1), 10–21. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opphil-2019-0002>
- Baldini, A. L. (2021). Street Art and the Politics of Improvisation. In A. Bertinetto & M. Ruta (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Philosophy and Improvisation in the Arts* (pp. 285–299). Routledge.
- Baldini, A. L. (2022a). Philosophy of Street Art: Identity, Value, and the Law. *Philosophy Compass*, 17(9), e12862. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12862>
- Baldini, A. L. (2022b). What Is Street Art? *Estetika*, 59(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.33134/eeja.234>
- Baldini, A. L., & Pietrucci, P. (2017). Knitting a Community Back Together: Spontaneous Public Art as Citizenship Engagement in Post-Earthquake L’Aquila. In L. Musarò &



- L. Iannelli (Eds.), *Performative Citizenship. Public Art, Urban Design, and Political Participation* (pp. 115–132). Mimesis International.
- Bicchieri, C. (2017). *Norms in the wild: How to diagnose, measure, and change social norms*. Oxford University Press.
- Blair, C., Jeppeson, M. S., & Pucci, E. J. (1991). Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 77, 263–288.
- Brighenti, A. (2007). Visibility A Category for the Social Sciences. *Current Sociology*, 55(3), 323–342. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392107076079>
- Brighenti, A. (2010). At the Wall: Graffiti Writers, Urban Territoriality, and the Public Domain. *Space and Culture*, 13(3), 315–332. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331210365283>
- Danto, A. C. (1998a). The Vietnam Veterans Memorial. In G. M. Horowitz, T. Huhn, & S. Ostrow (Eds.), *The Wake of Art: Criticism, Philosophy, and the Ends of taste*. (pp. 153–158). G+B Arts International.
- Danto, A. C. (1998b). Tilted Art and Public Art. In G. M. Horowitz, T. Huhn, & S. Ostrow (Eds.), *The Wake of Art: Criticism, Philosophy, and the Ends of taste*. (pp. 147–151). G+B Arts International.
- de Certeau, M. (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press.
- de Certeau, M., & Giard, L. (1998). *Culture in the plural*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Deutsche, R. (1988). Uneven Development: Public Art in New-York City. *October*, 47, 3–52.
- Finkelpearl, T. (Ed.). (2001). *Dialogues in Public Art*. MIT Press.
- Foucault, M. (1988). Practicing criticism. In L. D. Kritzman (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Politics Philosophy, Culture Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984* (pp. 152–156). Routledge.
- Graham, G. (2006). Can There Be Public Architecture? *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 64(2), 243–249.
- Halsey, M., & Young, A. (2006). 'Our desires are ungovernable' Writing graffiti in urban space. *Theoretical Criminology*, 10(3), 275–306. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480606065908>
- Harvey, D. (2008). The Right to the City. *New Left Review*, 53, 23–40.
- Hein, H. S. (1996). What Is Public Art?: Time, Place, and Meaning. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 54(1), 1–7.
- Il Fanciullo di Angera*. (2016). <https://www.angera.it/en/see-and-do/places/il-fanciullo-di-angera>
- Irvine, M. (2012). The work on the street: Street art and visual culture. In I. Heywood, B. Sandywell, M. Gardiner, Gunalan Nadarajan, & C. M. Soussloff (Eds.), *The handbook of visual culture* (pp. 235–278). Berg.
- Iveson, K. (2007). *Publics and the City*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Iveson, K. (2010). The wars on graffiti and the new military urbanism. *City*, 14(1–2), 115–134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810903545783>
- Keith, M. (2005). *After the cosmopolitan? Multicultural cities and the future of racism* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Kester, G. (2004). *Conversation Pieces: Community + Communication in Modern Art*. University of California Press.
- Kiki, C. (2017, December 5). "The seven works of Mercy" by Caravaggio in Rome, reproduced by Andrea Ravo Mattoni. *StreetArtNews*. <https://streetartnews.net/2017/12/seven-works-mercy-caravaggio-rome-reproduced-andrea-ravo-mattoni.html>
- Kindynis, T. (2018). Bomb Alert: Graffiti Writing and Urban Space in London. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 58(3), 511–528. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1093/bjc/azx040>
- Knight, C. K. (2008). *Public Art: Theory, Practice and Populism*. Blackwell.
- Korza, P., Bacon, B. S., & Assaf, A. (Eds.). (2005). *Civic Dialogue, Arts & Culture: Findings from Animating Democracy*. Americans for the Arts.
- Kristeller, P. O. (1951). The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics Part I. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 12(4), 496–527. JSTOR. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2707484>
- Kuruville, G. (2017, January 2). With Ravo, Caravaggio stars in street art. *Abitare*. <http://www.abitare.it/en/design-en/visual-design-en/2017/01/02/ravo-street-art-caravaggio/>
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space*. Wiley & Sons.
- Lefebvre, H., Kofman, E., & Lebas, E. (1996). *Writings on cities*. Blackwell.
- Lopes, D. M. (2009). *A Philosophy of Computer Art*. Routledge.
- Lopes, D. M. (2014). *Beyond Art*. Oxford University Press.
- Mitchell, W. J. T. (2005). There Are No Visual Media. *Journal of Visual Culture*, 4(2), 257–266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470412905054673>
- Musarò, L., & Iannelli, L. (Eds.). (2017). *Performative*

*Citizenship: Public Art, Urban Design, and Political Participation*. Mimesis International.

Pan, L. (2014). Who is occupying wall and street: Graffiti and urban spatial politics in contemporary China. *Continuum*, 28(1), 136–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2013.854867>

Rancière, J. (2004). *The politics of aesthetics: The distribution of the sensible*. Continuum.

Senie, H. F. (2002). *The Tilted Arc Controversy: Dangerous Precedent?* University of Minnesota Press.

Stuntz, W. J. (2000). Self-Defeating Crimes Symposium: The Legal Construction of Norms. *Virginia Law Review*, 86, 1871–1900.

Tunali, T. (2018). The Art of Resistance: Carnival Aesthetics and the Gezi Street Protests. *ASAP/Journal*, 3(2), 377–399. <https://doi.org/10.1353/asa.2018.0031>

Zio. (2015, June 5). Exclusive Interview with Utah & Ether, Graffiti's Bonnie & Clyde. *The Hundreds*. <http://thehundreds.com/blog/utah-ether-interview/>



