

Reflections about the Relevance of Graffiti and Mural Painting in the Current Architectural Scenario

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Abstract— *The research that follows has as main objective to promote reflections about the relevance that mural painting, through graffiti, has been developing in the current scenario not only of urbanism, but also of architecture. There is a remarkable excitement in the market for this urban art, which has been conquering more and more space as art in galleries, museums and other spaces. What is perceived is the elitization and appreciation of what was once considered just an illegal expression of the less favored classes. It is also important to analyze that there is a gap between graffiti-art and delinquent graffiti, which are opposite positions with different plastic results. The finding is that graffiti is being increasingly coveted by the art industry that aims to win over new admirers and collectors, and the exploration of this practice has gradually grown in the areas of interior / exterior architecture, product design, advertising and advertising and fashion.*

Keywords— *Artistic Expression, Elitization, Language, Urban Intervention.*

I. INTRODUCTION

All the major cities in the world exhibit the interference of their street artists. Equipped with atomic brushes and spray paints, they portray a culture that stands out. There is a worldwide demand for art aimed at the great masses, from Pop Art. In Brazil, a country with vast production due to the ethnic and multicultural variety, it could not be different.

Urban art took an important step in breaking with the elitism in which contemporary art was located. For the first time, an art coming from the peripheries and empirically carried out by social classes considered inferior is placed alongside the arts developed in the workshops. Today, the graffiti scene has surpassed all barriers of prejudice and ignorance. It is appropriate, then, to debate and get to know this parietal language that has moved the world artistic panorama and revolutionized current aesthetic concepts. In addition, the present research, of analytical bibliographic character, comes to discuss the question.

Graffiti reflects multiculturalism through its diverse styles, which counteract the media's eternal intention to massify a convenient style. It is impossible to dissociate graffiti from the principle of freedom of expression. The irreverence of this street art is linked to a philosophy of life, linked to hip-hop, as music, and to break, while dancing.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the History of Art, one of the first forms of graphic expression was rock painting, about 40,000 years BC, where prehistoric man portrayed aspects of his daily life on the rocky walls. So, it must be understood that the rock engraving was not only the first form of mural painting, but also the first graffiti configuration. This should be stated with Parramón (1979, p. 11):

For thousands of years, the primitive man discovered that the earth, the yokes of the plants, the calcined leaves, the trunks and the burnt branches, as well as being mixed

with water or with animals, provide different colors, in a stable way. Then I started to paint, [...] and here I used the most logical thing, because in the end I had the only support I had to hand: the wall, the walls of where I lived.

But, far beyond prehistory, mural painting has been observed in all civilizations and periods of history. The first civilizations were those of the Far East, India, China, Egypt and, later, Greece and Rome, respectively. But the technical apogee of mural painting took place in the Renaissance, through the fresco, which is a technique executed with pigments free from pure water over a fresh mortar. Considered the “noble mural” due to the great demand for knowledge of the pigments on the part of the artist, the fresco is enshrined in the History of Art.

In the 20th century, Mexican muralists Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros organized a manifesto in defense of the need for public art that would be able to speak to the crowds. “We will paint the walls of the streets and the walls of public buildings, of the unions, of all the corners where people who work are gathered”, affirmed Siqueiros, in one of the first indications that the mural painting should be popularized. This is what Gitahy (1999, p. 16), designer, visual artist and researcher of urban art in São Paulo, mentions:

All these data on muralism, along with pop art, already pointed to the origin of contemporary graffiti as an artistic and human expression. This manifestation, which began to appear in Brazil in the 1950s, with the introduction of the spray, passes through the 60s, passes through the 70s and is consecrated as an artistic language in the 1980s, conquering its space in the media.

There are rules that stipulate the structuring of mural painting: workability, resistance and, mainly, the materials used. It would be rare for a muralist to use pastel chalk, for example, when making a mural. The materials used in parietal paints must have good adhesion to the base material, have durability and resistance to the weather in the case of external paints. These are conditions for the construction of a quality panel. In the view of Tirello (2001, p. 66):

The rules are: the support must be continuous and well compacted, so that the brush slides and fills the planes of the composition with bright or opaque paints, depending on the basic pictorial technique

chosen by the artist. Every care is taken to ensure that each stratum of the painting is intimately connected with each other, ensuring durability and stability of the materials that make up the work.

In the contemporary context, graffiti enters as the type of mural painting of more focus. The word graffiti is the plural of graffito, from Italian, whose meaning refers to the inscription and drawings from ancient times, made in a crude way. Today, the term “graffiti” or even the Brazilian form and also correct “graffiti” is used to describe the painting technique used. Graffiti is a direct descendant of modern muralism and pop culture, from where it inherited resources such as masks, stencils and stickers.

For some scholars in the field, graffiti relates to all the doodles we invented: the doodles, the hearts engraved on the trees, the writing on the doors of public bathrooms, even those that come up during a phone call. However, for others, graffiti is an exclusively artistic expression, where there is an aesthetic concern on the part of the graffiti artist, prioritizing the image, always with a social and moral appeal. Unlike graffiti, which can be considered an aggression against the public patrimony, monochromatic, where there is no plastic concern, using writing as a foundation.

Essentially, graffiti had an exclusively political character, where it carried out social criticisms, denunciations and exposed ideologies. However, this practice lost its value, where he began to make declarations of love, tell jokes, curse and other doodles without any intrinsic intention. Generally, the graffiti artist is associated with the so-called wild style, a style of letters almost unreadable, used since the beginning of the history of graffiti. Despite this, according to Gitahy (1999, p. 23), “graffiti and graffiti always have something in common, they carry transgression and, therefore, they only exist in reasonably open societies - they do not combine with dictatorship”.

This graffiti-graffiti dichotomy goes far beyond aesthetic and artistic considerations. While graffiti is seen as an act of vandalism and visual pollution, graffiti emerges as an awareness resource, with a whole social role, where it represents a salvation from juvenile delinquency through a medium so sublime that it is art. This must be complemented by Souza (2008, p.10):

The whole atmosphere built around street art, such as these workshops that multiply the number of practitioners, the development of new techniques, the public and private interests related to the displacement of such

activities from the scope of delinquency to that of culture, from consumption to production, as well as urban planning, reveal the breadth of social and spatial effects related to the phenomenon.

Currently, the artistic environment has undergone a revolution. Graffiti came to democratize art, previously restricted to museums and private collections. Such changes can be observed in the entire urban environment: in walls, facades, culverts, sidewalks. The city has become the basis for free intervention by artists, who often use the technique in an arbitrary and uncompromised manner, without any spatial or ideological barriers. It appears that graffiti has been developing this role since the mid-60s, however, only now has it gained space among the most respected arts. In the view of Simões (2011, p. 35):

The fact is that the very strength of this visual language of graffiti, born mainly on the outskirts of large cities, is bringing the answers: street art started to be made on other supports, such as canvases and installations, and is now displayed in galleries, museums and specialized fairs. Urban art, street art, graffiti; there is still no consensus on the best terminology. But there is a certainty: urban art is selling, and well.

In architecture, graffiti has been playing an important role in breaking paradigms, personalizing environments and relaxing spaces. Graffiti has gained its space as an important resource in interior architecture, integrating spaces and using colors and shapes to obtain a unique and exclusive environment. This urban art made a true bridge from the street to the home, where it fell into the taste of the elites as an avant-garde movement.

As an example, in the city of Marseille, France, the Hotel Au Panier Vieux created the "Panic Room", which is nothing more than a room where an absolute half is white and the other half is entirely graffiti, causing a contrast almost disturbing, which justifies the adopted name. The paintings were made by the artist Tilt, who even created the prints for printing on the sheets and curtains, so that nothing escapes the context. The room is an absolute success of the hotel, which features four other rooms with different themes, which are updated annually by renowned artists and designers, with guests paying a higher price to enjoy these environments. Following, an image of this exotic space illustrates what is described here.



Fig. 1: Panic Room, at the French hotel Au Panier Vieux.

Raised to the art category, graffiti blends with almost any room in the house and is also widely used in commercial environments, offices, restaurants, pubs and nightclubs. In the same way as Pop Art, the graffiti technique has been taking its place in the market, influencing areas such as design, publicity and advertising, communicative media and fashion. Many objects are receiving shapes and prints with themes generally used by graffiti artists.

So much is the success of this urban art, that galleries and workshops are specializing exclusively in this language. This is the case of the Choque Cultural gallery, one of the most appreciated in São Paulo, whose main objective is to bring young people closer to plastic arts, as well as to win new collectors. In this gallery, graffiti is an ubiquitous theme in all works, which can be acquired for the most varied values.

Cities are also giving their graffiti artists greater prominence. In Rio de Janeiro, in 2010, the city created the Rio Arte Urbana project, which is very active, which aims to restore and maintain the existing graffiti in the city. The project estimates that 400 works will be restored in the coming years, in addition to promoting the execution of new graffiti and sculptures. One of the main objectives of the program is to get the population closer to both art and the city, so that people develop a more pleasant look at the urban environment in which they operate and are anxious to preserve this environment.

Along with graffiti and of course, mural painting, new techniques of urban art emerge. Trompe-l'oeil, for example, which is an artistic method that creates optical illusions through the study of perspective and an observation point. Its nomenclature originates from a French expression, which means "deceive the eye", since

you really have the feeling that that simple painting in two dimensions has height, width and depth. In other words, there is the impression that it is not a two-dimensional painting, but a three-dimensional scene, in 3D. The technique is old, since it was already used by the Roman Empire on murals in the city of Pompeii, where they imitated windows in order to enlarge the environment. At the same time it is used by artists from around the world as a way to make the urban environment more attractive.

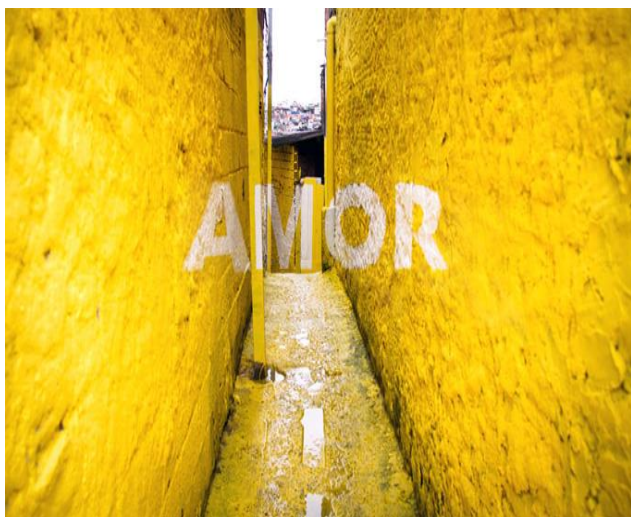


Fig. 2: Trompe-l'oeil in Vila Brasilândia, in São Paulo, Brazil, of the Boa Mistura Group.

III. CONCLUSION

Being in the urban bustle of everyday life, visiting a museum or even printed in interior and exterior architecture, the presence of graffiti enriches any landscape through its lines, shapes, colors and poetics. This art makes the city less gray, frigid and colorless. The urban environment is visually polluted by signs, advertisements, electrical wires, graffiti and this expressive language comes in order to soften this indigestible side of the urban fabric.

What can be seen through this research is that over the years, street artists have become closer to the art itself, seeking new techniques and improving the features. And with that, they gradually won the admiration of people and a privileged space in the artistic sphere. Today, graffiti is on the rise, dictates trends and deconstructs prejudices, that is, it has conquered a respectable place to continue to achieve its main objective: expressing political and social criticism, shouting its ideologies and drawing people's attention to the values in force in society. It is hoped that one day, and it is not far from that, every urban center can become an immense art gallery in the open.

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