

Keeping the City Vibrantly Youthful through Graffiti

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Abstract. Almost every city has a portrait of social inequality. In terms of space around the city, the public spaces in the city are cluttered with advertising billboards as symbols of urban economic progress. Alongside them, a small graffiti compliment public spaces in the city. A lot of people think that graffiti is vandalism despite whether it has aesthetic value or not. Some graffiti are profound and meaningful and it should be preserved and accommodated in a controlled surrounding. These kinds of graffiti is made with passion, it is planned, which gives it meaning as it have a story to tell. By providing graffiti artist a special public place to apply their skills, the city can be kept vibrantly youthful through graffiti.

Keywords: City, Graffiti, Public Space.

1. Introduction

Almost every city in general is developed to incorporate new ideas of urban planning - such as public facilities, which are designed and structured integrally into the environment. The environment has a blend of uses, providing opportunities for individuals to find a place to live, work, spend, get entertainment and express their ideas. The city is deliberately adopts a broad understanding, more than simply a physical or visual appearance of development, it is an integrative act.

This circumstances raises asymmetrical situation, which reflects a portrait of social inequality. Development of transit oriented urban environment, which connects satellite areas with the main city, creates a chance for people to see more on their journey. City corridors functionally works as a boundary between the clusters of spaces - both connects and defines the environment, in the form of parks, highways, rail lines, major roads, or a combination of all. Environmental corridor may incorporate natural features such as rivers or valleys. In some cities, the local government makes buildings, be it large or small or a monument as a marker to greet on comers by saying welcome or saying goodbye on the way out of the city.

Human scale sets the standard for the proportion of the building, regardless of its form and function. The proportion of these buildings typically follow the applicable discipline so that way they will interact among each other to equate, particularly relating to the limited availability of public spaces. Roads, main connecting path for a city are created together beautifying the street and provide refreshing visuals. City residents interacts with the roads around them, as pedestrians comfortably stroll down the road in the shade of the trees on the sides of the roads in the city, this interaction creates a synergy of visual and creates a symbolism between the people and the world surrounding them. Space as a paradigm of intellectual enquiry is crucial here because to situate a cultural artifact in space is to bring it down to earth, to re-orient reflection towards questions of context, of materiality, of relationship, of causality and interaction (West-Pavlov, 2008:23).

Once a city has grown large enough, it transforms into a metropolis where its residents have moved to the suburbs, creating a lot of people traveling to the urban centers for work. The residential area or a suburban area is different than the center metropolitan area. Psychic spaces consider the relationship between subjective, interior spaces and exterior material spaces as a site of anxiety manifested in psychic formations and projections (Rugg, 2010:3). The city offers casual encounters, the possibilities of engagement, the adoption or relinquishing of a personality. From the city surroundings, it is possible to take a snapshot of the city by an observer. A snapshot might be taken in a busy street, which although gives little idea of the city as a whole, it shows its configuration, its boundaries, and lending coherence to the cluster of buildings, transforming the city into a distinctive skyline.

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A city defined by a large number of infrastructure and buildings, also provides a portrait of social inequalities. Surrounded by elevated roads as a means of supporting public transportation, a city left the scenery barren with plenty of road infrastructure. The interconnecting roads create a pattern of road network, creating a number of alternative routes from one part of the area to another. Dotting along these road networks are billboards, which displays advertising. At the same time it provide a lot opportunity to deliver any messages through static board in the public spaces and addressed to audience who are passing by.

The streets form a hierarchy, from the broad main streets to narrow path and finally to the alleys. The roads themselves represent social inequalities as it divides the area and structurally indicates the socio economic status where luxury homes are paved with nicely layered asphalt while slums are using roads from dirt path. Foreign expensive four-wheel vehicles with only a few people inside seemingly mocks the people who are tightly packed inside run down busses, pedestrians walking in the smog of vehicles, and motorcyclists who have to endure the heat of the sun. Accompanying them, the city is cluttered by billboards of advertising, as symbols of urban economic progress, as well as graffiti, which convey the creator opinion of a topic and placed on public spaces around the city.

Graffiti came from Italian word of "graffiato" which means pictures or words painted or drawn on a wall, building, etc. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, *Graffiti*, which also serves as the plural of *graffito*, is commonly used as a singular mass noun. This use is well established although not yet as well established as the mass-noun use of data. Use of graffiti as a singular count noun is still quite rare and is not standard. Graffiti artists create artwork and communicate their ideas for enriching the environment. Graffiti can be personally expressive, but is usually addressed to a wide audience. Some people call graffiti as street art. The problem are: some of the works are very well made aesthetically and made the city like a big gallery, but some graffiti are created only to make a statement without aesthetic value. Some graffiti are created to mark individual identity, which has no aesthetic and regarded as pure vandalism. The objective of this paper is how to optimized graffiti to keep the city vibrantly youthful.

2. Methodology

Observed by a phenomenological approach with qualitative methodology, in general, despite its aesthetic values a lot of people think that graffiti is considered as vandalism. Although phenomenology is a philosophical term, it basically refers to the analysis of daily life from the perspective of those who experience it. Therefore, the flow of phenomenology places great emphasis on a person's perception and interpretation of their subjective experience. The problem is that no two people have the same life story and thus experience. Positive consideration is the unconditional acceptance that does not blend with the performance, and have empathic understanding. As a graffiti artist, these people share their experience and their knowledge of graffiti art. As stated, individual who is the subject of research itself represents the individuals who experience the phenomenon. On the other hand, qualitative researchers have assumed that qualified, competence observers can, with objectivity, clarity, and precision, report on their own observations of social world, including the experiences of the others (Denzin, Lincoln, 2000:18)

Empathic understanding is a skill to temporarily not heeding the views and values at the moment one enters the world of others without prejudice. It is an active process to listen to other people thoughts and feelings of others. Observed with a phenomenological approach, the city serves as an engine, which gives a lot of information to be shared with the audience. This situation inspired street artists to create artwork and communicate their ideas to enrich the environment. Facilitated by the physical form of the city are buildings ranging from small to large, seemingly reaching for the sky. Some structures are scattered providing empty spaces in between them, giving a cold and lifeless notion to its surroundings but at the same time provides a canvass for graffiti artists.

The existence of these voids, especially the separating walls is then used as a venue for various community interests and even individuals. They make use of the walls to be their foundation structure for the temporary houses, which later developed into a permanent house. Not only for living, and marking land boundaries, some individuals or people use the walls for advertising, and some of them use the wall for making graffiti.

3. Discussion

Regardless of valuable works of art or as means of communication where the artist voiced their opinions, desires, and their interest in the form of graffiti, it is still mostly misunderstood even though graffiti is often explores the day-to-day thoughts and ideas that may be associated with the public interest. Despite the context of meaning, all graffiti have one thing in common is that they have to adapt to the medium it is placed upon, creating a unique artwork as there are seldom one void space which have the same property of texture and size around the cityscape.

One defining factor of graffiti as art is that it contains themes which represent greater ideas in the community, about channeling opinion, aspirations and ideas voiced in the name of public interest. As such graffiti can be the voice of the masses as a statement of social emancipation, political change, or simply just a message to change the attitudes of onlookers. Thus, the city itself turned into an art gallery for the work of graffiti artists as it encourages audience to participate, and invite everybody to do an even better one. It is an open invitation to communicate about a particular issue.

Graffiti can be described as a personal expressive works. Street art is an inseparable part of youth culture (Jun, 2009:5). A common form of street art is graffiti scribble, to indicate their existence in their own community while expressing their youthful spirit. Going down the line, professional graffiti artists have a unique personality; they are almost never officially introduced themselves as the person responsible for creating their artworks. If they want to assert themselves, they will do so only in limited circles, especially among fellow graffiti artists by using nicknames.

In most cases, they are organized through a group of clusters. The street artist is incorporated in a local graffiti arts organization, and some joined international organizations. Their works are mostly organized through permission of the property owner. As it works constructively, regardless of the view that this work is a work of graffiti, it is clear that these works fill and decorate the empty spaces in the city.

These works of art are processes the elements in the empty spaces, which together, in the concept of ' integration ' creates a harmonious environment of urban space. Art has a social function. It works in parallel with the culture of the people and carry out functions as a commenting, viewing, reviewing or assessing of current societal issues. On the other hand, it also form a certain historical record. Once the art form of graffiti culture adapted by the culture, they often display the day-to- day thoughts and ideas, which can relate to everyone. One of the things that always made me paint in the streets is the fact that it is a form of experiential art (Wilke, Zaza, 2011:97). Experiential art means, every element connects with each other in a colorful visual diversity, and ultimately gives the order of interpretation. The order of objects to understood in image interpretation between these graffiti works form the visual system which can be define as a central message in determining the meaning of relationships between elements in a artwork of graffiti.

Graffiti became an inseparable part from the beauty of the city. Almost everybody in a city have a chance to beautify the dirty through graffiti. As a form of creativity in urban areas, graffiti makes the city more colorful and change the image of the city slums into something stylish and full of nuances that conveys positive messages. Basquiat, a graffiti artist, In continuation of his work on walls, signs, and buildings, he began to execute paintings on everyday objects like refrigerators, doors, and windows (Buchhart, Keller, 2011:33), showcasing that graffiti can change the mundane into something extraordinary. Display of street art in urban areas provides a bridge of interaction between graffiti artists, their audiences, and those who become urban observers. Graffiti in itself has become a channel to deliver message.

Through communication, graffiti writers gain knowledge, experience or learn how to analyze, synthesize, or evaluate something. Knowledge, communication and creativity in their many forms are among the great obsessions of contemporary societies (Sales, and Fournier, 2007:1). Indeed, life in human societies has always called upon knowledge, communication and invention. No group, no community has ever been formed without representations, information and knowledge.

The message aims to change knowledge, thinking and understanding, particularly in the delivery of messages through street art. Graffiti can also be analyzed in accordance with the elements such as letters, lines, colors, and structures are present to produce a narrative that reflects the designer's aesthetics. Another reason why the significance of graffiti art can be seen as an individual creation is by looking to its creator. Graffiti artists are unique individuals, because they are usually humble and work discreetly. The graffiti artists intend for their work to be accessible and understandable to communicate their feelings and ideas to a general audience.

Everybody can create graffiti, but those who create meaningful graffiti often came from technical background such as an author, calligrapher, craft artist, and painter. The latter are often created graffiti that reflects the day-to-day thoughts and ideas that relates to all people who sees it.

Graffiti has varying definitions from one graffiti artist to the other. One thing that many artist agreed upon is how it can be described as a form of communication with personal identifications such as territorial, possessive, and bombastic. The artists combined shapes and color with visual texts to reinforce the message. They created works in an effort to establish and maintain steady social interrelationships. The way in which graffiti has dealt with the multiple aspects of 'solutions' that can be created audience is to consider not only physical message, but to think in terms of a 'bundle of attributes' that consists of all of its elements, including benefits which relevant to audience's life, and audience's expectations.

Graffiti appears to be motivated by a simple desire to have fun, some works reflect the aesthetic talent of the artist. However it actually reflect the actual social aesthetics commercially. They seemed to justify the opinion that drawing has become a part of everyday life. They make graffiti because in the process, it is an enjoyable thing. The feeling of enjoyment triggers their passion to continue to create art on the streets and only reflects on aesthetics.

Society comprised of interdependent parts that work together to fill important functions for alignment and overall survival of the society. Graffiti artist has tremendous effort to create one with high work ethic and deep meaning where upon completion, the theme they created might be the same but the content will be specific to each artist and only to them.

Graffiti artist work on issues they found profound, and know what they dislike and expressed through illustrative text in certain places and urban communities. Graffiti became a mean of communication, to voice their opinions, desires, and their interest in the form of graffiti, and even some of them have moved to different areas, not confined to walls anymore. Their artwork creates a reality which is constructed through subjectivity, thus forming an objective reality for the audience.

Whether that audience is always a willing one is an argument for another time, but graffiti inspires its followers to take risks and dedicate everything to the lifestyle, especially to rejuvenate the city, keeping the city having a vibrant of youth. Graffiti itself is basically consist of a bunch of aesthetic criteria and motives behind the artist's work is much greater than just shaping the texts color with visual to reinforce the message. Graffiti is a useful tool as official languages for closing the gap between specific theme and audience. It stood well outside of any educational system, as such; it easier to be recognized clearly from those who sees it, and create close relationship between message and audience. However, placing graffiti on property without permission is a crime and is not art. Funding the removal effort of vandal graffiti can be diverted to fund another youth project and community development.

4. Conclusion

Graffiti has many interpretations, one of which can be seen something as simple as marking on tables, to graffiti for commercial activities such as advertising billboards. Many people think that graffiti is considered as vandalism. Despite it all, through provided special public spaces for graffiti purposes, graffiti artists can explore their imagination, express their opinions, visualize their creative ideas and keeping the city vibrantly youthful. In the end, graffiti contributes to a harmonious environment and graffiti artists can display their aspirations and engage in the process of beautifying the city.

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