

GRAFFITI – VOICE OF THE HEART

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Summary. *In this research we want to highlight the moral, social and cultural effects of graffiti. Graffiti is most commonly known as a form of vandalism, where misfit youth takes over public spaces with gang signs and large pictures made with spray paint. In the 21st century it has evolved into a professional art form that is admired across the world. Today we see that graffiti is an art form where people can express their feelings and thoughts that are able to leave a long lasting impression on a city. This often borders on vandalism when done on private or public property. Graffiti provides a voice for people in society who also want to be heard. Often in some third world countries the media is not allowed to portray what is really going on in the country. Graffiti then becomes the number one way to express their feelings and emotions, as well as let the world know what is really going on.*

Keywords: *graffiti, emotions, communicate, purpose, art, vandalism.*

Introduction

As humans, we have the right to express ourselves as long as we are not harming others. As an outlook, some people use graffiti to put on display their emotions that they otherwise wouldn't be able to communicate. Graffiti is a way that other people can get all their issues out and create something beautiful that everyone can see.

Graffiti is writing or drawings made on a wall or other surface. Graffiti ranges from simple written words to elaborate wall paintings, and has existed since ancient times, with examples dating back to ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, and the Roman Empire. The word originates from Greek γράφειν—graphein—meaning "to write". In modern times, spray paint and marker pens have become commonly used graffiti materials, and there are many different types and styles of graffiti; it is a rapidly developing art form.

In today's modern society, graffiti is a common form of expression and can be seen just about anywhere in the streets. While graffiti may just look like a colorful masterpiece, in reality, it represents a purpose. However, while graffiti could be viewed as an expressive form of art (the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form), others perceive it as public vandalism (action involving deliberate destruction of or damage to public or private property). These people believe that graffiti artists should not be allowed to "express themselves" on personal property and should be punished for doing so. They believe that in fact graffiti is very destructive and causes a disturbance.

1. Self-expression

Graffiti has always been a great way to express yourself [3]. Being able to choose your own colors and design. Street artists are actually showcasing their talent.

This compilation of various street art inspires a wide range of human emotional responses, not only expressed through the art itself but through the viewers interpretation of each piece of art and their personal association to the expressed emotion. Emotions [5] are universal in which all human beings are capable of feeling and expressing emotions to themselves and to others. This exhibit furthers this notion by utilizing street art found around the world. Street art can be seen within every country and city as artists express themselves by using a variety of canvases found in everyday life ranging from fences, the face of a buildings, bridges, anywhere really.



Figure 1. Graffiti on the Berlin Wall



Figure 2. Graffiti in New York City, 1986



Figure 3. Anxiety & Pain Relief (2012) by Bastardilla



Figure 4. Untitled (2011) by Miguel Januario



Figure 5. Large Mural (2013) by C215

They inform global circulation of ideas [1], information, and politics found within the world. They engage viewers by allowing them to create meaning and interpellate meaning within the art. They can draw meaning from associations found within things we see in movies or other forms of art such as tattoos. As they are located in towns and within public eyes they allow viewers to engage in social practices. This contemporary art form is produced within dynamics of social [2] and ideological practices that generate meaning through the work itself and where they are placed by the creator. This form of art [4] has the capacity to impact viewers depending on the cultural codes or shared concepts concerning what makes an image visually appealing to the viewer. This exhibit offers a form of realism in the form of diverse human emotions. This exhibit extends contemporary art to the widest range of public, establishing a strong cross-cultural relationship between art and public spaces, and making art and culture accessible to all.

2. History

The first drawings on walls appeared in caves thousands of years ago. Later the Ancient Romans and Greeks wrote their names and protest poems on buildings. Modern graffiti seems to have appeared in Philadelphia in the early 1960s, and by the late sixties it had reached New York. The new art form really took off in the 1970s, when people began writing their names, or 'tags', on buildings all over the city. In the mid-seventies it was sometimes hard to see out of a subway car window, because the trains were completely covered in spray paintings known as 'masterpieces'.

In the early days, the ‘taggers’ were part of street gangs who were concerned with marking their territory. They worked in groups called ‘crews’, and called what they did ‘writing’ – the term ‘graffiti’ was first used by *The New York Times* and the novelist Norman Mailer.

Art galleries in New York began buying graffiti in the early seventies. It began to be regarded as an art form, John Lindsay, the then mayor of New York, declared the first war on graffiti. By the 1980s it became much harder to write on subway trains without being caught, and instead many of the more established graffiti artists began using roofs of buildings or canvases.

The debate over whether graffiti is art or vandalism is still going on.

3. Art or Vandalism

Spray-painted subway cars, tagged bridges, mural-covered walls. Graffiti pops up boldly throughout our cities. It can make statements about identity, art, empowerment, and politics, while simultaneously being associated with destruction. And, it turns out, it's nothing new. Graffiti, or the act of writing or scribbling on public property, has been around for thousands of years. And across that span of time, it's raised the same questions we debate now: Is it art? Is it vandalism?

It focusses on a comparison study, mainly through artist interviews, between the evolving graffiti practices in major cities but Moldova is also no exception. From a civilization where calligraphy has been the core of the artistic production, the writing on a wall has different meanings than in a Euro-American context (gangs and political + social protests). Confronting these two almost opposite approaches, it allows a better understanding of this artistic form, as to whether it is considered vandalism or art.

Graffiti is mostly commonly known as a form of vandalism, where misfit youth take over public spaces with gang signs and large pictures made with spray paint. Taggers used coded labels to trace their movements around cities while often alluding to their origins. And the very illegality of graffiti-making that forced it into the shadows also added to its intrigue and growing base of followers. The question of space and ownership is central to graffiti's history. Its contemporary evolution has gone hand in hand with counterculture scenes. While these movements raised their anti-establishment voices, graffiti artists likewise challenged established boundaries of public property.

On the other hand, in the 21st century it has evolved into a professional art form that is admired across the world. Today we see that graffiti is an art form where people can express their feelings and thoughts that are able to leave a long lasting impression on a city. This often borders on vandalism when done on private or public property. Peter Vallone, a New York city councillor, thinks that graffiti done with permission can be art, but if it is on someone else's property it becomes a crime. ‘I have a message for the graffiti vandals out there,’ he said recently. ‘Your freedom of expression ends where my property begins.’ On the other hand, Felix, a member of the Berlin-based group Reclaim Your City, says that artists are reclaiming cities for the public from advertisers, and that graffiti represents freedom and makes cities more vibrant.

In interviews *Out in the open: Street art from Russia* [1]. It should be mentioned that a greater risk to the artists in the field was that what you created could only become a white wall. The buff guy, who used to cover graffiti drawings on the street and on trains. However, each of the artists had their genre to create. Some of them began to work in the style of bombing. Others opted for the madonnary technique (3D illusion effect drawings, executed on the roadway). These are just a few cases, which have found peace and are devoted to all these "arts".

We had the opportunity to interview a lady from Moldova who expressed her love for graffiti and also mentioned it as art. Inna, better known under the pseudonym iZZY iZVNE, is an international graffiti and street art artist, with more than 10 years ' experience, as well as the founder of the Urban Spirit Family platform, which aims to develop and unite the youth of our country through urban culture. She was inspired by hip-hop culture, which includes elements such as graffiti, DJing, MCing, breakdance. To the question of why the world is for or against graffiti she answered:” It all depends on the graffiti itself. No one likes illegal graffiti, it is more considered

an act of vandalism. Most likely, this is due to a lack of understanding of this action. But at the same time, everyone loves beautiful drawings (street art), recently it has become an entire industry. People are willing to pay money for it. People don't understand the main thing. One cannot exist without the other. As a result, I can only say that street art has begun to attract attention and this undoubtedly leads to the development of this area.” Also, if we approach the topic of expressing feelings through this art, she considered that: what is on the wall, is also in the soul. All energy is concentrated in the creation of beauty.

Conclusions

After surveying 57 people we came to the conclusion that young people are more tolerant than the elderly. According to the questionnaire, more young people explained [6], and according to the graph [7] 86,7 % opted for the fact that graffiti is an art. Also 41.1% think that it is a way to express feelings. Some of those questioned affirm their answer by: (in case they say it's art) people who are not able to release their emotions in the social environment do it through colours, and is an act of vandalism when graffiti is created on cultural buildings, on buildings with classical styles, state institutions and when vulgar things are drawn.

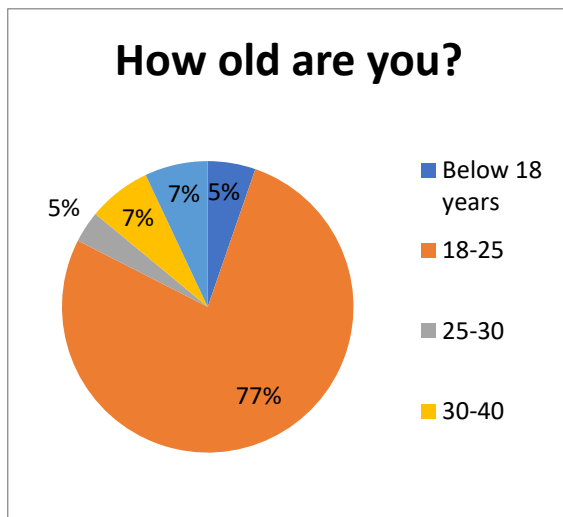


Figure 6. People's age

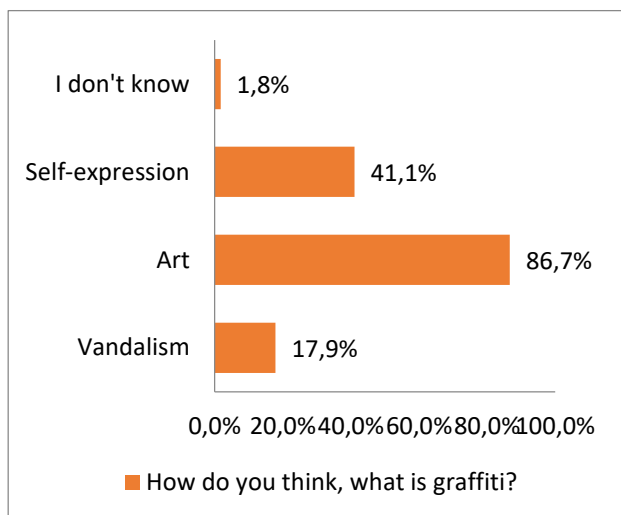


Figure 7. Percentage of given answers

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