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Approaching Athenian Graffiti and Street Art as a Multimodal Genre with GIS Application

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Abstract

Graffiti and street art as an ever-changing form of public art and visual communication is naturally multimodal, focusing on verbopictorial relations (Bateman 2014; Stampoulidis 2016a, 2016b). The Athenian graffiti and street art scene is a visually alternative medium of intercommunication during the socioeconomic and political crisis in Greece. The graffiti and street art activity on city’s walls can be characterized as:

1. Interactive public medium of multimodal communication
2. Metamorphosis of public space
3. Open dialogue with Athenian society

2008 revolution in Athens, after the shooting of a 15 year old student by the police on December 6, 2008 in Exarchia district, downtown Athens. The protest actions in 2008 constituted the onset of the sociopolitical and financial crisis.

Mass student demonstrations in traffic areas signified the end of Greek society of the last decades.

From May 2010 to present day, Greece has been part of three economic adjustment programmes.

The public walls rapidly started transforming into an interactive social public magazine, as an attestation of all those sociopolitical processes in the Athenian public landscape.

Sign types (Iconicity, Indexicality, Symbolicity).

Semiotic genres (Construction, Function, Circulation).

Verbal, pictorial, verbopictorial modalities.

Geographical area: Central Athens, Greece.


The Digital Archive of Street Art is a work in progress.

8 datasets.

158 pictures.


Geographical area: central Athens, Greece.

Descriptive and analytical categories.

Cognitive semiotic inquiry.

Classification – annotation schema (metadata).

Semiotic genres (Construction, Function, Circulation).

Verbal, pictorial, verbopictorial modalities.

Plastic and pictorial layer.

Sign types (Iconicity, Indexicality, Symbolicity).

Communication context – World knowledge.

Preliminary Results and Discussion

High frequency of pictorial and verbopictorial metaphors and metonyms in graffiti and street art genre as crucial instruments for the representation of concrete entities.

Conceptualization of abstract concepts of EU, financial slavery and economy, future, antifascism and antinazism, capitalism and consumerism, and political corruption among many others.

Open and changeable georeferential database.

Subjectivity issue is a weakness; the interpretations are strongly dependent on personal intuitions emerged from the observation of the picture.

Inter-coder agreement method could be a reliability equivalent.

The data will be freely available and downloadable.

References


