Street Art and Public Space: A Digital Archive

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Background

- Street art is a new form of art and activism of uncommissioned and unsanctioned artifacts.
- Street art includes paintings, murals and various kinds of stencils, posters, and stickers applied in any public surface.
- Street art is not synonymous with graffiti (Lewisohn 2008).
- Street art is a sociocultural practice (Bengtsen 2014).
- Street art is performative, ephemeral, and site specific based on geographical space and sociocultural context (Bengtsen 2014; MacDowall 2008).
- Public space is creative, communicative, and changeable.
- The street artworks create public dialogue.

Research Questions

- Has street art the potential to actively transform the public space into a communicative and dynamic sociopolitical arena?
- Has street art sociocultural significance as part of our intangible heritage?

If YES:

- How the ephemerality of street art could be overcome with the application of digital technology?

Discussion

- This pilot study may lead to alternative interpretations of the multimodal verbopictorial genre of street art, and thus to a potential re-evaluation of the datasets.
- Open and changeable database.
- Subjectivity issue is a weakness; the interpretations are strongly dependent on personal intuitions emerged from the observation of the picture.
- Inter-coding process and agreement could be reliability equivalent.
- More datasets may be in the process of expansion or change.
- The datasets will be publicly available and downloadable, including functions for downloading XML and JSON files.

Conclusions

- Street art is site specific, locational oriented.
- Verbal and pictorial integration based on various semiotic modalities is a visual testimony, in order to establish a spiritual bridge with the Greek society.
- The interpretation of street art requires shared sociocultural pragmatic knowledge – Lifeworld.
- The sociocultural and political changes give birth to a wave of popular sociopolitical wall commentary.
- Redefined signs and symbols, intertextual references, and culturally related subjects reconstruct the current Athenian public landscape.
- Complex multimodal verbopictorial nature of street art.

References