
Graffiti, street art, murals and music

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Abstract

This research analyzes graffiti and murals made by young artists who are school students in Kosovo, and some of the professional artists, as a visual expressive description for certain purposes. Murals and graffiti which are made by students differ from those by professional artists in the field of visual arts, for the fact that naturally the graffiti made on the internal and external walls of schools display superficial and educational messages but still show creative aspects of the feeling for mural painting. A part of the graffiti were interwoven with musical art and represent the influence or inspiration from various musical components which in their images show musical content in the representation such as: musical instruments, musical performers, musical genres, musical bands (orchestras), and various musical symbols, notes, staff (pentagrams), musical keys, etc. The graffiti made by the students show their peculiarities in the content and in their messages. They are numerous in some schools in Kosovo, where graffiti fulfills the need of students to enforce any given topic, either social or educational. The importance and peculiarity of this research is that it highlights that the creation of graffiti-murals by students of different ages contains and displays empowering messages on certain topics, although art can also be used in other mediums where they convey their messages, however, in the murals there lies a greater power for conveying a message.

Keywords: Graffiti, street Art, Music, school

Intruduction

This paper presents the graffiti and murals made by different artists with special focus on young artists or students of different schools in Kosovo. We often see that graffiti and murals are made as street art in different spaces and it is only natural to see graffiti in other spaces as in the case of schools where students make a completely free graffiti art and express a very artistic spirit in walls or different school spaces.

These graffiti of different natures display social but also other messages and the way they have selected their ideas to draw graffiti has sprung up in line with their needs to send messages with a good purpose. Of course this can be observed as art inside school facilities, art which also serves to motivate them or feel good within those spaces.

Young artists - students have created graffiti of the most different types, but special emphasis is given here to the drawing of graffiti in schools that display different musical content.

Some of these schools where such graffiti were made and were part of this research are: Dardania, NaimFrasheri, AsimVokshi, QamilBatalli (in Prishtina), ZenelHajdini, High School of Arts (in Gjilan)

It is known that graffiti are different and colorful genres, which often contain only text or symbols displaying the message and words addressed to a society, whether from a critical but also an emotional aspect. Such graffiti were also present in the respective schools where the research was done. Moreover, in some (or many) cases these graffiti were interlaced and contained different symbols such as musical - instrumental ones or figures of people in motion - dancing etc.

Young artists see graffiti art as an inspiring tool and a form of freedom of expression, they consider it as an art that they can express freely and that obviously provides them with pleasant feelings when they draw it on walls or different spaces. Young artists - students, consider that with this

way of expressing art on the walls they are empowered and show greater confidence. It is characteristic that in most cases during the process of making graffiti, young artists have constantly accompanied their work with listening to music, and as a result, this shows that music has played an exceptionally good role in the work process and they have felt motivated in the realization of artistic work on the school walls.

Topic: Graffiti, street art, murals and music

Based on the actual situation that prevails on the ground, we consider that the state of Kosovo has an extremely large potential for artistic expression by young people, especially for street art, murals and graffiti. This is evident everywhere in the streets of the capital city, Prishtina, but also in other cities such as Ferizaj, Gjilan, Malisheva and many other places in Kosovo. There is a large number of graffiti where local but also international artists have created art on the walls of buildings, alleys, concrete surfaces, walls of state institutions, etc.

This creative potential has also been manifested in school buildings in Kosovo, where students have created graffiti with figurative and artistic content of various kinds. We have singled out some of them and will present them below. Although it is known that graffiti can sometimes convey

bad negative messages or show some revolt, however, it is observed that the absolute majority of graffiti painted in Kosovo schools in their content show the positive side and convey positive messages. The graffiti, murals and writings made in these schools are mainly done in collaboration with the school principals, parents and the community, and from their content and execution, it can be seen that they match the nature of the schools.

In the following, we will present some of the graffiti created in various schools in Kosovo.

The graffiti executed in the school “Ibrahim Mazreku” in Malisheva is called “Ngjyrapërdrejtësi” [Colors for justice] which was painted by the Center for the development of art “Q’art” and the artist Tristan Menard.

Also, the graffiti in the school “EminDuraku” in Shtime was made by the Center for the development of art “Q’art” in collaboration with Thisones art.

In these graffiti/murals, the concept and visual nature are seen with clear messages calling for justice, the hand made of flower petals holding a hammer of justice in striking action to dispense justice but in the philosophy of flowers or peace. This graffiti is very acceptable on a school wall and as such has a rootedness in this object.



Figure. 1 – School “Ibrahim Mazreku”



Figure. 2 – Elementary School “EminDuraku”
MalishevaShtime



Figure. 3 Elementary School “NaimFrasheri” in Prishtina,



Figure. 4 Elementary School “NaimFrasheri” in Prishtina,

The special feature of the graffiti in these schools is because they are seen from outside the school, so they are not hidden or indistinguishable; on the contrary, the whole community has access to see them clearly, so that the importance and artistic language expressed in these graffiti can be shown.

It is known that students have a more unique creative expression; often their creativity is focused on an expression of their art in other forms, by putting inscriptions and making art on their desks, on the walls of classrooms or even in other school spaces. In this way, students want to show another form of communication or express something as a kind of dissatisfaction. In different cases in schools in different countries graffiti are integrated into the lessons through a certain topic as it is considered to help them in their learning, as is the case with Jill Staake - 20 Engaging Ways to Teach With Graffiti Walls “Graffiti walls are a simple, fun, and interactive way to get kids involved in their learning” (Staake, 2019)”(Staake, 2019)

A well-organized arrangement to do graffiti in schools among other things makes the students feel more confident because when they are in contact with their work as in the case of graffiti they feel respected.

At the “NaimFrasheri” school in Prishtina, graffiti can be seen outside and inside it, Fig. 3 shows inscriptions promoting peace, one inscription says “react humanely, not with violence” which is a general inscription expressing a human request for people to act humanely and not by displaying violence, arrogance or other such ways. The fact that this graffiti is done at the entrance of the school shows the importance of graffiti in the school. While the rest of the graffiti located inside on a column conveys a message about the power of women and the very values of women in an array of various colors. Although in terms of realization it is an amateur graffiti, namely at the level of the artists of this school, however, it should be appreciated, especially the message that this graffiti conveys. The involvement of school students in making graffiti is considered as something good and positive because during the process of making graffiti, among other things, the socialization of students is promoted in achieving a common goal, through cooperation and



Figure 5. School "Qamil Batalli" Prishtina



Figure.6. School "Dardania" Prishtina

interaction, as Dawson states about the benefits of murals in the school that "It's a chance to interact with peers and adults, involve decision making skills, and learn the process of bringing ideas to life" (Dawson, n.d.)

Meanwhile, the graffiti painted in two schools of Prishtina by a group of artists in visual language promote motivational dynamics for the students of these schools. In Figure 6 the brain in the foreground with a bright motivational light that shows the steps towards the development of generations, in the background a musical rhythm accompanied by many elements where each one is presented as a factor in itself. From musical rhythms, words, science, technology, history, etc., led by the hammer of justice where its power lies on the actual facts with a strike in the direction of the brain. The strength with which they are shown in this graffiti by displaying its message weighs more than when these things are said through words or other forms. This image is at the entrance of this school and as such stands as a reference view for the students who attend and get to look at it every day.

When looking at the graffiti or the mural in the Dardania school in Prishtina in Fig 6. there is a surrealistic image of a portrait of a woman in her blue with a light which is illuminated from within, open and under the ruins of the book which symbolically her head is filled with books and with power like storm passing through the space of the galaxy to illuminate the interior of this portrait.

Graffiti and murals always have something to show and express, although the fact that what is presented in graffiti through ideas and artistic taste is important, but the most important thing in graffiti or street art is the freedom of expression. Thus, this form of art creates the opportunity of expressing a message like no other form of art, since graffiti is also more special in terms of the way of exposition. Therefore, the method, technique and exhibition space offers - creates the opportunity for all those who want to show their art or creativity, as it is emphasized in the topic treated in 'The street is your gallery' "just like music, art is also about expression, analyzing and raising issues, protesting or beautifying... drawing whatever you want on the street is freedom... you don't have to be a legitimate artist"(art, 2020)



Figure. 7 Graffiti at the “ZenelHajdini” School in Gjilan - executed by the Center for Art Development “Q’art”

“Youth for justice” has been conveyed through the murals on the walls of several different schools. *Youth for justice* is a generalized term since Kosovo as a state is represented with the youngest population in the region and it is seen that there is a great potential for changes and prosperity of the youngest state in Europe. And perhaps naturally young people can bring changes and justice and this graffiti painted in an ideal place where it is easily seen by everyone and sends a clear message. Here it is presented a portrait with blue eyes that has a look of hope that is followed and intertwined by a metamorphosis from flowers, eagles, brain and array of shapes and colors.

When graffiti or murals became a symbol to convey the purpose of that country, the peculiarity lies in graffiti in schools,

depending on the social, economic and political context of a country, on the difficulties or problems of a society, they then reflect the ideas of the graffiti, street art and murals. As such, in schools, the artistic content of graffiti often deals with themes that are considered concerns or specific goals, such as the case of the mural in Philadelphia, United States of America, where a large-scale mural at the “Saint Malachy” school has love and artistic work as its main mission. (Philadelphia, n.d.)

Art expressed through graffiti in Kosovo

Kosovo, as the youngest country in Europe, currently has a large number of artists operating in Kosovo and abroad. Artistic styles and presentations are expressed in different

Fig. 10, 11 and 12 are the graffiti in the Ferizaj, where artists and students do a artistic work based on projects and vol work by talented young artists of art s and also professional artists.



Figure 8. Graffiti at the “HasanPrishtina” school in Mitrovica



Figure 9. Graffiti inside the “PjeterBogdani” school in Prishtina - executed by the Mural Fest group.

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Figure 10. Mural in Ferizaj



Figure 11. Street art in Ferizaj



Figure 12. During the graffiti work in Ferizaj

mediums, especially in contemporary arts and new media. Enthusiastic work in art is also displayed through graffiti on different streets and cities and also with murals everywhere in Kosovo. Currently, Kosovo holds the internationally known festival "Mural Fest" throughout the country, but it is mostly concentrated in the city of Ferizaj. Young artists, students and international artists came together to intervene with graffiti and murals in different places, especially in the city of Ferizaj. In the buildings of this city, the empty spaces are often filled with graffiti and present different social, political and educational topics. In the alleys everywhere there is art, also in the case of graffiti in schools which shows the importance of graffiti in general.

The following graffiti presents a completely superficial visual description that is seen with the idea of sports activities, art and paintbrush, but the vibrancy shown in this part of this school is immense.

Graffiti in schools for educational purposes

Schools as educational institutions that provide learning for new generations and promote values in learning through the necessary multidimensional information, that in frequent cases groups of students show their special skills in arts. These skills in figurative - visual art and that of music as two common fields that complement each other, they show them in different ways, in particular by creating graffiti in an array of colors but also by visually combining them with a message written inside and outside school facilities. For almost every school in the world there are different and unique creative expressions through graffiti or murals that show and display ideas in the concept of a message either for the future or for other ideas that are considered important.

According to "Bringing street art to the school", making art in graffiti or street art makes students or young artists gain greater experiences and feel responsible towards artistic work in graffiti and that they create a positive change to society, quote "This work got us the pleasant feeling that the graffiti had the ability to win in the class because it is a form of expression closely linked to these students' experiences; using this technique"

(BRINGING STREET ART TO SCHOOL, 2016)

Graffiti gives greater strength to words and things that society groups want to transmit to others. The peculiarity of graffiti in schools is that they cannot be exaggerated or have the possibility to express a bolder artistic language in their visuality. So, they differ from the graffiti that is done on the street, city, different corners, etc. since, in schools, graffiti should represent simpler and fundamentally educational ideas.

Graffiti in schools is done by planning special requirements, with ideas presented and everything being planned, so that there are no images that are not and do not represent educational purposes or contain unacceptable messages. The nature of graffiti in schools is completely with a simple visual language but in certain cases with motivational elements for the community of that school or that place. The art of graffiti in schools contributes to promoting appropriate values in society, cultural diversity, etc. not transmitting racist, (feminist), religious, marginalized groups, etc. messages. Often the images of graffiti in schools promote multi-ethnic (anti-racist) value, as in the case of graffiti located in New York in Harlem "education is not a crime" with educational purposes for the events that take place there, in that community where they promote cultural diversity for minority rights.

We often find graffiti in schools sketched on paper, school desks or classroom corners, we simply notice an art that is completely free and treated in the artistic nature of graffiti. Students express themselves with words or text that has different fonts and styles included with figuration within the text and here we see a language expressed through graffiti sketches that can then be later executed on the walls. This way of expression makes them feel more creative and show an interest in this art, as Fusaro states, "bringing the topic of graffiti into the classroom allows not only for some beautiful work, but also for a deep conversation about what art can be." (Fusaro, 2011)

Street art and school

In cases where graffiti, street art and murals are created by students or young artists, they promote collaborative values, because everyone performs group work with an extremely different inspiration and creates opportunities for

exploration throughout the work process. In almost all the graffiti that have been selected, which have been made in the schools of Kosovo, the process of their execution has been continuously accompanied by playing music of different genres, depending on the taste, preference and nature of the work. The art of murals, graffiti or street art finds an expression in all countries of the world where artists of different ages find a great interest in their participation, because the feeling that this art offers is different from other mediums. Associations of artists come together in an organized form where the spaces of any city are allowed to be filled with street art or colors for the fact that through graffiti a freedom is promoted and the culture of that country is conveyed. As stated in "Street art and its role in education", where some American universities organized special days for making graffiti "to increase the awareness of students about this art and its culture", also in places like Vancouver, students were invited to express themselves freely in a certain space in the streets of this city, while in France "exhibitions integrate urban art for the promotion and improvement of research and street art" (Drip'in, 2020).

Graffiti and music

Among the most frequent themes in the execution/creation of graffiti or art on the walls, either in other environments or even in school facilities, in many cases music is represented through visual images that have different musical content such as: musical instruments, musical performers, musical genres, musical bands (orchestras) or various musical symbols, notes, staff, musical keys etc. Although the artistic disciplines are separate they can support each other with inspiration and influence the energy, emotion and motivation within any creative endeavour. Music can be a tremendous source of energy and inspiration for artistic creators. Artists – whether they write, paint, sculpt, act or play music – use similar terms within their disciplines. Harmony, unity, rhythm, movement, balance, and emphasis are examples of terms and considerations within art. No wonder we react and feel a connection with each other. (Contributor, n.d.)

In this context, music can have a multidimensional impact on the creation of murals and graffiti, as it can bring emotions and inspiration to artists. It can become a source of inspiration for creators, and various studies have found

that listening to music can help improve artists' creativity and productivity and help enhance energy and a sense of happiness, which can affect the artist's work- "effects of music listening on creative cognition and semantic memory retrieval" (Katherine E. Eskine¹, 2018) According to the study conducted by Ritter SM, Ferguson S. listening to music can be useful to promote creative thinking in free and efficient ways in various scientific, educational and organizational settings where creative thinking is needed. (Simone M. Ritter¹, 2017)

Furthermore, appreciating the role music plays in inspiring artistic creators, organizations have been established that use music as a tool to help artists create public art. For example, "Musicity" is an organization that brings together artists and musicians to create public art projects in cities. In this way, they aim to build bridges between music and public art, encouraging a strong interaction between them. (Creations, n.d.)

Music can serve as a great source of inspiration for artists who create public art. It can help create an appropriate feel for the artwork and can help communicate messages in a powerful way, "music can serve well as a complementary form of expression in arts-based research" (Daykin, 2004)

Also, music can contribute to creating an appropriate feeling for the public artwork and that can help communicate its messages in a powerful way. As Mookiena says, "music is like a companion in our life experience that defines times and generations; It has also been related to artistic movements, marking the pace of their development and their evolution. Sometimes a link is built which is later installed as intrinsic. Such is the case of graffiti and hip hop, which although they already existed independently, saw the construction of a narrative in 1980, which connected graffiti as an element of hip hop in films and in the media (Mookiena, 2022).

In the following are presented some graffiti that were made in the schools of Kosovo that were inspired by the connection with the various musical activities/components.

As it happened in the beginning where "If you take a read through our recent feature, 20th Century & the Rise of Graffiti "it is obvious that street art, in its many forms, has become inextricably linked with the world of music. One



Figure 13. Secondary school in Gjilan



Figure 14. Secondary school in Gjilan



Fig. 15 - Elementary School "AsimVokshi" Prishtina



Fig. 16 - Elementary School "NaimFraseri" Prishtina

can't think of the word graffiti without thinking of hip-hop, but as mentioned in the 20th Century feature, graffiti also had close ties with the world of punk rock." This growing trend continues even today, and this is especially noticeable in the graffiti that has been created in schools where creators/artists have been inspired by different musical

genres and forms. Similar to what Gray points out that "scene around graffiti and street art seemed to give birth to a whole new generation of artists that were inspired by music, who then fed their imagery back into the world of music" (Gray, 2015).

Conclusion

In general, in various places such as: streets, sidewalks, buildings, various institutions of Kosovo, murals and graffiti have been created for specific purposes. But, graffiti executed inside or outside schools promote the value of a society and as such they show and echo a wide variety of messages and are seen as good references for the whole community. The importance of graffiti in school facilities is seen as an empowering and inspiring image for the school and not only, since schools are educational facilities of new generations and that colorful graffiti with various messages display the security and power of a message which must be expressed and conveyed through art and not through words. Schools recognized that their graffiti is now symbolic of their identification where students, parents and the community all have access to the images of the graffiti. The students who had painted some of the graffiti as young artists told about the pleasure they feel in the process under the rhythms of the music and that their words and ideas were reinforced in artistic language as graffiti or mural.

Also, it has been noticed that some of the graffiti and murals were interlaced with musical art and display inspiration or influence from different musical components which in their images present different musical content in the representation.

The groups of professional artists who had created graffiti in schools distinguish it as graffiti that differs from that in ordinary places.

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