Street art and heritage conservation:
From values to performativity

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Abstract

The present study re-evaluates the relationship between street art and the value-based approach to heritage conservation. The research presents the limitations of the value-based approach, which relate to its conceptualisation of stakeholders, experts and tangible preservation, as well as its distinction between present and past, and tangible and intangible heritage. In response, the paper suggests a performative approach to street art heritage conservation theory and practice. First, the paper introduces the notion of performativity within non-representational theory and its temporary, affective and relational aspects. Drawing further on the performativity approach, street art and urban studies, the paper illustrates and argues that the aesthetic experience of street art does not distinguish between past and present or tangible and intangible; instead, the experience is relational, socio-spatial, temporary and affective. Finally, the research offers a performative methodology for practising relations between street art and heritage.

Introduction

Street art, also called 'post-graffiti', is a hybrid form of visual art in public spaces (Irvine 2012). Street art has traditionally been unsanctioned, in the sense that it is 'made outside [the] formalized sphere of public art or without authorization or permission on property belonging to another' (Young 2014a, 146). Since the early 2000s, in line with the rise in information and communications technology, the commodification and mediatisation of street art has undergone rapid changes in form, function and content. Previously, street art was illegal and centred on traditional graffiti styles, such as large spray painted works known as 'pieces', the bubble-style letters of 'throw-ups' or 'throwies', and 'classic tags' (Young 2012, 298). Today, street art may be legal or illegal, and it includes both traditional graffiti and newer styles, such as guerrilla art, murals, stencils, street installations, yarn bombs, past-up posters and art interventions. While street art was once considered a rebellious statement against authorities and capitalist systems, it has now become a counterbalance between 'commercial advertising and its assault on consumers' (Gavin 2007, 6).

With the growing popularity of street art over the past two decades, individual works have begun to be considered items of cultural heritage by international heritage bodies such as UNESCO (2013); national, regional and local authorities (Felix 2016, Schilling 2012, Chang 2014, Costa and Lopes 2015, Avery 2009); and academics (Mulcahy and Flessas 2016, MacDowall 2006, Merrill 2015, Burdick and Vicencio 2015, Hansen 2018). However, attempts to integrate street art into formal heritage frameworks and legal and material practices have not provided answers to the philosophical and practical problems of street art preservation (Mulcahy and Flessas 2016, MacDowall 2006, Merrill 2015, Avery 2009, Hansen 2016). Merrill (2015) explains in detail the challenges of applying formal

heritage frameworks to street art and graffiti; these mainly relate to the authenticity of these art forms such as illegality, illegibility, anti-commercialism and transience. The present research extends Merrill's ideas by re-evaluating the relationship between street art and the value-based approach to heritage conservation.

The value-based approach is currently the preferred approach to heritage conservation. In particular, Poulios (2013, 170) identifies this approach is applied by most major conservation authorities, including the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, national (e.g. US, Canadian, Australian and British) authorities and research and educational institutions (e.g. the Getty Conservation Institute). The value-based approach to heritage conservation is largely based on the Burra Charter (ICOMOS Australia 1999), and it can be defined as 'the coordinated and structured operation of a cultural/heritage object or site with the primary purpose of protecting the significance of the place', as 'determined through an analysis of the totality of values' (Poulios 2013, 172). The primary aim of the value-based approach, similar to the material-based approach, is 'the preservation of material objects with ascribed values, considered to belong to the past, from the people of the present, for the sake of the future generations' (Poulios 2013, 172).

In response to the broader literature on street art and heritage, the present research identifies the limitations of the value-based approach to street art. Mainly, these limitations lie in the approach's defined boundaries between experts and community members; people and objects; present and past; and tangible and intangible heritage. The paper argues that, in contrast to the claims of the value-based approach, the heritage values of street art and graffiti are not detached from the human body, frozen in time or ascribed to a material fabric. Rather, supporting Smith's (2006, 45- 47) assertions that 'heritage must be experienced, and heritage is the experience', the paper argues that the heritage values of street art must be experienced, and street art *is the experience*.

In recent years, given the limitations of material- and value-based approaches, heritage scholars have called for further attention to be paid to performative approaches (Haldrup and Bœrenholdt 2015, Bagnall 2003, Smith 2011, Grewcock 2014, Crouch 2010a). The

performative approach to heritage moves the focus away 'from the visual/symbolic consumption of objects and sites towards the actual (co-)presence of living, breathing, sensing and doing bodies with the objects and material settings provided' (Haldrup and Bœrenholdt 2015, 53). The performance approach to heritage opposes expert-based approaches, focusing instead on practices and performances– social, cultural and political doings of heritage (Haldrup and Bœrenholdt 2015, Crouch 2010b, Bagnall 2003, Smith 2011, Grewcock 2014, Crouch 2002). Schofield (2016) asserts that the performative approach to heritage, in other words the study of the everyday, provides a symmetric approach to heritage conservation and management; it accommodates multiple views and perspectives; everyday practise provides the views about heritage as people actively engage with it rather than a selective heritage expert group managing the change.

In the sections to follow, it will be argued that performative approaches to street art heritage conservation theory and practice can be preferable to the value-based approach. In making this argument, the paper will define the notion of performativity in relation to non-representational theory. Non-representational theory is an umbrella term for any theory or approach that engages with 'what people or things do and thus squarely engages with practices' (Müller 2015, 3). Lorimer (2005) prefers the term 'more-than-representational' in order to avoid reductionist approaches that are 'against the representational' – acknowledging that both approaches are needed; however, in this paper, the term 'non-representational' will be used. Non-representational theory is appropriate for both theoretical and practical work: first, it provides 'an ontology which takes mundane practices seriously' and, second, it provides 'various means of amplifying the creativity of these practices through various performative methods' (Dirksmeier and Helbrecht 2008, 2).

Drawing on the notion of performativity within non-representational theory, the present paper will establish an analytical framework for studying and practising street art heritage. First, the paper will introduce the notion of performativity within non-representational theory. Building on the performative approach within urban and street art studies, the paper will exemplify that the aesthetic experience of street art is relational, temporary

and affective and that it may comprise various forms of socio-spatial engagement (e.g. sensorial, emotional, affective and political engagement). Finally, the paper will propose a performative methodology for practising street art heritage. Underpinning this performative methodology is the idea that art- and practice-based research may generate a strong understanding of street art's material culture, social world and everyday experience. The methodology offers a creative, experimental and flexible way of studying and understanding the complexities of street art and its relationship to people, the cityscape and the everyday.

Limitations of the value-based approach to street art

Value-based management is defined as 'the coordinated and structured operation of a heritage site with the primary purpose of protecting the significance of the place as defined by designation criteria, government authorities or other owners, experts of various stripes, and other citizens with legitimate interests in the place' (De la Torre 2005, 5). The approach recognises pluralistic cultural values and a location's cultural significance, referring to 'aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations' (ICOMOS Australia 1999). Adding to this list, English Heritage (1997) included educational, economic, resource and recreation heritage values in its report titled *Sustaining the Historic Environment: New Perspectives on the Future*. The concept of a 'stakeholder group' is central to the value-based approach, and is defined as 'any group with legitimate interest in heritage' (Mason and Avrami 2002, 15). The value-based approach attempts to include different stakeholder groups and to protect all values at the same time. Although the community is at the core of the conservation process, it is supervised throughout, by experts or officials (Poulios 2013). Conservation aims at preserving heritage 'considered to belong to the past, from the people of the present, for the sake of the future generations' (Poulios 2013, 174). This approach focuses on not only preserving an artwork's material fabric, but also protecting the values that are ascribed to the material (Poulios 2013, 172). The authenticity of an artwork's site is considered non-renewable and mostly linked to the site's tangible fabric (ibid.).

The following paragraphs will present the limitations of the value-based approach to street art, which relate to its understanding of stakeholders, experts and tangible preservation, as well as its distinction between present and past, and tangible and intangible heritage.

The stakeholder concept is key to the value-based approach. However, one of the biggest challenges of street art is identifying the stakeholder group that should lead the conservation decision processes. Dovey, Wollan and Woodcock (2012) argue that street art and graffiti have traditionally fought for the urban commons and aimed at resisting incorporation into formal gallery space, thereby eroding the distance between viewer and artwork. In this way, it can be considered the democratic art form – able to be made and viewed by everyone. For this reason, street art may be considered a city's 'common good'; however, it is not feasible to include an entire city in the conservation decision process. In addition, heritage values are often multiple and conflicting, so stakeholders – whether they represent the government, businesses or community groups – may have differing opinions on which street artworks should be preserved, tolerated or erased; this may lead to conflicts between groups and their assigned values (Hansen 2016, Hansen and Danny 2015, Avery 2009).

Scholars on street art and graffiti (Ferrell 1995, Young 2012b, Dovey, Wollan, and Woodcock 2012, Young 2014b) identify that the challenge of maintaining a neutral position towards the aesthetic value of street art and graffiti relates to a perceived dichotomy between legal versus illegal art (i.e. true art vs. vandalism). This bias is commonly echoed in the mainstream media as 'tagging=bad / murals=good, illegal graffiti = vandalism / legal graffiti= art' (Lökman and Iveson 2010, 136). Furthermore, Dovey, Wollan and Woodcock (2012) claim that our understanding of graffiti and street art is affected by the debate over whether such art is vandalism or 'true' art; in this debate, vandalism and art are commonly defined as opposites – one destructs while the other creates. The authors assert that, in itself, the debate over whether street art or graffiti should be considered vandalism or art interrogates conceptions and experiences of street art and the sites in which artworks are located. Furthermore, Young (2012b) describes that the legal and political discursive representations of illegal

artworks are associated with waste and criminality, rather than aesthetic style. She asserts that the law's affective encounter negatively shapes public perceptions of and reactions to illegal street art. In general, the value-based approach is criticised for its attempt to equally include all stakeholders and promote various values, as 'the promoted equity of stakeholder groups and values is theoretically debased and impractical' (Poulios 2013, 173).

The value-based approach emphasises community involvement under expert or official supervision. Waterton and Smith (2006, 350) assert that, although the Burra Charter emphasises the importance of community participation in the management process, 'the use of verbs such as "offer", "involve", "oblige" and "provide" relegate groups and individuals to audience status wherein they are required to "understand" the significance of the place under the "direction and supervision" of people with "appropriate knowledge and skills," putting non-experts in the position of the passive audience'. In the case of street art and graffiti, the experts and authorities responsible for preservation or removal are not only experts within the heritage field, but also representatives of state and city authorities (e.g. urban, road or railway planners; legal workers; municipal workers; members of the police).

One of the key limitations of the expert-based approach to street art and graffiti relates to Ferrell's notion of the 'aesthetics of authorities' and zero tolerance policies, which are still applied to uncommissioned artworks by city authorities across the globe (Young 2010, 2012b, Iveson 2010, Shobe and Banis 2014, Swanson 2013, Arnold 2019b). Young (2010) illustrates that police and city authorities tend to dominate political discourse through 'the authority of the authorities': authorities criminalise uncommissioned street art and graffiti and neglect to engage in communication, consultation and conversation with the local community around such art. Illicit images present a challenge within the 'legalised' city, which is characterised by regularity, order and control. In the case of street art preservation, unequal social environments are emphasised: those in a dominant position tend to prioritise the preservation of mural paintings, legal street artworks and (sometimes) the illegal works of famous street artists, while demonstrating little

to no consideration of artworks from lesser-known artists and neglecting the interests of other social groups and communities (see MacDowall 2006, Avery 2009, Hansen 2016, Burdick and Vicencio 2015, Herzfeld 2015, Hansen and Danny 2015).

The value-based approach considers both tangible and intangible heritage elements, but it understands the tangible elements to be ascribed with various values. With respect to street art and graffiti, the dichotomy between tangible and intangible heritage complicates the application of heritage strategies and frameworks (Merrill 2015, Hansen and Danny 2015, Dovey, Wollan, and Woodcock 2012). As an example, Hansen and Flynn (2015, 898) assert that tangible preservation with Plexiglas or Perspex may damage, rather than protect, street art. They assert that framing street artworks integrates the works into established social categories such as the formalised field of high art, which street art and graffiti have traditionally resisted. In turn, the technique reinforces the division between high and low culture and disrupts the dynamic relationship between the artworks and the community in which they exist, as the material protection deprives citizens of the right to experience the artworks in daily life (ibid.).

The value-based approach also draws boundaries between the past, present and future, and deals poorly with change (Poulios 2013, Waterton, Smith, and Campbell 2006, Walter 2014, De la Torre 2013). Hansen and Danny (2015, 911) assert that 'ephemerality and material impermanence are – somewhat paradoxically – defining features of street art, and that tangible preservation of street artworks may threaten this *in situ* definition'. There is a fundamental understanding within heritage studies that heritage meanings and values are not attached to artefacts, buildings, sites or time (De la Torre 2013, Walter 2014, Smith 2006, Waterton and Smith 2009). Rather, they are 'the results of repeated and ongoing interactions in the lived world of ordinary people' (Giaccardi 2012, 2). Heritage informs us more about the present than the past, because, as Crouch (2010a, 58) explains, 'heritage is not only constantly in the remaking – through, for example, festivals, the use of particular identified heritages in advertising, re-associations with new products and so on – but is always emergent in the present'.

Towards performativity

Over the past decades, scholars of art, culture and urban and heritage studies have imbued the notion of performativity with a broader meaning, generating what is today known as non-representational theory. Non-representational theory emerged in the mid-1990s under the influence of Thrift (2003, 2008), partly out of concern for the limitations of fixed representations and the symbolic and semiotic ordering of the social world. The theory does not neglect representation, but rather emphasises that 'practices, affects, things – [are] intertwined with the production of meaning' (Müller 2015, 3). Simpson (2009, 7) notes that 'non-representational theory is not in fact an actual theory, but something more like a style of thinking which values practice'. It incorporates a range of theories and philosophical traditions, including those of Michel Foucault, Michael de Certeau, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Henri Lefebvre, Gilles Deleuze, Pierre Bourdieu, Judith Butler, Bruno Latour and others. The theory takes inspiration from interdisciplinary fields including (but not limited to) cultural geography, urban and cultural studies, performing arts, body and emotion sociology, performance studies, feminism and political geography (Vannini 2015).

In contrast to the value-based approach, non-representational theory stresses the relational, changeable and affective aspects of the world. Four key performativity approaches are emphasised: a) the world is relational and made through performative practice; b) the world is always in the making; c) the world is affective and d) non-representational research is performative and experimental (Thrift 2003, Dirksmeier and Helbrecht 2008).

Within non-representational theory, performativity is rooted in everyday practices that understand the 'social world' as continually reproduced through performances of doing and acting. It describes 'practices, mundane everyday practices that shape the conduct of human beings towards others and themselves in particular sites' (Thrift 1997, 127). Everyday practice refers to the ways in which people routinely interact in everyday life and the ways in which they physically interact with their material settings. Non-representational theory acknowledges that the human body and the material world (consisting of technologies, material objects and nature) are interrelated, and 'the world is made up of all kinds of things brought in to relation with one another by this universe of spaces and through a continuous and largely involuntary process of encounter' (Thrift 2006, 139). Within non-representational theory, aesthetics is not considered an autonomous entity or a subdivided system, but an experience that emerges through socio-spatial practices, embodied actions and events, and temporary and affective processes. Drawing on non-representational theory and Lefebvre's conception of the social space, Samson (2015, 311) asserts that the aesthetic experience of urban design never pre-exists before social engagement, and 'that all forms of social experiences take shape through space'. Social space, as Samson explains, can be 'understood as an extension of the human body and the human senses' (Samson 2015, 294). It 'is produced by the people interacting and moving through it … people shape urban spaces as a social product of their everyday life and routines' (Samson 2015, 294). Thus, aesthetic performativity is 'an experience, which emerges 'from the conditions by which the material design relates to the social and how the social (the citizen, the viewer, the visitor) performs actual sensorial engagements with the material environment'(Samson 2015, 299). In more detail, aesthetic performativity refers to relational processes that bridge the link between the physical design and the experience of a space, as well as the social life that reacts to it (ibid.).

Furthermore, non-representational theory emphasizes the affective dimensions of the world. Affects are 'properties, competencies, modalities, energies, attunements, arrangements and intensities of differing texture, temporality, velocity and spatiality, that act on bodies, are produced through bodies and transmitted by bodies' (Lorimer 2008, 552). In Spinozist and Deleuzian philosophy, bodies are not only human bodies, but also the bodies of buildings and objects – the fabric and form of the city (Samson 2015, 318). Samson (2015, 318) asserts that 'affect between bodies could be understood as dynamic relations, for instance, the human social body and the urban environment, its design and architecture'. More specifically, affect 'concerns how urban space, including both its materiality and practices, affects and produces human social life and interactions' (Samson

2015, 319). In this respect, affects are always relational 'in the sense that they produce ties between people and their surroundings' (Samson 2015, 319).

In contrast to the value-based approach to heritage conservation, which distinguishes between past, present and future and sees the past as fixed, non-representational theory sees performance as an event that occurs only once and in the present: as 'the art of producing the now' (Thrift 2000, 577). For non-representational theory, the world is always in a stage of becoming; this is a continuous process whereby 'things and thoughts advance or grow out from the middle … that's where everything unfolds' (Deleuze 1990, 161). Non-representational theory engages with the ways in which we should think about change. Using the concept of an 'event', the theory focuses on 'the new, and with the chances of invention and creativity' (Anderson and Harrison 2010, 19). For example, an event such as a destruction may become part of a transformation heritage, giving rise to the possibility for something new to be created from something old (Holtorf and Kristensen 2015).

Aesthetic performativity of street art

Focusing on the notion of performativity within non-representational theory, urban art and street art studies, this section illustrates that the aesthetic experience of street art is relational, temporary and complex, and may include various forms of socio-spatial engagement (e.g. sensorial, affective, emotional and political engagement). In particular, it focuses on the socio-spatial, temporary and affective doings of street art.

Socio-spatial, temporary and affective doings of street art

Considering the notion of performativity within non-representational theory, the experience of street art can be understood as a performative act involving sensorial, emotional and embodied interactions with the artwork and its material world. Social engagement with street art emerges in the relational space between the artwork and its viewer and through socio-spatial practices and sensory-sensual experiences.

Street art socially engages an individual, social group or community through everyday socio-spatial practices, such as walking, writing, painting, touring and photographing, as well as through events such as street art festivals, street art tours and workshops and social and collaborative programmes and projects. De Certeau (2010, 883) explains that practices such as walking provide people with a means of producing a place: 'walking constitutes a paradigmatic illustration of the force of practice and its role in the ongoing (re)production of place'. With respect to place and identity, a person's experience of street art during a walk is facilitated by his/her relational experience of thinking about and feeling the surrounding physical environment. In this regard, socio-spatial practices such as walking may have a transformative quality by bestowing place identity and belonging to street art, as well as by building ties and increasing interactions between community members, social groups and places. Street art engages in political and social causes through its discursive representations of signs, symbols, words and images. However, political street art involves more than symbolic, discursive and visual representation. According to Rancière (2009, 23-24), 'political art is not that it might choose to represent society's structures, or social groups, their conflicts or identity, but rather the very distance it takes with respect to these functions'; in other words, political art shows an important 'ability to displace perceptions, to influence associations and to challenge the sensibility that makes art political'. With reference to Rancière's notion of political art, Jein (2016, 104) argues that street art is political 'not in the sense of any conventional political ordering or rationalized manifestation, but rather as an aesthetic process understood to interrupt the frameworks of identification and classification for the political subject'. According to Jein, street art is political only when it interrupts senses (e.g. the police order): 'through its material performance of the ephemeral and aesthetic interruption of the smoothness of public architectures. It calls on viewers to stop and look, pause in the flow of orderly departures and destinations that cause us very often to miss the cumulative presences that make urban space a public space' (Jein 2016, 103). In other words, political street art not only challenges established social norms and structures, but it also demonstrates the performative power to displace perceptions, challenge sensibilities and influence associations through its playfulness, illegality, ephemerality, visual dialogue and communication.

Street art ruptures people's sensory and momentary experiences as they pass through urban space in ordinary life. Jein (2016, 96) notes that street art is a form of art in which 'aesthetic identity is rooted in everyday sensorial experience: first, by its inseparability from public space, and second through its ephemerality'. Furthermore, she asserts that 'public space is street art's material resource, without which it loses its specificity, a characteristic that displaces the distinction between art and the real as spatially articulated by the gallery and museum, and which implicates art and the everyday of the street'. Such art cannot be separated from the urban environment or its viewer. As Young (2005, 72) comments, 'it is not possible for the citizen to look at the city without also being in the city: there is no separation of viewer and object as there might be with a painting in a gallery'. The experience of street art in urban space comprises a broad range of senses, including the movement of cars and people, as well as city tastes, smells, sounds and physical textures. Street art triggers people's sensory and present experiences, rather than their learned or long lived experience (Pløger 2016, 12). Street art is part of an urban space and, as Pløger (2016, 263) asserts, 'urban space means being situated in unforeseeable socio-spatial configurations and in moments of now-here and now-being experiences and a 'city life is, in its density, intensity, fluidity, and multiplicity, always a space of eventalization'. Mulcahy and Flessas (2016, 11) explain that experiences of street art are mediated by the city's constantly changing environment with respect to 'the taste of pollution; the smell of dog excrement or takeaway food; the noise of cars and conversation; and the feel of jostling bodies on the pavement'. In this regard, experiences of street art are never replicable, but continuously affected by the changing urban environment and shifts in time (i.e. day vs. night), season, colour, light and the movements of humans and non-humans. Pløger (2016, 261) stresses that 'any art practice is a performative and eventalized space. The art practices rely on now-here and now-being forces such as affect, emotion, gaze, experience, and what is taking place'.

Street art concerns affective experience. According to Young, affective encounters with images are more than visual – they are embodied and inherently haptic. According to her, a haptic encounter with an image is 'a hugely complex moment which manages to incorporate the imagined physicality of the image, its sounds, smells, look, touch, our memories, our projections' (Young 2012a, 81). Street art is an experience – a body register; it opens a path to feeling and seeing the world differently, thereby transforming the passive body into a body that actively engages in everyday life. An example from Cunningham's essay 'Street art repent' is apt for describing how street artwork can affect a person's everyday life:

Sometime later a lady contacted me. She said that she walked past the portrait every day on her way to work. She would stop by the portrait and start to listen to the sounds of the bay. And she would continue her walk listening. I find beauty in that. No longer was the walk just from home to work, but from home to being a part of the world around her. (Cunningham 2015, 21)

In this quotation, the passive body is exemplified by the woman's routine and mechanical walk from home to work – an impersonal flow of her body in the 'everyday'. Her body is active when she experiences the affective space between the painting and the surroundings – a space in which she is sensuous and emotionally in touch with the world around her.

Young (2014a) notes that street art has affective, emotional and enchanting qualities; it causes surprise. She (2014a, 149) explains that, to be surprised by street art is 'to [be] grasped or seized by something, captured, taken over, a sensation that can literally stop a spectator in their tracks, as they pause to look at a word or image on a wall'. She illustrates that the experience of street art may evoke both a negative and a positive reaction. The negative experience can lead to negative emotional projections such as anger, frustration, disgust and outrage, while the positive experience can lead to delight, joy, gratitude and hope. Street art of merit seeks to convey a balanced portrayal of life with both positive and negative aspects. It portrays 'paradoxical and diametrically opposite emotions (such as satire, irony, insult, death, martyrdom, and pain) that are closely intertwined in artistic expressions' (Abaza 2016, 324).

Performative methodology and everyday heritage practice

Non-representational theory is useful for carrying out practical work in the social sciences and humanities. Similar to representational research, non-representational research uses traditional qualitative methods such as interviews (including in-depth interviews), focus groups, observation (including participant observation), diaries and photography. However, the difference between this approach and more traditional methods lies in the style of research (Vannini 2015). Non-representational theory aims at breaking the divide between researcher and research object, expert and community or 'us' (e.g., researchers or audience members) and 'them' (e.g., participants)' (Douglas and Carless 2013, 58). Instead, non-representational theory encourages researchers 'to embrace experimentation, to view the impossibility of empirical research as a creative opportunity (rather than a damming condition), to unsettle the systematicity of procedure, to reconfigure (rather than mimic) the lifeworld, and in sum to learn to fail, to fail better' (Vannini 2015, 15). Non-representational theory provides a practice-based approach to understanding material culture, the social world and everyday experience. This practice-based approach 'represents a move away from analyses of the often spectacular and individualised culture' towards the ordinariness and often 'collective "competences" of the "practical", "material", and "embodied" everyday' (Ebrey 2016, 166). It provides 'various means of amplifying the creativity of these practices through various performative methods' (Dirksmeier and Helbrecht 2008, 2).

Law and Urry (2004, 392- 393) assert that non-representational research methods are, in themselves, performative, because they 'have effects; they make differences; they enact realities; and they can help bring into being what they also discover'. Performative research methods find inspiration in the study topic and use the body to witness events (or experience sensory reality) and study the ordinary and mundane, in order to re-configure the thinking, sensation and presentation of the research (Latham 2003, Dewsbury 2009). The performative turn in the social sciences and humanities engages with creative arts and creative practices such as performance, visual art, theatre, dance, graphic mapping, improvisation and sound production (Boyd and Edwardes 2019). It focuses on habitués and repetitive practices in order to unfold embodied experiences and the everyday social world. There are no prescribed rules or singular method of non-representational theory, only an attempt to understand the studied phenomena (Vannini 2015). Drawing on experimentation and performative methods, non-representational theory attempts 'to reweave relational interactions between people, places, environments, and technologies that might alter, or create a new, our sense of place, presence, embodiment, spatiality, and temporality, while enacting a critical consciousness of a politics of the everyday, both analog and digital' (Sheller 2015, 130).

Schofield (2009) expresses that, in order to achieve more inclusive heritage management/conservation, researchers must analyse the interactions between people and their everyday physical environments. In his opinion, 'heritage should be about: the everyday, the everywhere and something for (and of) everybody' (ibid., 112). He asserts that, by studying the everyday (which he defines as a symmetric approach to heritage conservation), researchers can achieve a balance between tangible and intangible heritage, as well as the engagement of all forms of sensory representation (i.e. smell, sound, taste, sight and touch).

As presented in the previous section, street art is not only imagery, but it also integrates city life – its atmosphere, its public space and its 'everyday' sensory, affective and embodied experience. Thus, the practice of conserving street art must engage with not only the multiple views and perspectives related to its image, but also its relationship to the cityscape and everyday local life. To promote this end, performative research methods may be used to explore performative practices and the sensory inventory of urban life; in particular, such methods may include 'soundwalks' and bodily interactions (Paquette and McCartney 2012), 'smellwalks' (Henshaw 2013) and investigations of rhythm (Edensor 2012). Pink (2007) offers 'walking with video' as a phenomenological research method to capture the sensorial elements of human experience and place making. This method may be used to study people's sensory embodied experiences of street art and its relation to place and the physical environment. Arnold (2019a) suggests that researchers draw on aesthetic practices such as psychogeographic walking

and urban photography when studying the aesthetics of cities, including the aesthetics of street art and graffiti. She does not treat these aesthetic practices as a scientific research method, but rather as open-ended city wanders – experiments and artistic practices in and of themselves: 'aesthetic practices encourage different and creative ways of looking at the city, enabling spontaneous and playful encounters that are concurrent with artistic practices' (Arnold 2019a, 14). Through the aesthetic practices of psychogeography and photography, she is able to 'explore the aesthetic displays of policy in the city whether it be through the visual evidence of graffiti removal, a revelation on how space and infrastructure are used, messages written on walls, or insight into the value of spaces used' (ibid.). These aesthetic practices enable her to gain a deeper understanding of the city's political possibilities and to engage with the material, social and temporal dimensions of the city's graffiti and street art.

Hansen and Flynn (2015) propose 'longitudinal photo-documentation' as a method of preserving and protecting street art and graffiti. They claim that, in contemporary literature, a hierarchy of aesthetic value exists; in this hierarchy, street art is often documented, but not graffiti. Moreover, the negative curation of local authorities often leads to the spontaneous removal of both street art and graffiti (ibid.). Longitudinal photo documentation is a form of data collection that allows researchers to document single sites over time and to subsequently examine street art and graffiti as a visual dialogue or performance. The method mainly involves photographing a particular wall repeatedly over a particular time span, with the aim of capturing everyday forms of graffiti and street art alongside more recognisably 'artistic' images and visually 'offensive' tags. To demonstrate this technique, Hansen and Flynn (2015) photographed a wall in North London over a period of 36 months, capturing its changing landscape and allowing its street art and graffiti to be examined as a visual dialogue between artists, writers and community members.

Jorge Otero-Pailos (2016) proposes 'experimental preservation' as an alternative approach to traditional preservation. In contrast to conventional heritage practices, which select aesthetically pleasing objects for preservation, experimental preservation chooses 'objects that that might be considered ugly or unsavory,

or unworthy of preservation, objects that might have been ignored or excluded by official narratives' (Otero-Pailos 2016). The primary aim of experimental preservation is not to maintain the material fabric, but to experiment with the *quasi-object* in order to advance knowledge about the preservation technique, test the artwork's potential as a heritage item and study the interrelation between the artwork and the community.

Summary and conclusion

This paper has reviewed the relationship between street art and the value-based approach to conservation. It has examined the limitations of this approach, which relate to its understanding of stakeholders and experts and its differentiation between people and objects, present and past, and tangible and intangible heritage. In response, the research has called for greater engagement with performative approaches within non-representational theory in the study and practice of street art heritage. Contrary to the value-based approach, performative approaches address street art's crucial relationship with everyday life and change, as well as its relational, embodied and affective components.

The research has argued that the heritage values of street art are not tied to any material fabric, but they are ascribed in, constructed by and experienced through the human body. Drawing on the notion of performativity within non-representational theory, street art and urban studies, the paper has demonstrated that the aesthetic experience of street art is relational, temporary and complex, and may include various forms of socio-spatial engagement (e.g. sensorial, affective, emotional and political engagement). The research has also illustrated that the experience of street art is social and relational because it is experienced through the body, and any human activity (e.g. 'visual' activity) occurs through/in space.

Furthermore, the research has introduced a performative methodology for practising street art heritage. This performative methodology integrates broad, diverse, flexible, creative and experimental methods for understanding material culture, the social world and everyday experience. Performative methods may promote research based on art and practice. According

to Ebrey (2016), the practice-based approach to culture and cultural policy is more 'inclusive' and grounded in everyday processes than expert-based models. Performative methods invite researchers and heritage practitioners to take a new approach to street art heritage conservation theory and practice. In contrast to value- and expert-based approaches, which aim at maintaining the material fabric of street artworks, performative and experimental approaches (e.g. experimental preservation) use material practice as a tool to advance knowledge about a preservation technique, to test an artwork's potential as a heritage item and to study the interrelation between the object and the community.

The performative approach to street art conservation theory and practice suggests that conservation should abandon the idea that art is an abstract category with symbolic values and aesthetically pleasing representations and instead consider art through the lens of aesthetic performativity and various doings (e.g. political, economic, aesthetic and social doings). Conservation should shift its focus away from the time divisions of past, present and future and develop a greater appreciation of the temporary aesthetic of street art, which may involve destruction and discontinuity. It also needs to release its adherence to tangible and intangible heritage divisions and move towards an understanding of socio-spatial and relational processes and practices. In other words, conservation must focus less on tangible preservation as the preferred means of protecting street art and instead use creative and experimental approaches to generate new knowledge about street art and its relationship to people, communities, power, space, place, temporalities, events, cityscapes and the everyday.

The present research does not wish to discourage representational research; rather, it seeks to encourage both representational and non-representational research. However, it suggests that there is a need for heritage conservation to move away from the 'representationalism' of the value-based approach, which frames the world and heritage through rigid subdivisions that are frozen in time and space.

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