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Interaction Design,
User Experience &

**Urban Creativity
Scientific Journal**

Urban User Experience
Vol. 1 / N° 1

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Susan Farrell,

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Creator of Art Crimes (graffiti.org)

User experience design and research

Graffiti art (also called “style writing”) and user experience (UX) intersect in a lot of interesting ways. The most obvious are how graffiti art affects the experience of people in various situations:

Graffiti on passenger trains greets people on train platforms, showing off skills and hinting of adventures that the commuters can only wonder at.

Graffiti adorns hip-hop community events, venues, and merchandise. Graffiti writing was adopted by hip-hop culture in American urban centers and is now inextricably embedded in hip hop, worldwide.

Freight trains deliver exuberant messages from far-flung places to people in rural areas, freight workers, and people in automobiles watching the slow, noisy parade on the tracks. Railfans sell model trains with reproduced graffiti pieces on them, because to do otherwise would be to provide a less authentic experience.

Skate parks, where daredevils sail the concrete terrain and reach for the sky on wood and metal, would not be the same without the glorious ambiance that graffiti imparts.

Halls of fame are points of pride in many cities and towns. Local and visiting artists mingle in these autonomous zones where time allows some of the best work to surface. People of all kinds visit and try to capture a bit of these fantastic places for themselves.

Site-specific graffiti art often graces the shelters of last resort, the abandoned spaces. The places under bridges, in tunnels, in wrecked factories and squats, the living rooms of those who wander. Many writers decorate these ad-hoc home zones specifically for the enjoyment of those who occupy forbidden territory.

As travelers come and go worldwide, many leave marks in a silent exchange, communicating that I was here, I exist. They embrace and taunt each other over time and distance, sharing in-jokes, and making rude gestures against surveillance and control. Marks about seeking community, personal bests, creating a customized, personalized experience of neighborhoods. This is ours. You are welcome. Some people and some experiences are still free.

Unsurprisingly, some graffiti and experience design professionals connect, emerge, cross over, and enhance the many disciplines in each. Artists bring graffiti writing and design skills to the digital, sculptural, and architectural worlds. Experience designers document, facilitate, and embrace graffiti culture and experience in their own lives and work, recognizing the importance of people owning, co-creating, and humanizing the artifacts and environments we share.

With this journal, we hope to illuminate some of the compelling work being done at these intersections of people, concerns, design, research, media, environments, liberty, trespass, and aesthetics.

Rest in Power, Phase2. Respect.

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The Woolen Blitzkrieg. Yarn Bombing for a Cozy City¹

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Abstract

A movement begun by Magda Sayeg in Houston (Texas) in 2004, but only documented since the late 1990s, a new kind of texture —fiber— has made an appearance and made its presence felt on the street art scene. The practice of what is usually referred to (more or less interchangeably) as “guerrilla crochet”, “knit bombing”, “yarn bombing”, or “graffiti knitting” mostly consists of interventions with customized crocheted or knitted cozies in different 3D elements of street ‘furniture’ such as sculptures, benches, poles, pipes, signage, railings, door handles fences and, above all, trees. Unlike other genres of art in public space, knit-bombing is rooted in the practice of crafts and activism. In fact, most actors started crochet or knitting as a hobby, as a fundraising campaign or as political activism rather than to pursue fame or reputation in the so-called ‘art world’.

This paper aims to serve as both an introduction to as well as an analysis of yarn-bombing practice in street art and post-graffiti contexts. It discusses how this medium impacts, challenges and disrupts the perception and use of contemporary cities by humanizing them and making them more approachable. In a broader sense, the medium’s rootedness in the everyday generally appears to result in a positive reception by the city users who engage with it.

Key words: yarn bombing, fiber art, textile graffiti, soft intervention, street art, post-graffiti, craftivism, activism.

¹ - I would like to thank all the people who have helped me complete this article. First of all to the artists mentioned here for their generosity, and also particularly to Uday 1973 and M^a Dolores Pérez Pintado (IES Francisco de Nieva, Valdepeñas) for their information and inspiration. Secondly, to Thomas Greene for reviewing and significantly improving the quality of this text and to Irene Callejas for her contributions to the title.

1. Preliminary clarifications: terms and genres

This article explores interventions in public space that use fiber. These interventions have been usually referred to with a variety of names. The label “yarn bombing” is one of the most common ones, and sources from the field usually attribute it to Leanne Prain¹, who used it for the first time in 2009. Later, artist and writer Lauren O’Farrell² introduced the term “yarn storming” because she wanted to reduce the perceived aggression implicit in Prain’s coinage. Other popular terms for the practice include “guerrilla knitting” and “guerrilla crochet”. These two expressions seem to be interchangeable because often the two techniques —crochet and knit—are used for similar purposes in the context of public space. Moreover, some practitioners speak of “graffiti knitting” or “textile graffiti”³. Evidently, the terms’ connotations are twofold. On the one hand, “yarn”, “crochet” and “knit” refer to the material and medium —needle-based work— and situate the activity in the broader area of textile art, folk art⁴ and craft. On the other hand, descriptors like “guerrilla”, “bombing” or “graffiti” are borrowed terms from the

field of graffiti writing and street art. These lexical choices entail a sort of declaration of intent on the part of the actors involved, as well as expressing a desire to align their practice with certain other kinds that are deployed in public space, something which is also made clear in their frequently-published manifestos. Regardless of the visual result of these practices, the terms used to describe them can themselves be confusing. For this reason, they deserve analysis. Just as “street art” seems to be an umbrella term used by the general public to refer to practices that experts in the field prefer to subcategorize, the abovementioned terms are an attempt to merely describe a medium deployed in public space, even if some of this terminology seems liable to be mixed up. In fact, within the area of fiber art in public space we can differentiate genres like New Genre Public Art⁵, urban art, community art, street art or post graffiti⁶. Due to the lack of space and the plethora of examples and cases that exist, this publication will primarily focus on fiber-based interventions as

1 - Daly Goggin explains that “The term “yarn bombing” was coined by Leanne Prain (a graphic artist, writer, knitter, and crafter) for her 2009 co-authored book, titled *Yarn bombing: The art of crochet and knit graffiti* (Moore and Prain 2009).” (Goggin 94, footnote 1).

2 - Lauren O’Farrell, who works under the nickname “Deadly Knitshade”, also developed the concept of “stitched story” which consists of dropping amigurumi characters to tell a story.

3 - All these labels also correspond to the most used hashtags on Instagram: #yarnbombing, #gerrillacrochet, #textilegraffiti, #woolgraffiti, #woolbombing, etc.

4 - Considering that the majority of knitters admit to having been taught by their grandmothers who, at the same time had learnt from their mothers, “folk art” can be another label to define yarn bombing in many instances. According to the expert Jo Farb, “folk art” can be used “to distinguish [it] from contemporary environmental works created by mainstream artists” and explains “... the term “folk” implies work linked to a communal heritage, reflective of shared standards and aesthetics, and transmitted across generations” (Farb 19). Moreover both the material and the techniques can also be considered folk or outsider. There are in fact various forms of sewing, embroidery and crochet patterns (whose authors are unknown) that have been passed on and developed throughout centuries in different cultures.

5 - Although it is possible to argue the case, we suggest that cases of fiber art that can actually fall under the category of “public art” or “muralism” are in fact scarce for many reasons. On the one hand, the material does not allow for durability in public space and it does not adjust to flat verticality as easily as paint. On the other hand, yarn as a material lacks a certain sense of the grandiose and the monumentality expected in public art. Finally, fiber art usually operates within certain ethical collaborative principles and attempts to engage the community, which distances the activity from pure plasticity or decoration. All these characteristics make the practice closer to New Genre Public Art. A groundbreaking example of muralism and New Genre Public Art, for instance, was the CAFAM project in Los Angeles. The project consisted of a temporary installation that covered the façade of the Craft & Folk Art Museum with 14,000 granny squares sent by crocheters from all around the world. It was organized by the collective Yarn Bombing Los Angeles between October 2012-November 2013.

6 - For this article, I am following the working definitions sketched out by Ulrich Blanché in “Street Art and related terms- discussion and working definitions” SAUC, Journal V1, N1. Lisbon, *Street Art & Urban Creativity*, 2015. The case of New Genre Public Art refers to Susanne Lacy (editor) as introduced in *Mapping the Terrain*. Seattle: Bay Press, 1995.

community art, street art or post graffiti⁷ pieces.

Therefore it will consider self-authorized pieces only⁸. For the purpose of this paper, we may refer to them as yarn bombing or soft interventions.

2. Street Craft

The turn of the 21th century witnessed a creative elaboration of the traditional concept of 'tag-writing' in street art. Several years later, once the phenomenon had begun to be assimilated, some artists went a step further by creating contextual installations using domestic crafts such as gardening or crocheting, thus transforming street art "... into a multidisciplinary pick-and-mix of arts and crafts, as artists and makers take their uncommissioned street creations from flat surfaces into three-dimensional installations" (Kuittinen 7). As Kuittinen posits, this trend is a "street art cousin" that "... draw[s] inspiration from street art while taking it in a different direction altogether" (10). This movement challenged the status quo in terms of the relationship between the domestic and the public. Unsurprisingly, it also put female hand-making center stage; this is not coincidentally a practice dominated by women.

As with any other cultural practice, it would be overambitious and oversimplifying to propose a monogenetic theory about the origin of this kind of intervention. There are diverse customs and traditions inside and outside the art world that include the presence of fiber in public space like that of wishing trees, *clootie* well, may

pole⁹, red ribbon¹⁰ or, ones more directly related to urban culture, such as the custom of shoe tossing¹¹. The tradition of crocheted or knitted cozies for objects can be traced back to examples like the projects *Cozy* (1999-2000) by Janet Morton, or *Yarn Works* (1993-1998) by Bill Davenport. Neither is the use of textile in public space new if we think of the famous fabric-wrapped installations that Jeanne-Claude (1935-2009) and Christo (1935) developed during the 1960s. As we see, yarn bombing is a multi-rooted practice that draws from folk, crafts, *arte povera*, contextual public art and graffiti. Each element provides the activity with specific characteristics, such as celebration of the past, hand-making, use of unconventional materials, subcultural and site-specificity.

Today the yarn bombing community, not always being aware of these rich and diverse origins, usually recognizes Magda Sayeg as the initiator of this practice¹². In 2005, she covered the door handle of her yarn shop in Houston¹³ with a knitted cozy that she would call "the alpha piece". The result was successful and immediately she formed the Knitta Please crew (or, simply 'Knitta'), comprised of Magda herself as PolyCotN, Purl Nekklas, P-Knitty, The Knotorious N.I.T., GrannySQ, MascuKnitty.

9 - In many cultures trees are receptors of wishes in the form of coins, or, more frequently, knot pieces of fabric. Sometimes they are used in the same way to indicate that there is a well nearby. Some cultures celebrate the arrival of spring with an outdoor dance that includes wrapping laces around a pole.

10 - "The red ribbon is the universal symbol of awareness and support for people living with HIV" <https://www.worldaidsday.org/the-red-ribbon/>

11 - Also known as "shoefiti". As explained in the website <http://www.shoefiti.com/> "...is the term used to describe shoes hanging from power lines. The term was coined in 2005 by Ed Kohler, and led to the formation of Shoefiti.com. Shoefiti shares some similarities with graffiti, such as the artistic statements of the work, possible connections to nefarious activity, and correlation with troubled neighborhoods".

12 - Daly affirms that the first yarn bombing was anonymous and took place in in Den Helder, in the Netherlands in 2004 (note 4).

13 - The Independent webzine Dioniso Punk suggests that Magda Sayeg could have seen the exhibition of crochet-covered objects held in Houston in the 1990s by the artists Bill Davenport (1962) <http://www.billdavenport.com/>. Different sources also appoint a project of cozies for stump trees in Oregon in 2002 by Shannon Schollian.

7 - I am going to refer to "street art" as an unsanctioned project in public space. As for "post-graffiti", I understand unsanctioned street pieces based on identity (tag) and repetition therefore the idea of bombing with a characteristic needle-based work piece.

8 - I am indebted to many publications that approached yarn bombing before me. The bibliography list at the end of this article is evidence of that. However, most publications referred to come from the fields of crafts, sociology, communication, politics, cultural studies, institutional or outsider art, etc. These fields raise/pick up terms like graffiti and place them on the same level as commissioned public art, which is confusing for people in the field of graffiti and Street art.

The idea generated a lot of interest thus inspiring other people to start yarn bombing in their own cities and funding their own crews under similarly madcap names such as Stich & Bitch London, 2005, later Stitch London, 2011; Masquerade, 2006 (Stockholm, founded in Paris); Micro-Fiber Militia (MFM), Chicago, 2007; Ladies Fancy-work Society, Denver, 2007; Knit the City (London, 2009); Jafa Girls (Ohio, 2009) or Teje la Araña, Valencia, 2011 to mention but a few¹⁴.

In the manner of that first piece, yarn bombing generally includes small, colorful and soft knitted or crocheted cozies for 3D objects in the city, specifically vertical objects such as sculptures, street lights, traffic lights, benches, poles, pipes, signage, railings, door handles and, above all, trees. These elements are often partially or entirely wrapped. The medium is based in needlework such as basic knitting and crocheting and sometimes it also includes more elaborate, sophisticated techniques such as intarsia, amigurumi, doilies, banners, lace, embroidery, quilting, sawn-written messages or the attachment of other alien materials such as intervened dolls or stuffed animals. The adaptability and flexibility of the medium —especially when it forms a cozy— make yarn bombing a very site-specific art practice and tactic¹⁵.

14 - For some of these crews the date(s) they were founded or established is unclear.

15 - I am using the concept of “tactic” according to De Certeau as the response to the power strategy: «I call a “tactic,” on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a “proper” (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a border-line distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances. The “proper” is a victory of space over time. On the contrary, because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time —it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized “on the wing.” Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into “opportunities.” The weak must continually turn to their own ends forces alien to them» (De Certeau XIX). The tactic is the method of reaction that counteracts the forces of the strategies. In this way, the tactic is acts on the space of power previously indicated and delimited by the strategies.

However, as we will see, the possibilities of textile work in the street can extend beyond this.

3. Soft activism: the woolen Blitzkrieg¹⁶

“Street installations can also be a form of protest, whether as a spontaneous comment or part of an organized campaign ... political content can also be delivered with gentle humor.... The approach of these protest crafters is a subtle, non-confrontational one, drawing the viewer in by using something gentle and beautiful while delivering a strong message” (Kuitinen 14).

Fueled by specific TV shows and social media¹⁷, we have in recent years witnessed a renewed, romantic interest in hand-making and the recuperation of pre-machine guilds such as calligraphy, bookbinding or knitting. This resurgence can be explained on the one hand as a reaction against over-digitalization in the context of a new

16 - According to Daly the writer Sabrina Shirobayashi, the curator and writer David Revere McFadden and the curator Jennifer Scablan (*Radical Lace & Subversive Knitting*) had already used fiber art with activist purposes before the term “yarn bombing” had been coined.

17 - Most social media were founded around that time, more specifically Facebook that started as a social media for Harvard University students in 2004. The popularization in the use of Internet marked a new era in many aspects of people’s lives. In the specific case of street art, most experts agree that social media totally distanced the concept of street art from its predecessors, New York graffiti and 1960’s-contextual practices in public space. Given the fact that the practice started in 2004, Yarn bombing from early on started depending on the Internet —interestingly a textile metaphor— and social media as much as street art does. Specific Websites for needle-base craft such as Ravelry (2007) contributed to the resurgence of crafts and also of their application in public space inspiring the formation of crews and the development of projects on a global scale: “Knitting’s increased popularity has been assisted and promoted by the Internet and the growth of a virtual community of knitters who subscribe to the many popular and well-established websites, online journals, and magazines. There are many Internet bloggers and photo bloggers who regularly show images of their work, provide links to other Web pages, and are active in encouraging readers to become involved in discussion forums.” (Brown 1).

interest in 'slow living', and generally in the transformation of the way we view crafts from a hipster perspective. On the other hand, it can also be taken as an elaboration of DIY ethics, in addition to the postmodernist and nostalgic fashion of vintage and retro lifestyle: "For our grandmother's generation, sewing, knitting and crochet were a necessary means of making clothing and linens. The decoration of everyday items with embroidery may also have served as a creative outlet, perhaps the only one available. But now crafts have emerged as a trendy hobby to escape from the tiredness of new capitalist behaviors... meditative and de-stressing quality of the practice, as the repetition of thousands and thousands of loops or stitches forms a slowly emerging pattern" (Kuittinen 10-11).

Thus, traditional feminine knitting circles have been transformed into weekly mixed gender groups who meet to work with textiles in an attempt to replicate the metaphor of the urban fabric in their activity and social relations. These local collectives use their interventions as a way to reinforce the fragile human connections in the city as well as a way to protest against the forces that threaten them such as real estate speculation, touristification or gentrification. On many occasions, the activity of communal knitting and yarn bombing is in fact linked with educational, solidarity or fundraising projects¹⁸. Some of the

18 - "Another current trend is the growing interest in knitting as a community activity. Groups meet regularly in churches, cafés,

most important social issues that can often be addressed include: the abovementioned defense of the social fabric; a growth in environmental awareness through the promotion of ethical consumption and DIY and recycling culture; the combat against ageism; and, of course, challenging gendered dichotomies of feminine-masculine¹⁹ and their associated spaces: domestic-public.

The political nature of yarn bombing is evidenced by the sheer number of collectives and crews that have published manifestos. In the manner of avant-garde movements at the beginning of the convulsive 20th century, manifestos reveal art groups' interest in developing an activity bound to certain shared ideas ranging from ideology to lifestyle, or simply the defense of an attitude towards the work (all of which have a political content). For example, the Craftivism manifesto clearly advocates

and on the street to sit, knit, and chat, sharing ideas and swapping patterns. Some groups meet to socialize, learn, and develop new skills, while others knit for charity, for therapy, or to "knit" for social change" (Brown 7).

19 - Following the popularity and increased interest in knitting as a hipster activity that challenges the traditional feminine-masculine and domestic-public dichotomies, in 2005 Danielle Landes launched the World Wide Knit in Public Day that it is celebrated on the second Saturday of June and that it is open to any knitting group around the World. The event's motto and first motivation was to prove that "not only grannies knit": <https://www.wwkip-day.com/>



Author's grandmother crocheting



Guerrilla Crochet as a trans generational activity in an educational center. IES Francisco Nieva, Valdepeñas, Ciudad Real. Spain

[Figures 1 & 2] - These two pictures show the evolution of the activity of knitting from generation to generation.

using handicrafts for activist purposes, including: consciousness raising; creating conversations about uncomfortable social issues; challenging injustices; celebrating traditional skills; subverting stereotypes about the medium etc.: “Craftivism is about reclaiming the slow process of creating by hand, with thought, with purpose and with love. Because activism, whether through craft or any other means, is done by individuals, not machines”²⁰. In short, to make cities (and, ultimately, the world) warmer and more humanized. In the case of the Sweden-based crew, Masquerade, their manifesto is a mockery of the seriousness inherent in the very concept of manifesto, as well as a celebration of yarn bombing as, above all, a playful activity. Their manifesto explicitly welcomes knitting mistakes, all kinds of colors and pattern combinations, all kinds of ‘cheating’ when it comes to bombing in the street and general rule-breaking. Their last statement-cum-motto speaks for itself: “Nemo attexet sobrius” (Nobody knits sober)²¹. By a different token, the British crew Incognito suggests dashes of green ethical awareness and objectives by emphasizing the non-threatening, non-discriminatory, non-destructive, and unnecessarily productive nature of their actions: “actively contributing to a more positive type of global warming”; “Do you have too much responsibility in your life? Do you yearn for something pointless?”²². Finally, the Craftivist Collective stresses the qualities of beauty, small, humble, positive, and slow-made objects as advancers of activist causes²³.

20 - Manifesto written by Mary Callahan Baumstark, Ele Carpenter, Joanna Davies, Tamara Gooderham, Betsy Greer, Bridget Harvey, Rebecca Marsh, Manna Marvel, Ari Miller, iris Nectar, Abi Nielsen, Elin Poppelin and Catvarvis. <http://craftivism.com/>

21 - Complete manifesto in Moore & Pray, 69.

22 - Complete manifesto in Moore & Praine 106.

23 - Many practitioners share a particularly personal relation to the medium. It is very common in fact to hear that either they arrived to crochet or knitting activities after having been taught by friends, mothers or grandmothers (therefore not in a formal context), or they having discovered it as a way to express their creativity and as an outlet in this sense alongside other more challenging mediums such as drawing or sculpture. They all agree on the easiness and versatility of the technique, which provides an immediate sense of satisfaction and application in the street.

Of course, not all yarn bombers have social or political causes in mind when planning their actions; they might be simply interested in the adrenaline generated from doing something without permission or might find motivation in decorating and beautifying the city. However, those motivations may themselves be considered political due the disruptive power of the medium.

Active since 2011, the work of the Spanish collective Teje la Araña (Valencia) sticks to a more traditional idea of yarn bombing. Lavapiés is one of the main areas where their interventions can be found; especially on the bollards in the street of the same name, where they return every November 7th.



Figure 3: Lavapiés, Madrid, 2013 by Teje la Araña

Greer also agrees here: “The fact that art is often seen this way inevitably leads a large portion of society to feel cut off from it. I think this is another factor for the significant growth of interest in craft: it’s not art. It’s not “the other.” Craft is something you can toy and experiment with instead of worrying that you are striving toward a certain goal or are setting yourself up for failure. The expectations for craft have always been completely different than those for art. Art goes on the wall to be admired, whereas craft is meant to be used ... craft has fewer preconceptions and a more fluid definition, there are no limits to what can be done with it” (67-68)

To the question of whether their work has any socio-political message or if it was simply decorative, they answered: “It’s not contemplative, it is to be touched! It is to be felt, hugged and if the passerby smiles, we are more than satisfied. Then you take the image to your place and that’s when the social and political dimensions of the work begin; switching off the TV (or your cell phone) to start making something (whatever; everything works). Thinking of your mother or your grandmother because they might be knitters and finally deciding that you want to learn from them. Thinking of the large number of hours that it takes to knit an installation like the one you saw and realizing that the sweater (t-shirt, pants purse...) that you are wearing also took many hours to do. Double-thinking the next time you feel the impulse of buying something to use and throw away”²⁴. This answer reveals the tremendous power that a seemingly benign material may entail as well as the level of complexity and awareness behind the apparently simple act of relocation. And these are all shared aspects involved in the practice of textiles: the immediate sense of pleasure elicited by hand-making, the reconsideration of the concept of time, the (re)connection with other people and/or family (in the matrilineal sense, especially) and general social awareness addressed to and from the textile industry (therefore a greater critic of the industry practices – labor conditions, pollution emission or encouragement to hyperconsumerism).

4. Domesticated medium.

What makes this practice unique is that it brings domestic craft to public space. Moreover, textile as a material and as an industry has always been at the center of many social and political causes: “...since the rise of industrialization, textiles have been central to many pas-

sionately anticapitalist movements and artistic initiatives, including within the workshop of nineteenth-century British Arts and Crafts leader William Morris (Brian-Wilson 8). Sewing circles as safe spaces for women to meet and discuss their problems²⁵, suffragettes’ banners, or Chilean arpilleras²⁶: those moments in history have also impregnated the practice of needle-based work today, making it a perfect vehicle for activism: “Fabric has served as a tool of political communication throughout history, and at times it has been as a medium of communication in places where it was illegal, or even deadly, to speak or to write” (Prain 81).

Textile arts have not been taken seriously within the academic discipline of art history²⁷. Some reasons for this lie in the fact that yarn has strong associations with family, comfort, coziness, warmth, protection, softness, color, the home, etc. There has been considerable mental space wedged between these spaces, criteria and characteristics and the accounts of art history. However, many contemporary artists are using the characteristics of textile as a medium to both subvert what the very medium represents as well as to help spread and pass on

25 - “From quilting bees to sewing circles, taking while you make something by hand is a wonderful way to socialize. For centuries, the sewing circle was where women could convene and speak their minds in a private sphere, away from men” (Prain 236).

26 - Chilean Arpilleras (burlaps) were made by women (“arpilleristas”) during the dictatorship (1973-1990). They worked as a source of income, as a way of expression and as a way to celebrate the memory of their relatives that were not around anymore –disappeared, exiled or dead.

27 - In Greek Mythology the fable of Arachne already informed of textile arts as inferior: “A very skilled weaver and embroiderer, one day she came superbly to challenge her patron goddess, Athena. Although she, transformed into an old woman, tried to persuade her and give her modesty, Arachne insisted on her challenge. Athena made a tapestry representing the Olympic gods and the punishments inflicted on the mortals who challenge them, Arachne replied in another in which appeared the scandalous loves of the gods. Athena, enraged, struck him with her shuttle, so Arachne, humiliated, tried to hang herself. The goddess saved her, but transformed her into a spider, the animal that continuously spins and weaves its webs” (Falcón Martínez, Fernández Galiano and López Melero, 73).

24 - “Contemplativo no...jes para tocar!, sentir, abrazar y si además sonríes me doy por satisfecha. Luego te llevas esa imagen a casa y empieza lo social/político: que te den ganas de apagar la tele (o el móvil) y ponerte a hacer algo (lo que sea todo vale). Que te acuerdes de tu madre o abuela porque son tejedoras y te apetezca (finalmente) dejar que te enseñen. Que pienses en el montón de horas que toma tejer una instalación así y te des cuenta que el jersey (la camiseta, el pantalón, el bolso, etc.) que llevas puesto también y te cortes la próxima vez que tengas el impulso de comprar algo de usar y tirar” Interview to Teje la Araña, 6th May 2019.

their messages²⁸. The following cases provide evidence of that.

4. 1. Subversive use of time: Hanna Hill

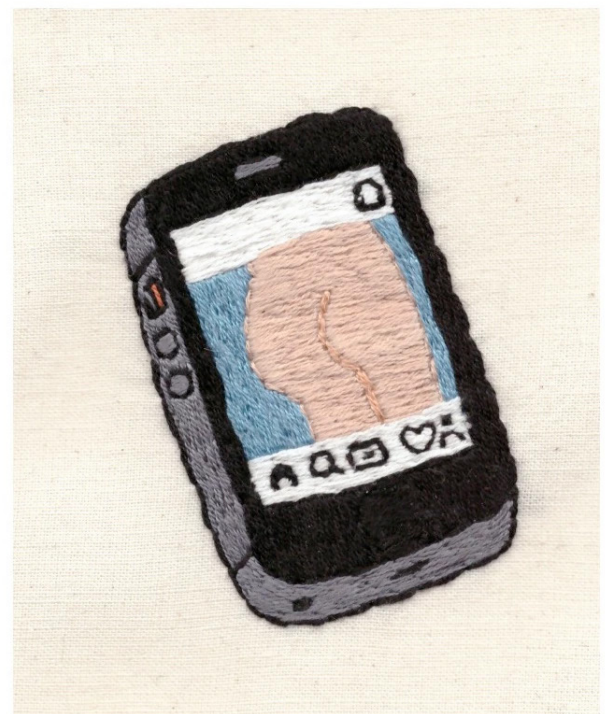
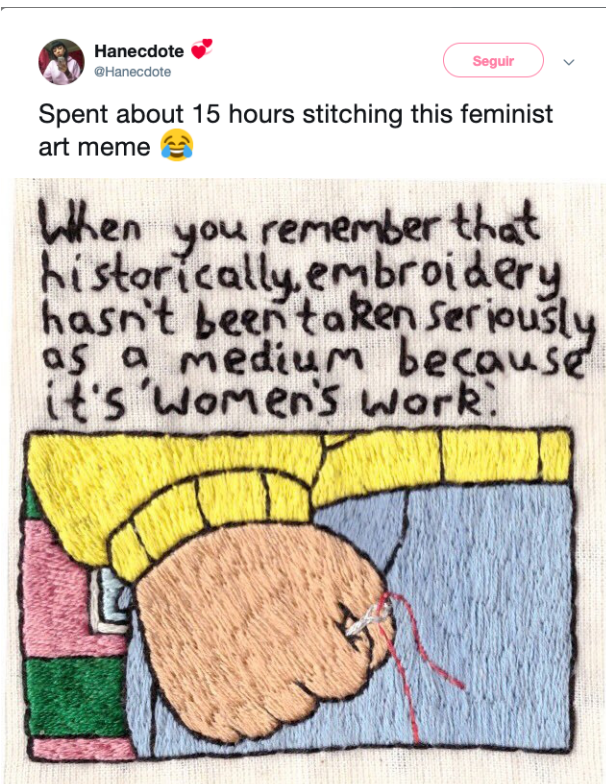
British artist Hannah Hill (1994) illustrates that contrast by embroidering the image[s] of smartphones and laptops. On October 2016, she posted in her Instagram account (@Hanecdote) the following message: "Spent about 15 hours stitching this feminist art meme". The image showed an embroidered image of a hand holding a needle next to an also-embroidered critical text commenting on embroidery as a traditional feminine work. This Instagram posted by Hills foregrounds the concept of time throughout history and emphasizes the quickness of our actions in the social media. The image by Hannah Hill received more attention and observation time thanks to the medium. Albeit un-

28 - The groundbreaking publication by Rozzika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch* (1984) elaborates on this subject extensively. Drawing inspiration from previous historic cases where civil disobedience through stitching proved to be effective, she explains how people have found in knitting a very accessible medium at the service of not only aesthetic purposes but also of social causes.

fairly, the appreciation for time-consuming pieces of work (versus those that can be made, say, in a matter of seconds) is still a very prevalent logic when judging art images. In addition, questioning why anyone would devote so much time to embroidering these days also helps establish a connection. A peculiar aspect of this medium is that it is based on repetition and sometimes even mechanical movements. According to many knitters this specific act brings an opportunity to both relax and think²⁹. On the one hand it allows you to totally enter a new dimension of time in what seems to be a celebration of slow-living, consciousness and mindfulness of the moment³⁰. Although these two actions —relaxing and thinking— might sound contradictory, the peaceful mindfulness that the task may

29 - Words of the artist Bettina Matzkuhn (Vancouver): "We have a cult of efficiency. I think the DIY movement is a response to the digital age. I like my Mac, my phone, my digital camera, but embroidering gives me the time to think" (Prain 207).

30 - "At the core of the Slow Movement is the philosophy of wanting to do well and to do good. Quality is the priority, not quantity; sustainability, not speed; ethically produced, not cheaply made" (Corbett, cap. 3). Furthermore, the first point in the Craftivist Manifesto is "Be the tortoise".



[Figures 4 & 5] - Hannah Hill (1994, UK)

bring can actually help to organize thoughts in a clearer way. “I work in hand embroidery and cross stitch because I get the time to reflect while making the pieces” (Sarah Corbett in Kuitten 35). This apparent oxymoron takes us to another double-edged dichotomy embodied in fiber arts: one between labor and leisure (Brian-Wilson 8). On the one hand, the activity has for so long been associated with unoccupied or idle women who needed to kill their time. It is therefore perceived as an unproductive pastime because of this. On the other hand, when used for a social cause, it is the appearance of knitting as a hobby that makes it all the more efficient. Sarah Corbett continues: “I also find that the medium is a great way to engage a wide audience ... in a non-threatening and thought-provoking way” (35). This leads us to the conclusion that, today, making something by hand and investing time in the activity can be considered a subversive act in and of itself. Furthermore, the slowness of the time it requires to perform the craft, when contrasted with the sense of speed and immediateness in almost all aspects of life today, provokes a sense of interest and ultimately an engagement effect in the audience.

4. 2. Embroidering messages: Bass Cross Stitch

Another artist who embroiders political messages (usually feminist ones) and uses her Instagram account (Badass Cross Stitch, @BadassHERstory) as her vehicle to reach the public is Shannon Downey (1978). Following the popular fashion of posting inspiring messages on social media, Downey takes the idea further by posting sewn messages on cloth that remain in their embroidery frame. These frames work not only as Downey’s hallmark but also as a way to stress the nature of the medium. Some of her stitched statements are, for example: “I have never wanted children”; “Stop telling women what empowers them”; or “Animals are not objects”.

In *Strange Materials*, Prain wonders about the difference between writing out a message on paper or on textile: “Why commit words onto cloth rather than into the pages of a journal? What makes textiles different than paper?” (Prain 103). Her core argument is twofold. On the one hand, she posits that the medium is both simple and powerful enough to trigger memories and emotions, therefore helping us establish an immediate connection



[Figure 6] - Shannon Downey (Badass Cross Stitch) (Chicago 1978)

with the object: “Artists may have many reasons to work with textiles, but often, their love for the medium of fabric, has to do with the sense of touch...fabric can evoke memories. Our childhood memories are filled with fabric, from the blankets we were wrapped in to the scratchy sweaters we were forced to wear to school. Quilts, embroideries, and weaving can hold remembrances both personal and collective, and artists can use them to create biographies, autobiographies, genealogies and memorials” (103). The emotional triggering power of textile is based on the fact that we live in regular contact with the material and, unlike wood, paper or other materials, we have a very close and intimate bodily relation with it³¹. On the other hand, 31 - Corbett gives many examples in *How to be a Craftivist*. *The*

she identifies the traditional use of handicraft techniques as being for ‘serious’ objects such as wedding quilts, contrasting with today’s commemoration of the ordinary (Prain 187). In fact, behind their appearance, both Hill’s and Downey’s messages distil high doses of contemporaneity and daily life.

4.3. Stitched bombs: Sarah Corbett

art of Gentle Protest: “The Creative Director of Bystander Revolution, Michael Wood, writes that: “Transforming something as everyday and disposable as a sticky note into a hand-stitched, lasting message reminds us that with a little bit of effort and creativity, a few simple words can make an indelible impact” (Corbett, cap. 6)



[Figure 7] Courtyard of Somerset House. London fashion week September 2012.

Photographed for craftivist collective by photographer Robin Prime.

The Craftivist Collective: www.Craftivist-Collective.com

In 2003 Betsey Greer coined the term “craftivism” out of the combination of craft and activism³². Later on in 2009, activist Sarah Corbett would found the group Craftivist Collective in London as a way to transform it into a substantive movement and tool for activist campaigns. Corbett has delivered talks and has written some books on craftivism, which she also refers to as ‘gentle’ or ‘soft’ protest. Some of her books are planned as genuine handbooks for the practice with ideas, tips and guidelines. Corbett is a passionate defender of craft, and more particularly needle-based work as a tool to provoke change. In her publications, Corbett explains that after years of experience as an activist - sometimes with discouraging results - she realized that messages delivered through crafted objects (she refers to fiber works, in particular) had more potential, provoked more curiosity, invited people to spend more time thinking of them and were more widely shared via social media, therefore reaching greater degrees of visibility. In short, she noted increased engagement and better general effectiveness.³³ She counterposes these characteristics of the medium with the associations traditionally attributed to activism which, unfortunately, are often featured in the media: violence; a

32 - Greer, B.: <http://craftivism.com/>

33 - Corbett provides examples of material, real-world changes won by craftivist campaigns. One of her most famous achievements was helping to secure higher wages for retail employees at Marks & Spencer <https://ideas.ted.com/how-a-gentle-protest-with-hand-embroidered-hankies-helped-bring-higher-wages-for-retail-employees/>



[Figure 8] -Extended bench by the collective Deb-van_deE

sense of threat or menace; signs that care for the purpose or end and not for the appearance or medium, etc.

The project called “minifashionprotest” consisted of a series of banners hung up in different places around the world with the purpose of raising awareness around the textile industry during the London Fashion Week in September 2012. The banners had been elaborately put together with different fabric layers, buttons, pins, and sewn messages such as: “LOVE FASHION. HATE SWEATSHOPS. Who made your clothes? What do they earn?” As we can see, fiber art provides a safe space to address a wide diversity of social problems³⁴; Farinosi, M., Fortunati even speak of “urban knitting” (in their words) as a social movement³⁵.

4. 4. #publicspacereclamation: Deb_van_deE and

34 - One of the more powerful actions that informs of the, many times unseen, interwoven relations between textiles and politics was deployed by Calgary Revolutionary Knitting Circle: “The first major action initiated by the Revolutionary Knitting Circle was the Global Knit-In held during the 2002 G8 Summit. Groups in a number of cities and towns hosted protest rallies featuring knitting outside of major corporate sites, especially bank office towers. Notable among these was the mass rally held in Ottawa, Canada - where protesters set up a ‘social safety net’ made of knitted squares”. <https://www.revolvy.com/page/Revolutionary-Knitting-Circle>

35 - Farinosi, M., Fortunati, L. “Knitting Feminist Politics: Exploring a Yarn-Bombing Performance in a Postdisaster City” in *Journal of Communication Inquiry*. 2018.



[Figure 9] - String Art by the collective Deb-van_deE



[Figure 10] Happening by the collective Deb-van_deE



[Figure 11] Tag Uday 1973

#textilegraffiti: Uday1973

The Collective Deb_van_deE is made up of three members @holamerzi, @irene-lume and @guillermoenforma. Their works are based on string art, using urban elements or nails to hook a string and then connecting them thus drawing geometrical forms in the air. They propose a playful relationship with city space by extending benches or cancelling, rearticulating and redefining transit areas and urban furniture with their threads. Sometimes their fibers are introduced into public space in the form of participatory performances in which people need to wrap, unwrap, or connect the strings. Their spatial installations push us to look at urban architecture in a different way, while their whimsical performances celebrate public space as an area in which to share, socialize, connect and play³⁶.

36 - In "Towards the politics of whimsy: yarn bombing the city", Joanna Mann argues that: "... whimsy arises in between our familiar conventions to present itself as disconcertingly both recognizable and obscure, without any obvious reason to exist. Despite or perhaps because of, its out-of-planeness, I argue that whimsy can function as a powerful political force that is able to alter bodily dispositions and foster ethical spaces and modes of political action ... I also argue that whimsy's efficacy emanates

Uday1973, a current member of SNC Crew, represents textile graffiti. Based in Valencia, Uday1979 arrived at street art through the practice of textile arts in collaborative and activist local groups around 2011³⁷. Although he started in the street with a more classical version of yarn bombing by knitting a cozy for a bollard, he would later explore both the street and the medium in order to develop his own personal style. Inspired by other practitioners from other cities - especially by Eric Rieger (Hottea), who was already tagging with fiber in the

from its elusiveness, for once whimsy is used in an intentionally political way it evaporates as other forces come to the fore" (1-2)
37 - It is important to notice that at that moment, the city of Valencia witnessed an explosion of creative resistance led by neighbors' associations that wanted to protect certain areas of the city that had been threatened with destruction or submitted to real estate speculation. The Indignant Movement, also known as Occupy Movement or Spanish Revolution with great visibility in Madrid had replicas in other Spanish capitals like Valencia, a city particularly impacted by political corruption. Like in many other cities, street art played a key role in the regeneration and gentrification of some neighborhoods in Valencia since 2010.



[Figure 12] Etero by Uday1973

USA³⁸ - today he sews his letters into city textures that can contrast with fabric like fences, balustrades, trash bins or handrails. At the beginning he was simply tagging his nickname, but later he incorporated messages ranging from poetry to activism – words and phrases from dating apps, gay codes, reclamation of urban fabric for neighborhoods or issues around social injustices.

His pieces can be situated at an even more complex intersection between tradition – learning from others about an endangered guild, craft etc. – since he adopts textile as well as any kind of haberdashery materials and between street art because it consists of self-authorized visual and contextual interventions in public space, but also with a high doses of graffiti cultures of different kinds. Starting with his chosen nickname, the letter and number combination of which echoes the fist writers in the US Subway. In addition, his interventions are based on writing and his techniques imply the development of a very stylized letter style. Finally, his mode of activism in terms of the content and location of his messages channels political graffiti.

38 - Conversation with Uday1973, June 2019.

His letter style depends on the surface being engaged, hence his often sharp and geometrical strokes resulting from the strength of the fiber from one point to another. Despite the apparent limitations of the technique (based on string art), Uday1973 gets to emulate diverse graffiti styles such as 3D effects, round letters in almost bubble appearance or the contrast of thin and wide strokes by embroidering. Today, he also works in other media inspired by textile arts and combines his activities with commissioned works. Uday1973 represents a rare trend within fiber art in public space in which the reminiscence of graffiti world in relation to identity allows us to know his name and to associate him with a particular style³⁹.

39 - Only few names are known within the field. Indeed, most yarn bombers despite their background – many hold art-related degrees – do not aspire to make a name as artists. On the contrary, yarn bombing seems to be more connected to ideas such as exploring and playing in the city, fighting for social causes or weaving collaborations. Another simple and blunt possible answer might be the fact that yarn bombing is both based on domestic labor and dominated hence it replicates the discrimination



[Figure 13] Shot from a video of NeSpoon using a doily as a stencil. El Cabañal, Valencia, 2017.

5. Main yarn targets: #genderequality & #womenissues

As we have set out, yarn bombing deals with social justice and politics, but if there is a topic yarn bombing gravitates around above all it is that of feminism and women's issues. And it has been that way since ancient times; Greek mythology, for instance, provides some examples of problem-solving or the tackling of problems through the use of textiles such as the case of Philomela, who reported sexual abuse through the needle⁴⁰. Another archetype is Lysistrata. As narrated in the play by Aristophanes, Lysistrata takes on the role of the problem-solver and mediator by simply proposing recourse to common

traditionally suffered in the domain.

40 - "The legend of Philomela ... is inseparable from that of her sister Procne. ... Pandion gave his daughter Procne as wife to his ally Teseo, king of Thrace. But when he met his sister-in-law, he fell in love with her and seduced or raped her. So that she could not tell what had happened, he cut off her tongue and locked her in a house. Finally, Philomela managed to inform her sister of what had happened by embroidering events on a cloth" (Falcón Martínez, Fernández Galiano y López Melero, 247).

sense and procedures of traditional textile-making. Thus, she proves that the textile can function as a metaphor of sorts for life itself, a method of thinking analytically and strategically and therefore a non-threatening but powerful tool in the hands of those who are most often involved with the medium: women. The male audience looks incredulity and amazed but the nature of the material make them listen to Lysistrata⁴¹. Corbett, as a strong believer in

41 - Lysistrata: "Magistrate - And how, pray, would you propose to restore peace and order in all the countries of Greece? / Lysistrata.- It's the easiest thing in the world! / Magistrate: Come, how is that, eh? I am curious to know / Lysistrata - When we are winding thread, and it is tangled, we pass the spool across and through the skein, now this way, now that way; even so, to finish of the war, we shall send embassies hither and thither and everywhere, to disentangle matters./ Magistrate- And is it with your yarn, and your skeins, and your spools, you think to appease so many bitter enmities, you silly women? / Lysistrata: If only you had common sense, you would always do in politics the same as we do with our yarn. / Magistrate: Come, how is that, eh? Let's see / Lysistrata: First we wash the yarn to separate the grease and filth; do the same with all bad citizens, sort them out and

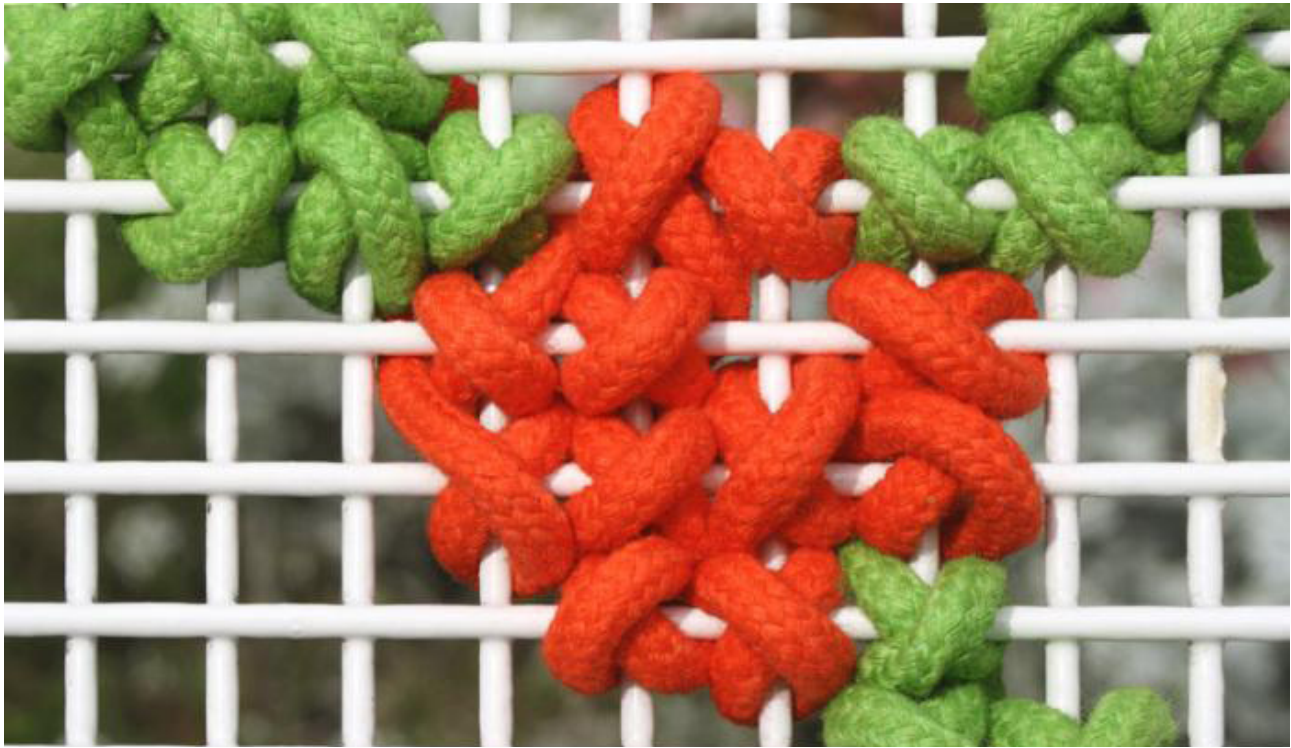


Figure 14 - Detail, Berlin 2010 by Miss Cross Stitch

the strong potential of soft interventions, plays the roles of the former heroines and explores textile metaphors too⁴²:

drive them forth with rods — they're the refuse of the city... First we wash the yarn to separate the grease and filth; do the same with all bad citizens, sort them out and drive them forth with rods — they're the refuse of the city. Then for all such as come crowding up in search of employments and offices, we must card them thoroughly; then, to bring them all to the same standard, pitch them pell-mell into the same basket, resident aliens or no, allies, debtors to the State, all mixed up together. Then as for our Colonies, you must think of them as so many isolated hanks; find the ends of the separate threads, draw them to a centre here, wind them into one, make one great hank of the lot, out of which the public can weave itself a good, stout tunic (*Aristophanes, The Clouds, Lysistrata, Money* De García Novo, E.) Madrid: Alianza, 1995 (138-139).

42 - We should bear in mind that the speech by Lysistrata is approached by the writer as the peak of his comedy. Yet the case still stands for all the symbolic connections between the feminine and textile crafts, it is important to notice that Aristophanes was mocking what Lysistrata represented. These weavers along with other ancient Greek feminine problem-solvers were in fact re-

“... we can make, thread and weave our values through all that we do. Stitch by stitch we can make a difference. Sometimes we need to unravel an unjust system before we can sew it back together and sometimes we simply need to make do and mend a situation rather than create a revolution. Injustices can be seen as messy and tangled up threads” (Corbett cap 1). A more recent example might be seen in International Women's Day, the roots of which lie in a strike in a textile factory⁴³. Yarn Bombing Los Angeles decided to appropriate the poster of Rosie the Riveter including a skein.

Although there are many examples of cultures and moments in history in which males dominated textiles

garded as witches hence the relation between witches and craft; craft as synonymous to (hand and metal) manipulation: witchcraft, crafty, etc.

43 - “1909: The first National Woman's Day was observed in the United States on 28 February. The Socialist Party of America designated this day in honour of the 1908 garment workers' strike in New York, where women protested against working conditions” United Nation <https://www.un.org/en/events/womens-day/history.shtml>



Figure 15 - Dresden 2013, Miss Cross Stitch

or at least certain textile traditions, knitting and embroidering have been more often than not developed in domestic interior spaces by women. Public space has been a masculine area for centuries and hence the most characteristic urban elements such as street poles, trees, bollards and sculptures are usually key targets of yarn bombing, part of a process of feminization or emasculation,⁴⁴ as well as a breaking of the dividing line between inside and outside, the private and the public. The simple relocation of the medium in public space challenges all the rigid associations of gender and gendered uses of space. The well-worn motto “the personal is political” manifests itself in all the actions that needle-based work in public space imply: “The city becomes an extension of the private as streets are decorated with objects usually found in private spaces” (Kuittinen12-13).

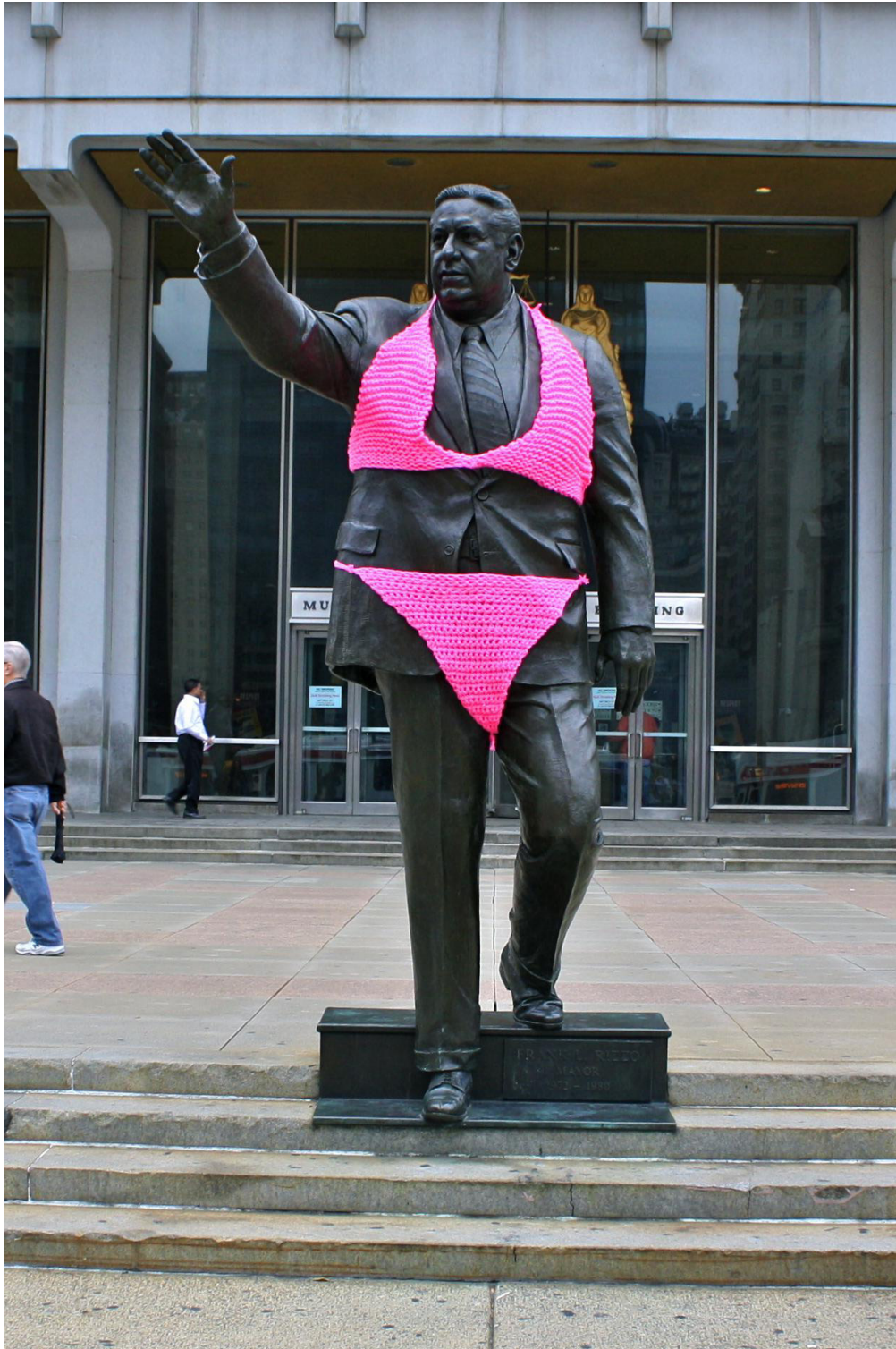
A perfect example of this is when doilies travel from grandmothers’ tables and sofas to street façades like artists NeSpoon (Poland). In ceramics, crochet or in

44 - Referring to The ladies Fancywork Society founded in Denver, Colorado “This group doesn’t say bombing or tagging; they say they are “putting skirts on the world” (Moore and Prain 108)

the form of stencils, NeSpoon brings intricate doily patterns to surfaces and between urban elements imitating a spider net. Another case of ‘homey’ work in public space are the interventions by Miss Cross Stitch (Germany) who brings typical cross-stitch flower patterns to fences and benches.

Incredible as it might seem, the color pink and certain garments traditionally associated with women can still take on a challenging dimension when imposed on men. Ishkits (Jessie Hemmons, USA) deployed a three-minute-long installation consisting of placing a pink crocheted bikini on Frank Rizzo sculpture in Philadelphia. According to the artist, she wanted to spark thought around the politics of Rizzo celebrated in the monument as well as questioning why the color pink or a bikini would look ridiculous or denigrating on a man⁴⁵. She repeated the ac-

45 - Ishkits explains her installation: “Frank Rizzo was a notoriously controversial Police Commissioner and Philadelphia Mayor from the 1970s. He was well known for facilitating a low crime rate in Philadelphia through his abusive tactics like bringing a group of Black Panthers into the street and making them strip naked, rounding up homosexuals on Saturday nights, limiting ac-



[Figure 16] Frank Rizzo, former Mayor of Philadelphia by ISHKITS (Jessie Hemmons)
Photo credit Conrad Benner/Streetsdept.com

tion by putting a pink knitted t-shirt on a statue to Rocky nearby the Art Museum in Philadelphia. The t-shirt had the message “Go see the art” repurposing the image of a muscled strong Sylvester Stallone into an energetic posture to encourage the appreciation for art and museums.

Medium and location have also served the purpose of raising awareness around women’s issues. Knitted boobs, vaginas and uteruses are frequently found in the repertoire of fiber artists and yarn bombing campaigns with visibility or fundraising purposes. A quick search on Google yields information about the many local campaigns under the banner of such slogans as “knit your congressman a vagina” or “knit a uterus for your Prime Minister”⁴⁶. In 2013, Amnesty International published a

cess to resources for African Americans, and using abusive and intolerable language. One hope for this installation is to discourage the celebration of this contemptuous figure, and I have done this by dressing him up in garb that he would find deplorable and offensive. Another hope is to facilitate a conversation about whether this cultural view of a man being emasculated and “disrespected” by simply dressing him in feminine clothing is representative of and in accordance to current beliefs that women are viewed as equal to men. Essentially, I hope this installation will raise questions about our cultural beliefs such as, “Would it be universally ‘disrespectful’ or ‘degrading’ if I were to install pants and a suit jacket onto a statue of a female figure?”, and “Why wouldn’t that installation have the same social impact?” An additional hope with this installation is to act as a kind of retort to Rizzo’s assertions of heterosexual [white] male social and cultural superiority. Figuratively I hope to accomplish this by ridiculing the bigotry he represents through the use of a ‘feminine craft’ to create a ‘feminine’ outfit conceptualized by a woman artist. Literally I hope to accomplish this by being a woman artist who crawled on top of the statue commemorating him without permission and covered it with a bikini because I wanted to and I could” <https://www.ishknits.com/frank-rizzo-installation-photos/>
 46 - “Wombs on Washington was a project inspired by the knitted womb pattern created by MK Carroll, which appeared in the free online magazine Knitty in the winter of 2004. In early 2005 a group of knitters organized via LiveJournal, an Internet blog host, by creating a members-only online community called Knit4Choice. The organizers, two young women in the United States, called on other knitters to use MK Carroll’s pattern to create knitted wombs to drop on the Supreme Court steps in Washington, DC, in symbolic protest of attempts to restrict abortion laws in the

newsletter to encourage participation in a campaign for reproductive rights in Canada. Among other recommendations, the campaign also included calls to “Knit or crochet a uterus and send it to your Member of Parliament, with a message encouraging the Canadian government to protect our sexual and reproductive rights”⁴⁷. Many times these campaigns end with women going to marches holding their knitted work as flags. Another similar event took place in October 2011 and was titled “Boob bombing for the Big Breast Even”. The project encouraged women around the world to leave knitted boobs around their city to promote breast cancer awareness⁴⁸.

Conclusion

In the title of this article, yarn bombing is compared to Blitzkrieg⁴⁹, a war strategy that relies on a quick attack intended to cause surprise. Yarn bombing usually acts in the service of a cause, taking speed and location into account as part of its calculations. In addition, the medium in and of itself has great potential to trigger emotion and meaning. Those two considerations are both challenged and amplified when presented out of their usual context(s). This in turn guarantees the surprise effect that helps engage the audience, bringing them into the conversation. Notwithstanding the objective or purpose – whether it be personal branding, aesthetics or political – fiber proves to be an effective medium for several reasons. The woolen Blitzkrieg is thus connected to the aesthetics of the unexpected since it is its particular sense of incongruity, of dislocation – the out-of-place sweater on a tree – that makes it so powerful⁵⁰.

United States and in continued support of the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973. The community received enthusiastic support: it had nearly three hundred members registered a month after its creation” (Pentney par 29).

47 - <https://www.amnesty.ca/blog/my-body-my-rights>

48 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ppth05pxHs>

49 - “Blitzkrieg”, (German: “lightning war”) a military tactic intended to create psychological shock and resultant disorganization in enemy forces through the employment of surprise, speed, and superiority in material and/or firepower. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/blitzkrieg>

50 - “Yarn bombing takes place in unexpected spaces ... These installations thus disrupt the *genius locus* of the space ... Clothing outdoor “things” in yarn disrupts the domestic use of yarn

Moreover, unlike stencil or spray paint, textiles are universal. It is easier to engage with the material regardless of your cultural background or education level. The material is ubiquitous and every culture has its own textile tradition⁵¹. In fact, in some cultures such as Peru or Indigenous American traditions, textiles are considered one of the higher – if not the highest – art forms. Meanwhile, in Europe, in spite of the contributions of post-colonialist and feminist art history to help reduce the existing prejudices between institutional art and textiles, there still remains a gap between it and arts and crafts⁵². Yarn bombing takes that controversy to the street, allowing the problem to be approached from different angles and therefore enriching the perspectives and discourses on the topic. Visiting the haberdashery for graffiti supplies subverts not only the traditional notions of domestic labor, but also those about graffiti, street art and public space.

Textile as a medium conjures and stirs up strong emotions: the reference to daily objects, the affection rendered by the associations with the home and its intimacy or family memory⁵³ makes it unique on the street art scene. Domestic labor roles have changed throughout European and US history. While during the mid-20th century, most women used to reject needlework for what it symbolized, today, in a world influenced by third-wave feminism, domestic labor practices are reclaimed and reappropriated as a tool in the fight for gender equality as they are neutral and the public use of space” (Daly 96).

51 - “One of the remarkable things about knitting and handcrafts is their ability to transcend societal differences, as every culture has its own craft history based on its own idiosyncrasies.” (Greer 23).

52 - “But if within contemporary art the art-versus-craft divide has more or less eroded, there persist classed, raced, and gendered distinctions between “high craft” meant for institutional display (works made by Trockel or Louise Bourgeois, for instance) and the “low craft” or hobbyist that is often cited or directly appropriated by such artists but is not meant to, and might not ever, travel beyond a living room and is sometimes stained by “bad taste”” (Bryan- 13-14)

53 - “We can view our current continuance of knitting as something that keeps the creativity of our crafty relatives alive and thriving, because it not only allows us to better understand their lives (and society before machines ruled the earth), but also to honor “woman’s work”(Greer 46).

tralized in the new context of public space. Finally, the appearance of hand-making and craft conjures up post-modern nostalgia for a world in which production did not depend on machines. These are only some of the ways this medium – thanks to its connection to the everyday – impacts, challenges and disrupts the perception, engagement with and use of contemporary cities by making them more humanized and approachable.

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World Wide Knit in Public Day: <http://www.wwkipday.com/about/FIGURES>

From experiencing sites of past to the future of the Demolition Man, and how graffiti fits to all

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Abstract

This paper explores the possibilities graffiti can provide to research user experience, focusing in those that might emerge in urban environments. The concept of User Experience (UX) can be seen as a consciously experienced phenomenon entailing for example biological, psychological and cultural, spatial and temporal aspects. Graffiti can be used as a tool to study experiences and meanings in physical and social places and practices. This can be done by studying direct experiences while completing a task, but also for example by narratives and memories involving graffiti. As the technology develops, it is incorporated in our lives, becoming more adaptive and virtual. This might have a strong impact in our future experiences while engaging with urban systems.

Keywords: Graffiti, user experience, spatial experience, memory, interaction research, UX-design

1 Introduction: defining User Experience

The term User Experience (UX) is often associated with human-computer-interactions (HCI) and when designing products and services involving computers, smartphones, machines, digital user interfaces and such. Even though there is a lot of buzz around this trendy term “UX”, the concept of user experience still seems to be vague and varying to many. For example, sometimes “experience” is mixed with “perception”. Experience as a word might have alternative meanings in different contexts, as can be seen when experience is referred to a direct and immediate experience (Erlebnis in German) or to the cumulative, earlier based experience (Erfahrung). Typically, UX in HCI refers to the former; as internally felt effects of interaction with a product or a system in the context where it is used

in (Hartson and Pyla, 2012), whereas the latter may be more about gained knowledge, memories and life history.

As Saariluoma and Oulasvirta (2010) suggest, user psychology framework can be used outside the field of HCI. The same underlying explanations about how humans interact and experience can be applied for example in researching and designing physical places and urban, built environments. User-centric planning that involves understanding people’s behavior, cognitive processes and what kind of tasks they might face, has been suggested to be implement for example in architectural work, where humans can be seen interacting with artifacts such as buildings (Krukar et. al, 2016). However, in order to be able to discuss about user experience in urban contexts, it is necessary to first clarify how UX can be described.

Saariluoma and Oulasvirta (2010) propose that we humans can be seen as intentional actors, where different sets of activities are driven by different sets of needs and goals. Our subjective experiences emerge in interaction with the material-social-cultural-historical world and technological artifacts (Saariluoma and Oulasvirta, 2010). User experience can be seen as a phenomenal experience that occurs during a same period of time than the underlying mental activities and processes related to that specific event (Edelman and Fekete, 2012). User experience may be seen as cognitive process that is prompted by internal or external stimuli (Dale et. al, 2012). This process which involves perception, thinking, emotions, goals, knowledge, memories, attitudes and believes, and many other psychological and biological factors, may lead to an unique conscious experience including a meaning and a certain feeling. (Revonsuo, 2010; Chalmers, 1996; Dennett, 2002; Carruthers 2000; Saariluoma, 2001; Von Eckard 2012). A conscious experience can be seen as a plastic phenomenon, which is based on the development of individual's skills, sensorimotor practice and cultural learning, reflecting to the dynamic and social interactions in different cultures, contexts and situations (Allen and Williams, 2011). These interactions can further modify both our behavioural patterns and even the functionality and structure of our brains (Han et al., 2013).

An experience is deeply impacted with individual's cognitive functions. For example, shift in attention might change the focus of interest and perception and thus alter the experience (Laarni et al., 2001). This may affect to how a person starts to perceive new environmental affordances and possibilities to act (Noë, 2004; Tversky, 2011; Schnall, 2011). The sense of agency impacts to perception, thinking and experiencing (Noë, 2004; Varela et al., 2016; Joy and Sherry, 2003), also in graffiti (Schacter, 2008). In addition, as humans we are living beings, moving, navigating and interacting in our three-dimensional environments (Schubert and Maass, 2011), converging the sensory information from different senses such as touch, vision, hearing and others, into a supramodal, spatial knowledge (Tversky, 2011). As Bloomer and Moore (1977) propose, the strongest memories of the spatial structures of our three-dimensional environments are born through our bodily experiences. A conscious experience depends also on spatial context, which may further affect to the

perception and estimations of space and time, due to both biological and socio-psychological reasons (Schubert and Maass, 2011). These reasons might be for example what kind of bodily, cognitive, emotional and social resources a person has in order to cope and act in any current situation (Schnall, 2011). As Schubert and Maass (2011) propose, spatial and social cognition affect each other and to our thinking about spaces and social realities. These suggestions above might explain for example, if a person is interested in graffiti, she may start to notice new city surfaces as potential places for graffiti, create mental maps of those places where for example physical distances, accessibility, and the social milieus in those places might be felt differently than before or than for other people.

According to Hartson and Pyla (2012), user experience cannot be designed because it is related to the subjective user and to the context of the interaction between the user and the design. However, by using appropriate research frameworks, such as user psychology, we can try to find explanations with enough predictive power about different users and what may impact to their experiences of things and interactions (Saariluoma and Oulasvirta, 2010). We can try to find solutions to those problems that arise from the analysis around events and activities in human life for human beings, by researching "what people do and why they do it" (Beccari and Oliveira, 2011, p.13). This way of thinking also evolves the user centered design to a more holistic view that is used in life-based design, where the focus from analysing mere individual user needs is shifted to a goal of improving the quality of people's lives in different situations (Leikas, 2009).

2 Graffiti as a tool of an experience and an anchor to cultural sites

Research in art and aesthetics by using graffiti as a research tool can offer insights to the study of how different users experience life. According to Dewey (2005), art is experienced as a result of interaction between the art work and the experienter; as a subjective, emotionally impacted experience when reaching a certain goal. Visual art and graffiti both may (or may not) invoke interest, further interpretations and emotions in their perceivers (Myllylä, 2018b). The experience and inferences may



Fig. 1: Urban user experiences can be studied by using graffiti as a tool. This kind of a UX-study was conducted during a Purkutaide-project in 2016 at Kerava, Finland, where this photo is taken (Purkutaide, 2016). Photo: Mari Myllylä, 2016.

change according to the perceiver's knowledge, values and goals, just to mention few. Also, the multisensory sensations that arise during inspecting an artwork may affect to how a person values and experiences art (Joy and Sherry, 2003; Kirk and Freedberg, 2014). Visual art and graffiti are made possible by using technology and tools to produce different kinds of pictures, which can further be seen as not just visual copies of the world, but as tools for putting something that is normally hidden on display (Noë, 2015, 152-161; Heidegger, 1995). Using urban art form such as graffiti as a means to study experience (Myllylä, unpublished raw data; figure 1) creates an intriguing possibility to inspect for example what aspects of individual and social properties are similar or different, how they develop and change and what might explain those and other possible phenomena in contemporary world we live in.

We can interpret graffiti also as a part of a contemporary, urban culture and its built spaces. Graffiti, like other

postmodern art, can be interpreted as a way to confiscate and humanize built environments that are made distance and sterile by the modern architecture (Myllylä, 2018a; Pallasmaa, 1996). We can see graffiti as an intervention disrupting and challenging not only physical places but institutions, attitudes, morals and norms about for example legality, democratic participation to the society or art (Dickens, 2008). We can also understand graffiti not as a confrontation, but as a natural, organically developing and spreading communicative, technological and creative practice (Noë, 2015).

Graffiti is externalized in physical world, altering and modifying for example the spatial experience. Graffiti entails artistic and other properties and may create an experience with aesthetic content. An aesthetic experience can be seen emerging as a result of a complex, continuous interaction within perceptual, cognitive and emotional processes, and it underlays not only the perceiver's individual characteristics, such as knowledge, interests

and personality, but also the situation, social discourse and socio-cultural world's expectations, and many other aspects (Leder and Nadal, 2014). According to Noë (2015), to experience art and to be able to perceive different nuances of it, to be able to infer it and to have interest, ideas and emotions about it, requires also to be able to engage with it. This is just like with graffiti. The engagement is easily disrupted, and it requires active efforts from the experiencer to be able to stay interested, find new aspects, meanings and understanding in the work, even baring the occasional dullness and boredom that perceiving art might cause (Noë, 2015). This kind of involuntary boredom can be illustrated for example in study of street art (Bengtson, 2014).

Context and physical location seem to be some of the key issues when explaining the differences within how people perceive and experience art and graffiti (Bloch, 2016; Chmielewska, 2007; Ferrell and Weide, 2010; Gartus and Leder, 2014; Kirchberg and Tröndle, 2012). Even though graffiti works are by their nature ephemeral, there typically seem to be places where the amount of graffiti artefacts is saturated. According to Ferrell and Weide (2010), these kind of locations provide also moments for social processes and development of both the city and graffiti world in a dynamic relationship (Ferrell and Weide, 2010). As Casey (1993) proposes, we come into places and act in those places usually together, also modifying and reforming the places together, through our shared cultures. At the same time that culture is shaping us. We are all connected to the same continuously changing and renewing spatial and temporal history, where we all create new mental connections to just by moving in those places (Massey, 2005).

According to Wells (2016), within graffiti writers "graffiti" is foremost a culture, a way to participate in the world as a rebel, to conquer public spaces and walls with writers' signatures. Groups from families to cultures are also important for a person's development, behavior and user experience (Matsumoto, 2001). Graffiti works may be seen as connecting the graffiti subculture into concrete places. As Casey (1993) proposes, places are an essential part of culture, they are always connected with a cultural context, and vice-versa a culture has always been linked to a certain place. The cultural connection of a place emerges in the level of an experience, via the agency of the body, expressing the collective community, social interaction, historicalness

and politicality (Casey, 1993). Social and spatial practices, differing human activities in different cultural contexts can create varying meanings even for a same physical place (Arnold and Ballantyne, 2004). Because people experience the world in fundamentally different ways between different cultures, it is recommended, that any research related to humans should be done as a cross-cultural study (Pervin, 2003). In case of designing interactions which impact user experience, at least the world view and general knowledge of the end user, context of the usage, and the tasks to be accomplished by the end user should be considered (Blank et al., 2013).

3 Spirit of the urban space, spirit of the graffiti

Norberg-Schulz (1980) sees, that a place is formed out of wholes of concrete material things, which together define the essence of that place. A place has its own experienced atmosphere that is construed of different wholes of its parts, that cannot be reduced to its individual properties. The *genius loci*, the spirit of a place, is defined by the nature of those things that are in that place (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). Instead, Langer (1953) suggests that places are things that are created through people's activities and relationships, illusions of different perception fields and activity patterns, each having their own geographical visual looks. Places are invisible, tangible virtual spaces, where however there are different physical objects. These artefacts are only parts of the whole culture, that opens up and is understood only for the people who know that culture (Langer, 1953). Similarly, because graffiti are artefacts produced by their own subculture, their aesthetic language and symbolic meanings may open up to a person who understands and can read the graffiti subculture often better or at least in different ways than a person who does not possess this knowledge (Bowen, 2010; Gartus et al., 2015).

Graffiti can also be mentally associated to exist in special places or activities, in meaningfully organized mental schemas (Solso, 2003). In a study to investigate graffiti evoked experiences (Myllylä, unpublished raw data), interviewed participants often seemed to imagine visually certain types of prototypical (Solso, 2003) graffiti works into underpass tunnels, on abandoned buildings' walls or on train cars, with speculatively less possible encounters

and interactions both physically and temporally. In other types of graffiti, especially those that participants seemed to evaluate for example more artistic, skilled or interesting, they located to more publicly shared places, such as libraries, sport halls, or even on covers of books; assumably, where ever they seemed to think to be more active site of participation and visibility (Myllylä, unpublished raw data). Presumably, on what kind of sites the graffiti works are mentally located might depend for example of the individual's psychological characteristics, her personal history and interests (Gartus and Leder, 2014), level of expertise and knowledge (Ferrell and Weide, 2010), certain learned graffiti cultural stereotypes (Lombard, 2013) and social norms (Fransberg, 2018), and possible other reasons.

Built environments can be seen as network of public and private places, where people's experiences are born of interaction with physical and imagined spaces; things and everyday practices which affect to our concepts of space and time (Deshpande 2016, p. 321-322; Tversky, 2011). Similarly, graffiti can be encountered in abstract and concrete forms; as physical artefacts or in spoken or written stories. Graffiti writers' works can be seen as a collection of their individual and subcultural meaning-making practices, creating name-tracking networks, which affect both the members of that subculture and anyone who confronts their graffiti (Hanna and Harrison, 2004).

Different narratives exemplify the various and complex ways graffiti can be assessed, judged and engaged with; not only as hegemonic master narratives but also as showcases for ambivalence of individual actors (Sliwa and Cairns, 2007). Ylinen (2018) describes, how graffiti is viewed in two different construction projects' public media narratives, bringing forth certain, occasionally overlapping and partly contradicting themes, which illustrate some typical ways graffiti are assessed and judged. As Ylinen (2018) suggests, these narratives could and should be utilized more in designing better living environments for all users of those spaces.

4 Urban experiences in sites of memories

Graffiti can merge into parts of their environments and create a unique experience of place, which would not be the same without those graffiti. Those places become valued and fostered, and they can stay in the memories or recordings of their experiencers long time after the physical place has disappeared. This way those places can become as "sites of memory", places for preserving and honoring practices of histories and meanings of special social groups (Winter, 2010, p. 312). An example of this kind of a special place is the "Pasila Gallery" (figure 2), a noticeable Hall of Fame for Finnish graffiti subculture which attracted painters from all over Finland and abroad.

In this place as a physical, architectural space, originally a large tunnel for cargo trains, there were many elements that fascinated graffiti writers as well as other graffiti interested audience; it was at the same time hidden and in a central location, it was illegal, mysterious, exciting and dangerous, generating a feeling of temptation as described by Hildebrand (1999). Pasila Gallery had its own distinguished character, which according to Norberg-Schulz (1980) is an important aspect of experiencing a place. Pasila Gallery had also its own recognizable identity, which served as a platform for both shared experiences and intentions, reminding other graffiti galleries, but still being unique as its own spatial whole (Relph, 2008).

Since my last visit to Pasila Galleria in 2016, there has been major changes in the Pasila station area, and the Galleria has deceased to exist. With the disappearance of the Pasila Gallery a large part of Finnish graffiti culture's history has disappeared too. The formerly active and often visited place by graffiti writers has now turned into a saved memory, that is shared and put forward in discussions, nostalgic stories and historical documents about graffiti in Helsinki, both by graffiti writers and institutions preserving art and other cultural artefacts (see for example HAM Helsinki Art Museum, 2018). Thus, the lifetime and existence of an original graffiti work can be seen continuing as a physical copy, recording or a memory (Marsh and Hick, 2014; Schacter, 2008; McCormick, 2005).



Fig. 2: A researcher is exploring, experiencing and recording Pasila Gallery. Photo: Antti Ojajärvi, 2016.

Memory as a mental phenomenon is not a sort of a permanent recording, but a result of a dynamic, selective, interpretive and integrating process (Foster, 2008). Memory can be seen as a reconstruction of a past, which is affected also by the current moment and the anticipation of the future. To remember something is an interactive event itself. It is affected by individual's worldview, knowledge and expertise, attention and interests, mood, motivation and goals, and memories, in turn, affect to individual's thinking and behavior. Memories change, mix and distort as time goes on, and also much is forgotten. What is recalled later, is often actually a reconstruct of the existing memories, reasoning, suggestions and expectations that a person has at the moment of recalling. This can even lead to false, imagined memories. (Foster, 2008; Sutton et al., 2010.) Also, memory is not to be understood as a simple information storing and retrieving process that happens

mechanically in brains. As Sutton et al. (2010, p. 210) put it: "The activities of remembering that matter in everyday life often involve the interaction and coordination of memory-related processes at many different levels and timescales: neural, cognitive, affective, bodily, social, material, and cultural".

For example, even though people seem to appreciate the experience generated by original visual artworks higher than their copies, the memory of that artwork can still keep it existing, even if the original work was destroyed (Marsh and Hick, 2014). Then, Marsh and Hick (2014) speculate further, by recollections of the artwork an art experience might be possible to become a part of a publicly shared experience, even with people who have not perceived the original work themselves (Marsh and Hick, 2014). It is quite easy to see how graffiti can be experienced via

printed or digital copies of shared memories. Whether it was about the subcultural resistance and the collective traumas of zero-tolerance period or the visual styles of early contemporary graffiti, graffiti enthusiasts seem to be immersed in graffiti subculture and recognize its highly appreciated artefacts almost as if they had lived, encountered and experienced those events and objects themselves, instead of learning them from for example discussions, books, internet or other media. Thus, individual's personal memories become compatible and completed with collective memory (Sutton et al., 2010).

5 Back to the Future with the Demolition Man

As technology develops, those thoughts that today might seem utopian or even absurd can tomorrow be a part of ordinary everyday life. We can find examples for example from the development of information technology, computers, robots and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Technological development has enabled new information age phenomena and things accessible to all (at least in developed, high-income societies) from social media to selfie-sticks, from movement recognizing game consoles to augmented reality smartphone applications. Even though it is quite impossible to predict the future, it is quite plausible that technological development will change our lives even more drastically or different ways, than we can imagine now.

Remember the clip from a movie "Demolition Man" from the year 1993, where a graffiti automat appeared from the ground and painted a quick political graffiti on a police sign; the piece was immediately erased by an automatic buffing system (electricity?!). That automatically erased the graffiti? Well, what then was the imagined technology in year 2032, is not that far away technology anymore. As we have witnessed, technology has become ubiquitous, invisible but all-present in our environments, interacting and adapting to human behavior and changing environmental conditions.

For example, it has become common to have inbuilt systems and "adaptive architecture" that can automatically manage for example lights, temperature, air-conditioning and access in buildings, and even further, reacting to human behavior via embedded sensors, computers and

other technology (Jäger et al., 2016). "Embodied Adaptive Architecture" aim to offer digital environments, which can provide unique and personalized experiences for people via their bodily inputs and interactions from distance, without needing to physically touch the system controls (Jäger et al., 2016). Even though I do not wish that there would be systems such as in the Demolition Man, what would be interesting to see is how adaptive environments could offer for example digital interfaces for creating graffiti and public art for some building users, and something else for others, depending on user requirements.

Virtual Reality (VR) has been used to gaming but also for education and research on experience, for example to investigate gender differences and similarities (Martens et al., 2018), and the experience of body ownership and body transfer illusion (Slater et al., 2010, p. 4-7). It is already possible to create immersive paintings in Virtual Reality (VR), where people can "step inside" the painting in a virtual, three-dimensional space, where the graphical objects such as light or fire can be synchronized with audio sounds and tactile haptics, and the works can be even shared with other artists (Tilt Brush, 2019). Also graffiti production can be simulated in a virtual space in a special VR game, where the player can browse and wander in different virtual locations, either selecting her own spots to write or observe other graffiti writers works in other virtual spots (Kingspray Graffiti, 2018).

This raises an interesting possibility for the future: maybe in the not so distant future graffiti are made, watched and experienced more and more virtually. For purists this might seem an appalling idea, and rather silly science-fiction. However, according to the brief discussions of couple of graffiti writers who have themselves tried out this game, the experience is not that far from the real one. Of course, there are still differences for example in the ergonomics, how the player of the game holds the controller versus how in real life a spray can or a marker pen are held. There are still challenges and shortcomings in creating a fully immersive and realistic experience in VR, as it lacks for example odors - which can be important part of a graffiti writing experience - and inputs and feedback on vestibular-proprioceptive information, causing nausea and disorientation.

But the technology gets more realistic, cheaper, and for example travelling to further locations is probably going

to lessen due to possible restrictions and lifestyle changes required because of the climate change. It starts to seem quite plausible that VR could replace at least some of the physical graffiti production and practices in real life. What kind of effects this would have to the physical appearance or the mental experience of a place in situ can only be speculated.

6 Conclusions

As has been noted, urban user experience in graffiti is not only the physical production or perception but it is also a mental and bodily experience, connecting oneself to physical and social world and their meanings. The user experience depends on multiple factors from individuals to groups, from spatial to temporal. Research and design of urban user experiences require considering how aspects from the biological to psychological and social may affect to the experience.

Models from e.g. neuroscience can help us to understand, for example, how the visual and attentional systems may work in biological level, but they do not tell much about the social discourses and bodily interactions that happen in the real world, outside laboratories. Similarly, focusing on just social or cultural explanations of experience can leave out some important findings related to for example psychological development or cognitive mechanisms, which can provide stronger explanations for certain behavior and mental phenomena that are otherwise difficult to explicate. (Freeland, 2002; Noë, 2015; Saariluoma and Oulasvirta, 2010).

When designing common spaces, products, services and systems, it is important that all people who are potential users are considered and involved. For example, living places should be designed to offer comfortable, safe, accessible and adaptive spaces for all members of the community. They should be respecting and preserving both tangible and intangible material, people and cultural-historically valuable items. These include also graffiti, as they may be an essential part of contemporary, urban experiences.

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Figures:

Figure 1: Purkutaide-project. Photo by Mari Myllylä, 2016.

Figure 2: Pasila Gallery. Photo by Antti Ojajärvi, 2016.

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'It's free, it's fun, it's not doing any harm'¹: young sticker artists are making the city better

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This essay examines the phenomenon of sticker art in St. Petersburg as a practice that empowers young people and gives them an opportunity to change the city according to their ideas and interests. Young people in Russia are usually considered to be a marginal, deviant group that must be regulated and controlled by government and adults (Omelchenko 2004; Blum 2006).

Urban context illustrates the same patterns. The urban political regime which has been formed in St. Petersburg has been named the 'growth machines' (Tykanova and Khokhlova 2015), because of its focus on maximizing benefits from using urban spaces by local authorities and business elites. In such conditions, city dwellers and especially young people have very limited opportunities to influence the urban policy or decision-making process. For them, the urban landscape becomes more hostile, digital, controlled, and as such, it does not reflect young people's requirements and makes them find alternative means to transform the city space.

The research for this essay investigates one of the means of having impact available for young people – sticker art. Based on Amin and Thrift's notion of 'politics of small interventions with large effects' (Amin and Thrift 2017), consideration is given to the effects of small visual interventions in the city and their influence on the city making process and sticker artists themselves. Moreover, inspired by Asef Bayat's concept of 'social non-movements' (Bayat 2010), this essay applies the view that everyday spatial politics are able to trigger political and social changes in the city.

What is sticker art?

Sticker or, in other words, paper or vinyl with adhesive backing is a medium used by young people for various purposes. Youth subcultures may incorporate stickers in their style as subcultural markers (Borden 1999) and thus demonstrate their belonging to a specific culture. This essay focuses on stickers and sticker art that is the branch of graffiti (or, according to Macdonald, sticker art can be classified as street art because it is oriented on a wider audience than graffiti (Macdonald 2001)) constituted by practices of creating and putting stickers in the city.

Stickers may show a character, font style, symbol or nickname appropriated or invented and produced by a sticker artist. This activity is considered to be a popular street culture spread around the world, as well as an art form: stickers can be seen both on the streets and in the museums (Shirvanee 2006). However, sticker artists acknowledge that stickers placed in the city take on additional meaning through producing a new type of relationship with the urban space for both an artist and a viewer. Charles Moleski in his *Sticker Shock's* review notes that "the stickers provoke an open-ended interpretation process and a desire to scour the urban landscape searching for more" (Marecki 2014).

Shepard Fairey, a street artist and the author of the famous sticker with the text "OBEY" and image of Andre the Giant, in his manifesto of sticker art describes the sticker as a tool which provokes questioning of one's surroundings that are taken for granted, triggering new reactions and interpretations of a familiar environment.

Using the example of Singaporean sticker artist SKLO, Researcher Adelina Ong explains how stickers can reflect the local character of the city dwellers in the urban space and reshape its aesthetics (Ong 2016).

Methodology

The data for this essay are derived from ethnographic work, which took place from June to October 2016 in St. Petersburg (interviews were collected jointly with researchers of the Center For Youth Studies (National Research University Higher School of Economics) within the framework of the project “Digital Youth In The Media City” (DiMe, 2016-2018) supported by the Kone foundation), and from October to November 2018. The data include in-depth interviews (6 females, 13 males; aged 12-30), participation in sticker-artists’ events (jams, festivals), and walking with research participants around the city while they were applying their stickers. As part of the DiMe project, in May 2018, sticker artists participated in a photo shoot (photographer Patrik Rastenberger) for the art-research exhibition ‘Visible Invisibility’. During this photo shoot we were shown their city and their places. This method gives participants an active role in research and contributes to the analysis of the sticker artists’ perspective on the city and their position within it (Kennelly 2017).

Results

In St. Petersburg, sticker art appeared in early 2000 and nowadays this urban youth culture has found a number of participants and fans. A lot of sticker artists consider their activity as a part of hip hop culture and they concurrently make other forms of street art (posters, murals, etc.), or graffiti. There is no strong or established community of sticker artists in St. Petersburg, but sticker artists form the situational community through common events, online communication, exchange of stickers, common stickering practices, and jointly produced stickers. Thus, sticker art seems both a collective and individual practice which allows engagement with the material environment through interaction with urban surfaces and objects, as well as engagement with a community of young people, who share the same values and ideas.

Sticker artists represent their stickers as positive items designed to make the city more beautiful and not to do

any harm. Stickers are usually placed on gray surfaces, reverse side of road signs, poles, fences, and in abandoned places. However, the materiality of a sticker (small size, temporality, easy removal), relatively small number of active sticker-artists, and absence of the culture of horizontal communicative relations between the city dwellers through street art in St. Petersburg (Samutina and Zaporozhets, 2017) make them invisible for the majority of the city dwellers and produce a small contribution to the formation of the visual appearance of the city. Nevertheless, sticker art is a step towards democratization of the urban life, in particular, through transformation of perception among those who produce stickers and put them in urban space.

The majority of sticker artists in St. Petersburg describe sticker art as a peripheral activity in their life as opposed to graffiti, graphic design, etc. Most of them do not put in stickers any political agenda or statements, protest or claims on right to the city. The practices of stickering simply penetrate into their everydayness and has become a repeated action, a part of artists’ personal life they perform in a public space routinely. As a result, it is a way for them to transform their status in the city from a follower of the existing city order to an artist/creator, who constructs another city image and representations, through which other behavior models are produced. On the one hand, sticker-artists reinterpret city as a museum², in which sticker is an art object, and sticker-artist is an author. The metaphor of a museum gives the city special value reflected in the sticker-artists’ citizenship through the rhetoric of care and responsibility to the city. On the other hand, permanent city exploration and interaction with the urban space, involvement in urban communication with other sticker-artists contribute to domestication of the city space and its reinterpretation in terms of home. Both of these metaphors illustrate how sticker artists reconfigure optic, through which they perceive the city, and due to this new point of view they transform the city and themselves.

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Notes

1 - The quote was taken from the video 'Stick to it', URL <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL89TeQxIaoWPztk2Ks1wdpbctP-10Okfa>

2 - Despite the fact that this essay uses the category of museum to compare to the street, it is important to note that, according to sticker artists, there are no experts or formal selection of stickers/artworks on the street.

The perception and value of time in the context of urban mobility

A user experience design case study

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Abstract

As the current urban mobility paradigm undergoes rapid and innovative disruption, the future of cities is being rethought and redesigned. To stimulate and inform this metamorphosis, the MoTiv project aims to collect opinions from travellers on a larger and more holistic set of factors involved in the experience of urban travel that is not limited to the usual variables of time and cost. The project looks to collect this data via a mobile app. This paper reports on the process of designing this mobile app that was eventually named Woorti.

Keywords: urban mobility, value of travel time, user experience design, quantified self, gamification, qualitative data collection

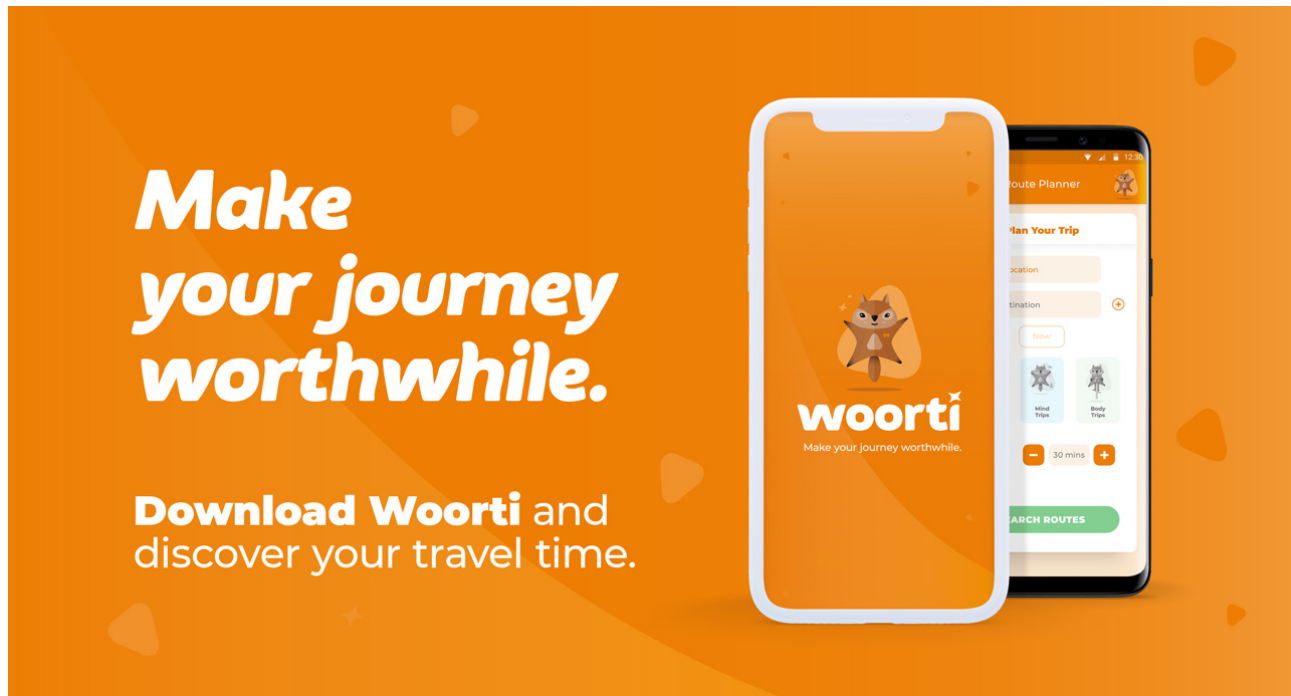


Fig 1 - Woorti Intro

1.1 Introduction

The number of factors involved in making a choice on how to get to work from home or how to get to school from home are often not limited to merely time and cost. [1] However most of these factors are subconscious and rarely considered by urban planners and transport operators. The MoTiV project aims to change this by conducting a scientific study to collect qualitative data on various factors with over 5000 participants from 10 European countries in urban areas and other areas with advanced transportation. This data set aims to uncover behavioural patterns and learn more about the latent user needs and expectations with regard to choices in urban mobility. This data set will eventually be opened to stimulate further research and better inform mobility businesses, urban planners, economists etc.

The instrument to collect this rich and qualitative data from people as they travel, on trip and post trip, is a mobile app named Woorti. Woorti was created using design thinking methodologies to discover the best way

to not only collect data without being too tedious for the user but also to figure out how tracking one's commutes could provide new value to the user and create a moment of introspection. It's important to note that travelling or commuting in urban contexts is a daily and usually a mandatory activity for the majority of urban dwellers and often overlooked in individual reflections.

1.2 Initial Considerations

As the success of the MoTiV project hinged on the quantity and the quality of the data collected, there was a need for the app to be attractive to its user base. This presented significant challenges in today's cognitively competitive landscape where most urban users have entrenched behaviour patterns and mobile phone usage patterns with regard to their travel. Additionally, the app also had to meet diverse needs of the various stakeholders involved with their research purposes. It was necessary to find additional motivations for user engagement.

Persona	Value proposition	Features related
Olinda	Save time	Reliable trip information Ease of use
Duarte	Handle delays	Identify public transport delays and gamify them
Lara	Optimize time Record feelings	Chatbot Logs
Frederik	Rewards	Promotions and contests
Johanna	Gamify your trips	Gaming elements Indicators on trip performance in various ways
Andrej	See all the benefits and costs of how you travel	Indicators on trip performance in various ways
Samantha	Contribute to a research project	Share results of the research
Roger	Help us improve our service and get a reward	Payment or voucher to a service Monetary cost information on trips
August	Help us research about how people travel	Above all, simplicity about what to do

Tab 1 - Personas of Woorti

The market research and app engagement strategy [2] developed by the MoTiV project consortium defined that the main value proposition for users would be to help them improve their travel time. It outlined various requirements for the Woorti app, including the use of gamification, a quantified self approach for individual mobility and a personalized and feature rich travel planner. It also detailed a mapping of the various user personas of the app and suggested features/functionalities.

During the early phase of the design process, the card sorting methodology was used to arrive at a high-level information architecture. With the information architecture and a brief albeit vague notion of the proposed features, the design of the app progressed with the Travel planner.

MoTiV Information Architecture

HOME	ROUTE PLANNER	MY TRIPS	DASHBOARD	MOBILITY COACH	MY PROFILE
<div>Trip Validations</div> <div>General Surveys</div> <div>Trip Surveys</div> <div>Coach Tasks</div> <div>Coach Hints</div> <div>Coach Stories</div> <div>Coach Goal progress</div> <div>Streak Counters</div> <div>Total Points</div> <div>Jump to Route Planner</div>	<div>Search Trip</div> <div>Origin location</div> <div>Destination location</div> <div>Route points/ Intermediate points</div> <div>Mode of transport</div> <div>Date and Time of arrival</div> <div>Sort Trip Results</div> <div>By Time</div> <div>By Cost</div> <div>By least Transfers</div> <div>By gen cost</div> <div>By time usability</div> <div>By environmental costs</div> <div>Trip Results</div> <div>Origin location.</div> <div>Destination location</div> <div>Route points</div> <div>Mode of transport.</div> <div>Date and time of departure</div> <div>Date and time of arrival</div> <div>Environmental indicators</div> <div>Health indicators</div>	<div>Trip Detail</div> <div>Trip Origin</div> <div>Trip Destination</div> <div>Trip Cost</div> <div>Time Time</div> <div>CO2 emissions</div> <div>Calories spent (if applicable)</div> <div>Trip validation (if auto detected)</div> <div>Trip related survey (if applicable)</div> <div>Trip Speed</div> <div>Space occupied</div> <div>Trip evaluation (leg level evaluation)</div> <div>Mood</div> <div>Satisfaction</div> <div>Report Incidente (Strike/ Acidente)</div> <div>Start Trip (manual recording)</div>	<div>Mobility Overview</div> <div>Total distance travelled</div> <div>Total distance cycled</div> <div>Total calories spent</div> <div>Mobility Time Breakdown</div> <div>By mode of transport</div> <div>By type of time (productive, health, unusable)</div> <div>Daily Travel Budget breakdown</div>	<div>Interesting info</div> <div>Hints</div> <div>Hints based on recorded trips</div> <div>Stories</div> <div>Goals</div> <div>Alternative Routes</div> <div>Streak counters</div>	<div>User Photo</div> <div>User Name</div> <div>User email</div> <div>General Surveys</div> <div>User preferences</div> <div>Modes of transport in order of preference</div> <div>Other route planner preferences</div> <div>Less transfers</div> <div>Less Cost</div> <div>Less Time</div> <div>Less CO2</div> <div>App permissions</div> <div>Location permissions</div> <div>Notification permissions</div> <div>App Settings</div> <div>Preferred language</div> <div>Feedback</div> <div>Change Password</div>

Fig 2 - Information Architecture

2.1 Designing the route planner.

From the start, it was clear that the design of the route planner was not a core feature of the app. With the wide adoption of pre-existing route-planners in apps like Google maps, Citymapper, Moovit etc, there was a standard design that existed almost like a design pattern.

While there wasn't much room for creativity in terms of the layout, Woorti's route planner did seek to offer an alternative to these existing products. In line with the main

value proposition, this was accomplished by creating a route planner that offered its users search parameters such as "Productive trips", "Active trips" "Relaxing trips" and "Trip time budget". This allowed the user to search for trips that were based on factors outside of the usual. Depending on what they wanted from their travel time, users could search trips prioritized with matching attributes.

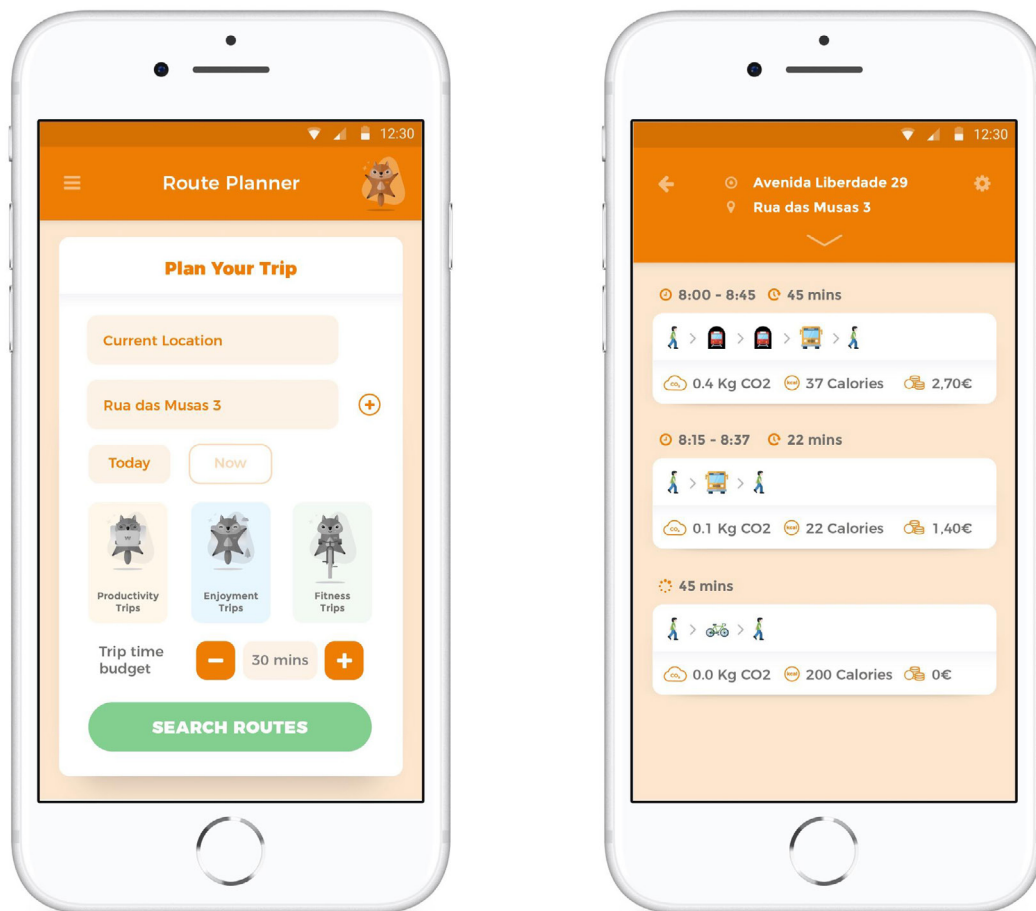


Fig 3 - Route Planner

2.2 Travel Mobility Coach

Perception and value of time are highly subjective and each individual’s lens is shaped by one’s specific socio-economic factors. As Woorti was a data collection tool there was a need for the data collected by Woorti to be contextually calibrated by the individual user. This led to the creation of the concept of Worthwhileness and its three value dimensions - Productivity, Fitness, Enjoyment.

Based on the user’s evaluation of the various modes of transport, the app would create a model of the user’s perception of time spent across the various modes of

transport. This breakthrough facilitated the creation of the mobility coach concept!

The mobility coach represented by the Woorti’s mascot is a gamified coach that automatically tracks and scores the user’s trips. After a week of usage, it creates a baseline travel profile thanks to the automatically tracking and scoring the trips made in this period. Based on this profile model, it prompts the user to set a “mobility goal”. Once the user sets a goal, the mobility coach will “nudge” the user to make slightly different choices for his/her trips in line with the goal.

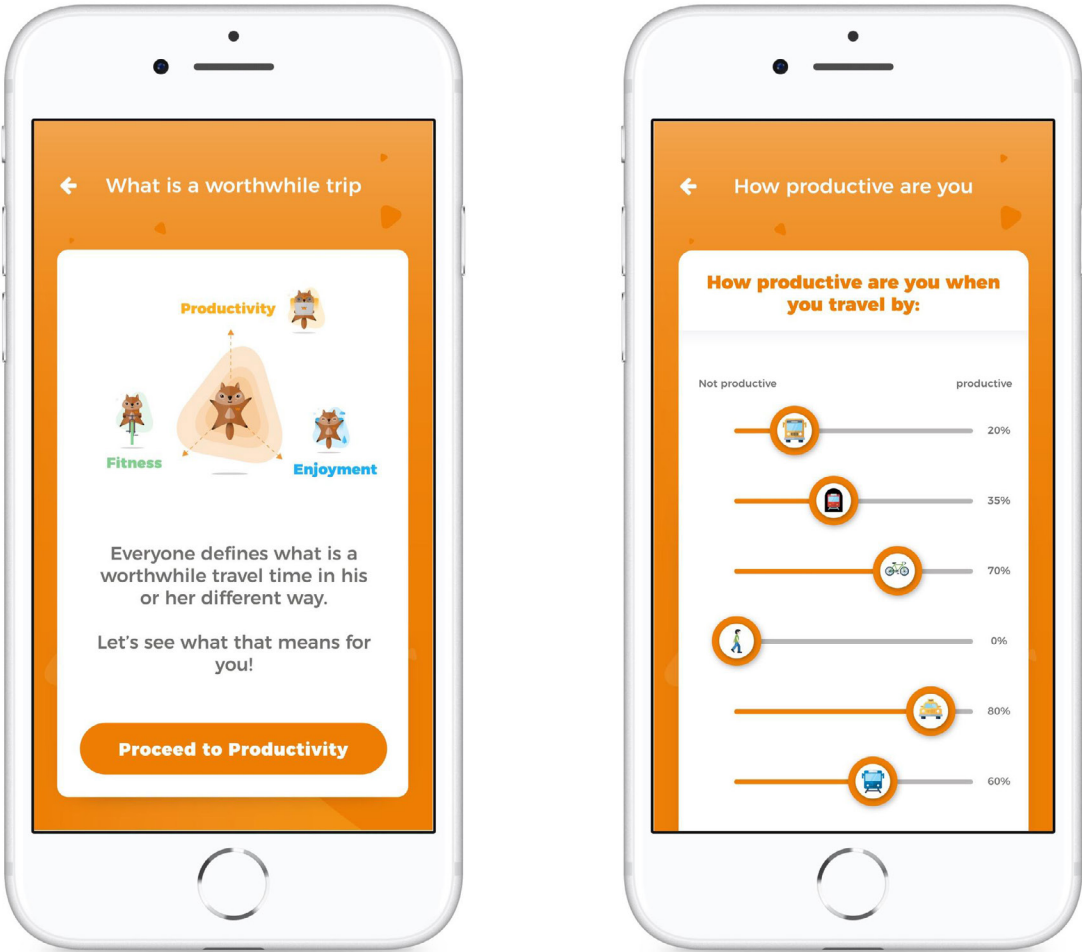


Fig 4 - Defining worthwhileness

Outside of the mobility goal and the nudging mechanism, the mobility coach also shares content on a daily basis geared towards not only illuminating the various alternatives modes of travel that exist and also helping the user make more conscious and intentional decisions about his/her travel.

This scoring model turned into the backbone of the value proposition of the app and was eventually reflected in the route planner as well. For example, all trip results yielded by say a productive trip search are ranked by its productivity score.

2.3 Travel Dashboard

While the Mobility coach was designed to help, the user achieve a specific goal should he choose to do so, it was clear that an interface that would automatically illuminate and help the user visualize his/her travel time was in the context of his/her city would be a great breadcrumb to lead to this action. Tapping into the suggestions of gamification and quantified self, a quantitative mobility dashboard was designed to help achieve this.

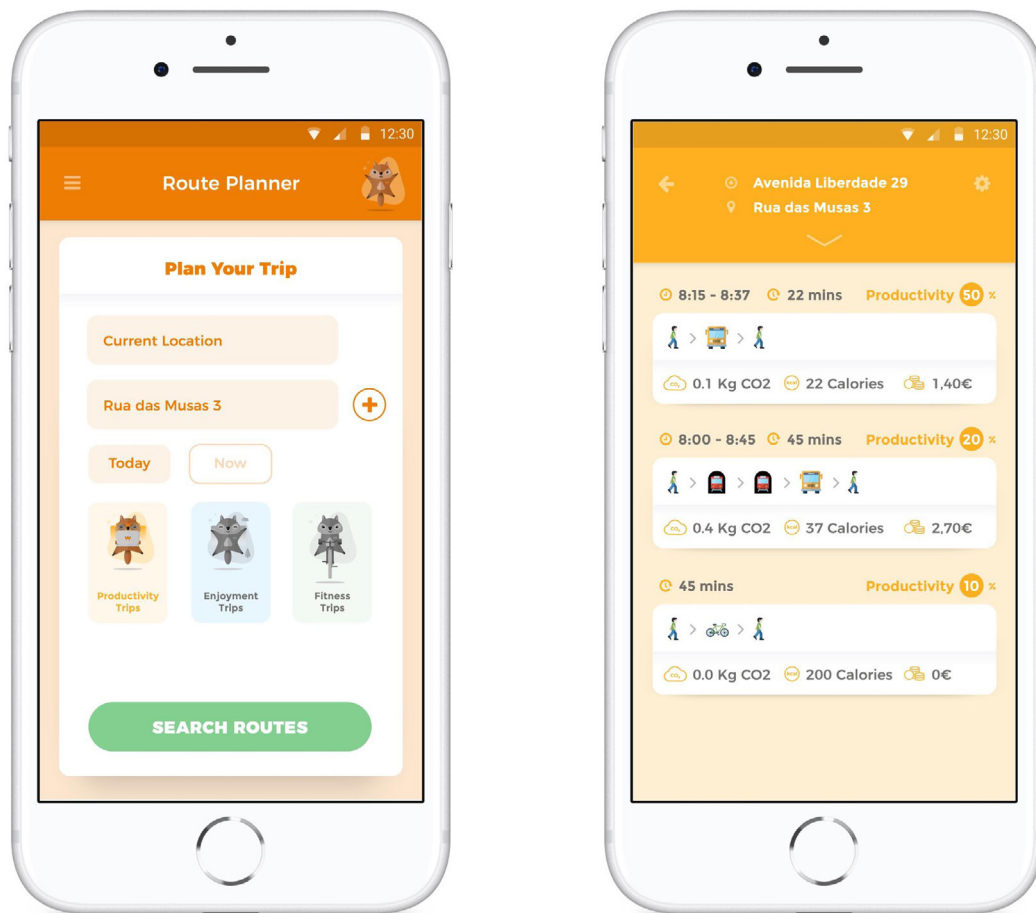


Fig 5 - Route planner yielding results ranked by productivity

The dashboard was inspired by successful trends in health related quantified self data and how a mere exposition of this data proved to be a great first step in driving behaviour change. It also took however a travel time dimension, showing users how worthwhile their trips were being in each value dimension. Adding to the mobility coach target, this was another incentive for the user to regularly validate the data on their trips. In the mobility dashboard, the user is presented with a simple language textual interpretation of the data behind his/her patterns with the graphics hidden one click away (in an attempt to present the insight upfront as opposed

to presenting the raw data). A secondary view allows the user to compare himself to the city he lives in leveraging the game dynamics of competition.

2.4 Survey Modules

Last but not the least, one of the core objectives of the app was to collect rich contextual qualitative data without being tedious to the end user. In an effort to diverge away from the sensation of “filling a form”, survey modules in Woorti employ game mechanics of leader boards and graphic elements like emoji to bring a certain levity to the task.

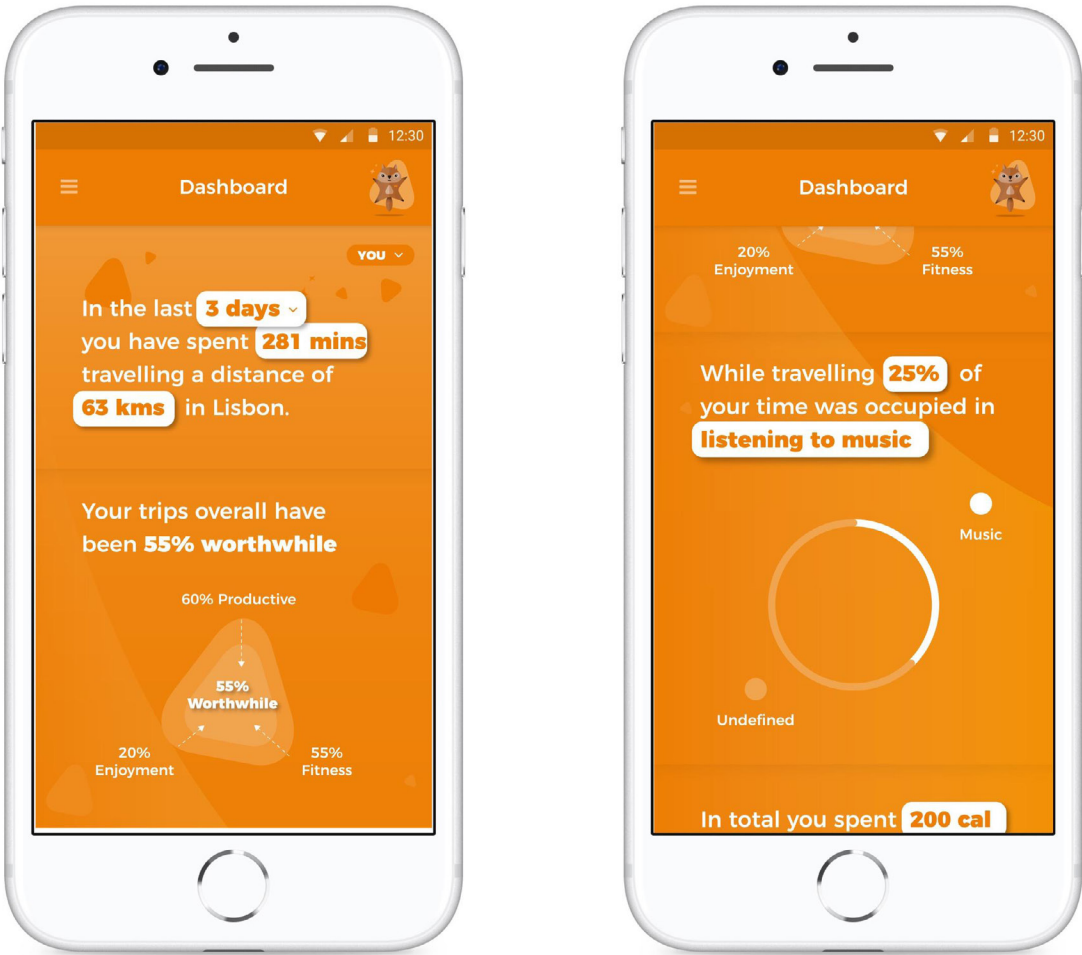


Fig 6 - Dashboard Individual

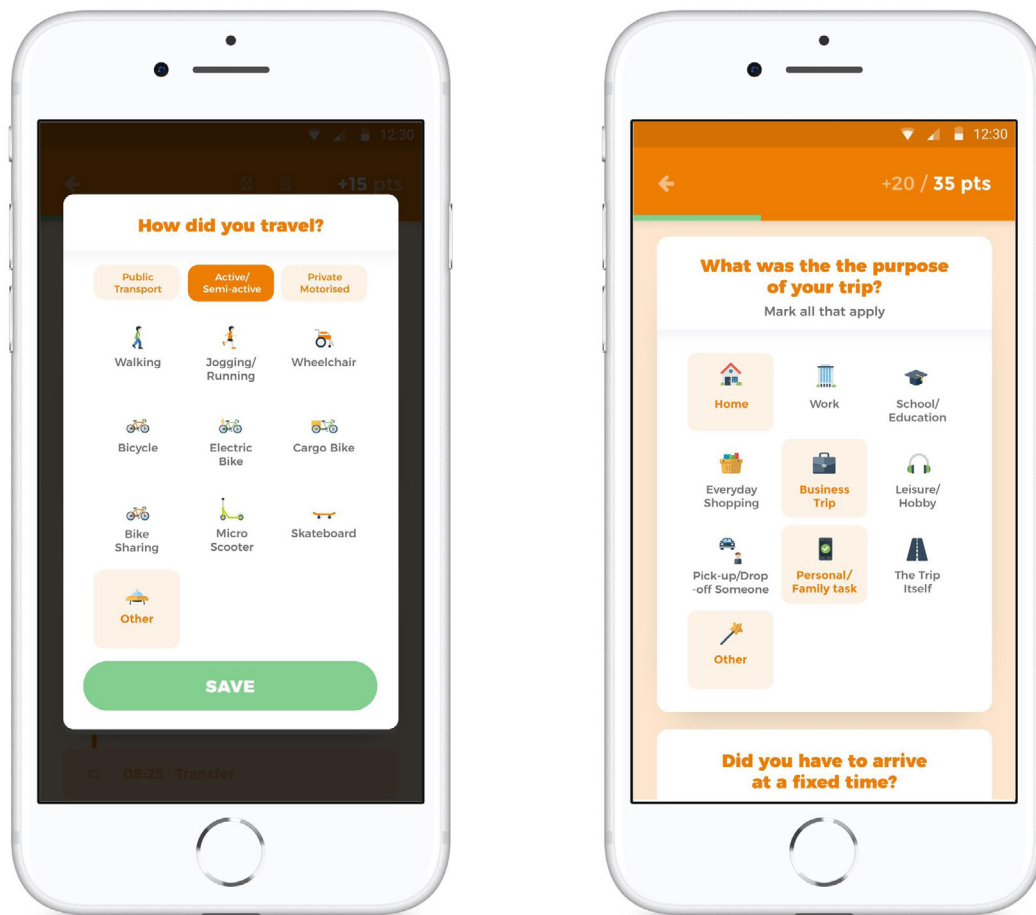


Fig 8 - Survey modules

3.1 Conclusion

Designing Woorti was an exercise in exploring and experimenting with ideas that represent an outlook that is future looking. It's no secret that transport operators, urban planners and other similar stakeholders seek ways to reach their audiences and learn from their experiences to improve their services in the same way that brands aim to reach their customers. Woorti aims to meet this need and create a real-time channel between stakeholders and their customers.

A number of factors are starting to converge that are increasing the demand on the market of mobility. Socio-economic factors such as a growing demand for affordable housing coupled with shifting workplace cultures of remote work offer a glimpse in the shifting needs of urban

populations. Technological trends such as autonomous cars beg the question: what would travellers do if they no longer needed to drive? And let's not forget, environmental concerns such as weaning citizens off private mobility is intrinsic to the future of a sustainable planet. The future of the world hinges on effective and efficient urban contexts with flexible mobility infrastructures. Woorti aims to contribute to this future in an informed, cheerful and positive manner.

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Some thoughts on the street art panorama: the case of Madrid

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Abstract

During the last four decades, street art has been developed and multiplied in most of the biggest European and American cities. In the case of Spain, the roots of this artistic phenomenon appeared during the restoration of democracy, so it is specially linked to the urban society created according to the arrival of freedom. In Madrid in particular, an increasing number of urban interventions have appeared in some neighborhoods such as *Malasaña*, *Tetuán* or *Lavapiés*, which means that the street art is the artistic reflection of the new urban reality. In recent years, some initiatives, such as *Pinta Malasaña* or *Muros Tabacalera*, have used this phenomenon as a way to improve the area and, as a consequence, a new artistic expression has been developed: the new urban muralism. The identification of the artists working in a certain city will give us the idea of where the city can be located in the global panorama of street art and, moreover, this local study will enrich the knowledge of the whole phenomenon. This essay focuses on giving an overview of the street art in Madrid with the idea of providing new insights to increase the knowledge of the current global society.

Key words: Street Art, Madrid, Urban Muralism, Contemporary Art

Since the inception of democracy, first, graffiti and, one decade later, street art have appeared in Spanish cities. Since then, the number of interventions has been increasing incessantly. Due to its development and to the growing interest shown by the media, it has become a major issue for the established art market.

“In recent years, street art has become embedded in popular culture and received growing attention from the art market and art institutions. Work by street artists has entered galleries, auction houses and museums, and some artists have been given the opportunity to create large-scale sanctioned public art projects” (Bengtsen, 2014)

Despite its recent relevance, few attempts have been made in our country to study this phenomenon, with just

a few publications existing, most of which contain a wide range of images but with short texts. In the academic field it doesn't exist a consistent theoretical corpus, in fact the term “street art” is quite controversial and it is difficult to define what it encompasses. Only ten years ago street art was defined as: “All art on the street that's not graffiti” (Lewinsohn, 2008:23). Since then only four theses have been produced in the Spanish academic field. The few theses or articles about this recent phenomenon agree in adding some other ideas: street art is an artistic intervention carried out in an urban space with no permission. That urban space is chosen by the artist, as the relation with the urban context is essential. (Abarca, 2010; Fernández Herrero, 2018).



Ilustración 1. Madrilenian Graffiti. Madrid. Source: Antnio Pavón

In the case of Spain, the birth, development and evolution of street art has grown in parallel with the new urban society developed since the democratic process started. During the 80s two groups of graffiti writers could be identified in the city: the followers of “Muelle”, the most widely known graffiti writer in Madrid, close to the culture of skateboarding and punk, and the group of the followers of the New York graffiti, usually hip-hop and breakdance fans. During the 90s some individual artists, from both graffiti groups, began the new adventure of street art. They were not interested in writing their names any more, but in creating artistic interventions, sometimes for raising awareness about different issues, other times to communicate with the citizen or just to bring beauty to the neighborhood.

Since then, some neighborhoods such as *Malasaña*, *Tetuán* or *Lavapiés* have experienced a multiplication of urban interventions in their walls, not only by local artists but also by internationally renowned artists. A wide range of techniques may be appreciated today in the city such as stencil, stickers, paint, yarn bombing or sculptures made with plaster (e.g. some poetic lips made with plaster are currently decorating some facades in Lavapiés). A wide variety of styles can be found, from the colorful big compositions by the famous artist Okuda to the subtle conceptual art by Dos Jotas, the poetic interventions by

Jonipunto or the signals hacked by Yipi Yipi Yeah. Not only local artists have done interventions in the city, but also relevant international figures such as Blu or C215.

During the last ten years, new artistic experiences have been emerging from Street Art. Some initiatives, like *Pinta Malasaña* or *Muros Tabacalera*, have called on artists in the city to make artistic interventions as a way of improving the area. These new experiences are mainly big murals produced in street art Festivals or Encounters. Current studies appear to support the idea that they cannot be called street art as they create legal art with permission and they are not site-specific anymore. These initiatives would be more accurately labelled as urban muralism rather than street art, although they were born under the umbrella of street art and most of the artists are producing interventions in both fields (Abarca, 2016) dado que existen diferencias claras y fundamentales entre estos murales y las obras a las que llamábamos arte urbano en la década pasada, más pequeñas y producidas sin permiso.¹ Este texto identifica las diferencias entre estas dos prácticas y es al tiempo una descripción detallada de las cualidades que hacen único al arte urbano independiente.”, “accessed”: {“date-parts”: [“2018”, “1”, “23”] }, “author”: {“dropping-particle”: “”, “family”: “Abarca”, “given”: “Javier”, “non-dropping-particle”: “”, “parse-names”: false, “suffix”: “” }, “container-title”: “urbanario.es”, “id”: “ITEM-1”, “issued”: {“date-parts”: [“2016”] }, “title”: “Del arte urbano a los murales, ¿qué hemos perdido?”, “type”: “webpage”, “uris”: [“http://www.mendeley.com/documents/?uuid=c3edd03e-57ce-346f-942f-8f3ff5e92d94”] }, “mendeley”: {“formattedCitation”: “(J. Abarca, 2016.”.

The aforementioned initiatives are related to the improvement of the neighborhood and therefore to the process of gentrification, and thus we have to emphasize the current need to develop some researches focusing on the existing relation between street art and the development of the neighborhoods as well as studying the new relation between art and citizens.

Some areas are experiencing today a controversial situation. Many neighbors feel very proud of the artistic interventions. It is not unusual to find one of them showing and explaining the works to the visitors. In that sense, the interaction with the works is clearly changing the relation



Illustration 2. Gay Pride by Yipi yipi Yeah. 2018. Madrid.
Source: author's material



Illustration 3. Mural "Love Wins" by Okuda for MUROS TABACALERA. 2014. Madrid. Source: author's material

between the citizens and the urban space in a positive way as street art is transforming that space into a place for communication with other human beings. On the other hand, other citizens see in these interventions a way of gentrification and they have a clear position against them. As an example, some violent messages have recently appeared in the façade of Swinton and Grant, a gallery and bookshop specialized in street art in the Madrilenian neighborhood of Lavapiés.

The development of street art in Madrid is not unique. Similar experiences are appearing in other locations as street art is a global movement which is connecting experiences all over the world. The research of what is happening in every city as a local level will give us the whole picture of what is happening in the global sphere. That means that the next step to follow would be to develop and connect local studies to look for new solutions.

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How can cities become a better human habitat?

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If humanism were defined by quantity over quality, modern cities would be the ultimate humanistic terrain because of overpopulation. Instead, we live with this incongruity of human masses while suffering from an absence of humanistic interactions. It's a daily constant to deal with packed public transports, living in sky-scraping edifices and stand at long lasting supermarket lines (where we wait to be assisted by an operational machine). Avoiding eye contact with others or ignoring homeless peoples conditions are arguably becoming common responses and thus automatic actions in a high-tech, automatized and immediate era of the now.

We see humans - dozens, thousands, millions of humans... - but we almost need to seek for humanity. Or most of the times we don't look; we don't need to look because we are convinced by secondary entities that people are united by diverse causes, principles, choices and culture.

While our social network pages are filled with good intentions and ethical positions, we are most likely to find ourselves sinking in a virtual reality. The dangers of this virtual reality are simple: virtuality gives a sense of realness and escape of our daily-life. Such a play where the stage fits in our pocket and dramaturg is in our typing.

To look at a common passenger at the bus stop and comprehend that his/her space in that moment is virtual, remains a concentration of the viewers perception rather than the people around.

This virtual space comes to replace public space and its interactions: talking, flirting, expressing, observing. We take pictures as proof of the beauty we witnessed on a certain place. Often in a night out the connecting 'pick up' line is asking for your whatsapp instead of seeking

an extended real time chat and even the individual is perceived as a new virtual-self - empowered by likes, comments and followers.

Is it that public space has become an empty transient environment to reach other spaces? So, what is the role of cities of the now? A space that accommodates our physical bodies and its needs. A space that facilitates the organisation of private spaces. Will public space become solely a transitional space? No. We are social beings and we need human interaction to keep us sane, fulfilled. We cannot live in isolation since space, time and its conditions (or consequences) impact our ability to function as social beings. We tend to relate with matters that are close to our ideologies and refusing or showing lack of interest by oppositional arguments. Divisions of social groups appear to give stronger connections and serve our personal interests while they shut down for the issues of others. In stark contrast, corporate entities can appear to stand for a 'common wellbeing' and while the reality of corporations is linked to private spaces and the increase of divisions, they are linked to efficiency and the delivery of city services.

Cities dispose countless services and opportunities to organize and isolate different lifestyles: from low cost pub bars to expensive barista coffeeshops, female hairdressers and/or barber shops, public parks to nature reserves, private clinics versus the Chinese medicine treatment of a potential next-door neighbor. As a city grows in size, so too does the range of choice for its inhabitants.

A panoply of services is at our disposition and consumerism is an intrinsic part of our daily-lives that

masks our loss of connection with each other. We are defined by what we wear, what we drink, how (much) we contribute to the economy and, ironically, how unique we can be, in a mass production era. Demanding changes that are mainly for self-protection of our lifestyles and to our dearest ones more than a globally social well-being.

Pointing fingers and immersing into companies' creative innovations to problems of this century are a 'convenient' approach for those who hold the capitalistic desire of success. Solving problems and making money is the magic formula of where we stand as an occidental society.

Though the need of expression and being in contact with nature and each other is so evident and prevailing we can see aspirations in the youngest ones; children playing adults role while depending on their guidance later than it ever was before.

Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old activist who recently organised the 'Friday4future' movement after her speech on climate awareness and the urge for political attention is moving students to manifest about environmental rights. These ongoing strikes demand public and political attention not only for climate change but for the voice of an underrated generation.

A few months before, a 12-year-old girl called Genesis Butler also started the non-profit campaign Million Dollar Vegan, motivating a vegan diet during Lent with a special invitation for Pope Francis - if the Pope publicly accepts to compromise with the campaign, 1 million dollars has been pledged to a charity of his choice.

The awareness of these two young women and the

crucially important messages attached to environmental education as well human relations with others has helped raise public awareness and recognition that they stand for a cause and the most humanistic principle - compassion.

So, why are we so strongly attached with political parties, cultural standards and religious conventions, if as social beings we depend on each other? We need to develop intercross thinking, acting and imagining. In order to establish substantial ties with others, we need to challenge and embrace our differences. A space for chaos instead of repressing and attacking what we do not comprehend.

Thomas Crow posits that physical contradictions are the source of articulateness, due to their brief duration: "if the piece could persist indefinitely, the contradiction is illusory (Crow, T. p.136). The city's public spaces are the breaches for contradictions and the relations in-between.

While third spaces - referring to virtual spaces - are more predominant than ever, public spaces need to be re-activated. We must re-think and re-establish new connections with these spaces that are supposed to be available to everyone without limitations or impositions.

The author's intent is to question the context of private spaces and how there is a limiting of interdisciplinary interactions: is there a need to convey an art piece in an artistic establishment to achieve the recognition that it owns? Is the value of speech more critical when presented in a Parliament instead of a public park? Is religious devotion more sacred when practiced in spaces, such as churches, monasteries and chapels?

The use of private spaces seems to enhance our social behavior while public space becomes absent in intimacy due to its exposure. Users of these spaces actions are being reduced to passing-by with occasionally spontaneous demonstrations of performing artists and marketing companies.

While there is coherence in private spaces addressing specific actions and services in the name of privacy and interest development, it is important to question: where does interdisciplinarity activities happen?

As privileged citizens, we are in position of choosing our interests and manifesting our opinion but we are not challenged enough by contradictory realities. It is time to challenge our pre-achieved conceptions and to observe through alternative lenses, people, space and time. Public space is our communal home, our blank canvas ready for chaotic art. Private spaces will always be inherent to it, but right now, we lack a communal ground - public space invigoration.

What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put on? - Henry David Thoreau

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Acoustic Space, Sign and Community Identity

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Abstract: The contribution of soundscape studies is a way to understand local cultural identity and gives importance to local communities of a specific place. Through public art and acoustic communication, a system of signs and symbols presented by a community can be mapped and/or created. Sound as a tool allows the community identity of a place to be defended, while its inherited cultural values, knowledge and traditions are evidenced.

Keywords: Sign, Soundscape, Acoustic space, Public Art, Sound, Identity

This research text is developed in the context of author creation and the use of space as a community place where cultural identity settles and forms through sound. The various areas of study are approached with the intention of serving the cultural identity of a population of a given place through public art. For the construction of the text will be addressed uses of signs and signals in acoustic spaces in order to build community identity.

We consider the acoustic space as a place of sharing that marks the interaction of an acoustic community. An acoustic space coincides with the soundscape, defined as “[...] any acoustic field of study. We may speak of a musical composition as a soundscape, or a radio program as a soundscape or an acoustic environment as a soundscape. We can isolate an acoustic environment as a field of study just as we can study the characteristics of a given landscape” (Schafer, 1977). By approaching the acoustic community as a sharing of sound experiences related to the sharing of private and common space (Schafer, 1977) we introduce the communication model proposed by Barry Truax in *Acoustic Communication*, which is useful when considering the grouping of information and designation of specific actions that will be essential for the reception

of the same. At its core, a community interacts through systems of signs and symbols so that the stakeholders gain information about the surrounding space. The use of signs is thus evidenced when there is sharing of meanings as forms of communication, as Metzeltin defines:

“[...] a sign is an object or a process – for example, a stone, a drawing, a gesture, etc. – to which man ascribes a concept and which serves to raise awareness and express a different object or process distinct from the former. [...] In order to serve the interindividual communication this relationship, must be sanctioned by two or more individuals, that is, it is conventional.”¹

Deely posits that intentional signs “[...] are used by animals and by men for the purpose of communication – including language and its substitutes [...]”² (Deely, 1995). Using sound as a tool in an already built system of signs can stimulate the community through acoustic space for the purpose of creating local cultural identity. As Catarina Carvalho refers, Connerton (1989) in Featherstone (2001) book “*Reafirmar a Identidade Cultural Local: O Património Cultural Imaterial Local como Recurso*” states

that the community builds a sense of belonging to a place that “[...] sustains a collective memory, that in turn, depends on ritualistic and commemorative practices and ceremonies [...]”³.

We can conclude that it is through value and representation that signs provide the potential for a population to be defended and that identity is created by inherited knowledge, as well as their traditional form as the basis to reconstitute their sense of belonging to space.

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1 – Original text in Portuguese: “um sinal é um objecto ou um processo - por ex, uma pedra, um desenho, um gesto, etc. - ao qual o homem atribui um conceito e de que se serve para consciencializar e exprimir um objecto ou um processo distinto do primeiro. [...] Para que possa servir à comunicação interindividual esta relação tem que ser sancionada por dois ou mais indivíduos, quer dizer, é convencional.”

2 – Original text in Portuguese: “[...] são usados pelos animais e pelos homens com o propósito da comunicação – incluindo a linguagem e os seus substitutos [...]”

3 – Original text in Portuguese: “[...] sustenta numa memória colectiva que, por sua vez, depende de práticas e cerimónias ritualísticas e comemorativas [...]”.

Visual Signs and Cultural Analysis

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Nonverbal manifestations by a person or a group of people towards elements in a city conveys a message. It is worth the effort to recognize the type of messages being communicated, their relevance, and whether they are related to a larger social movement – perhaps reflecting a behavioral shift or trend – because they may contain useful information to government agencies, companies, and the society at large.

In this article, I discuss how the visual signs present in a territory and cultural analyses are related. We may consider that “territory is a concept generated by people organizing space for their own aims” (GOTTMANN 1975:1). Visual signs are studied in the field of semiotics, which seeks to understand the “relationship between the sign and the object or signifier and signified” (SMITH 2011:229), using visual code (image, painting, etc.) to send a message that, importantly, may “be hidden or largely unnoticed, even by the people using the code” (SMITH 2011:236). Culture is all human being manifestations that occur through habits, values and attitudes – “the way of life of a particular people living together in one place” (EAGLETON 2000:112).

The same sign might have multiple meanings depending on the context in which it is embedded. As Maria Isabel Castro states, “A careful look at the signs in different parts of the world allows us to deduce that they are not always universally or directly interpretable and that, on many occasions, they require knowledge of the cultural context in which they are located” (CASTRO 2008:89). This in itself sets the close connection between signs

and context. Street art, for example, charged with visual signs, expresses the context in which is embedded, but also intervene in the territory and its culture.

An example is the Ana Botella Crew case, a movement that started in Spain in 2009: a template with the ABC signature was spread collaboratively and rhetorically through the internet, giving anyone access to download it. Spontaneously, people brought the template out into the streets (see Luis Menor for more on this case). In this case, the current increase of collaborative practices in Spain reflected in the artistic intervention.





Source: Flickr



Through this example we see that visual signs and the local or tribal culture feed one another, establishing the following cycle: the visual signs in a territory represent and broadcast (connotatively or denotatively) their cultural context, and at the same time are an important elements that set the culture itself, constituting an important source of analysis.

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Evaluation Of Urban Park Design Criteria In The Case Of Taraqi Park (Afghanistan, Herat)

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Abstract:

The objective of this study is to define park design standards, determine the user expectations of the parks and evaluate the defined standards in the case of Taraqi Park in Herat city. On-site detection, observation and survey methods were utilized in the study. The conformity of the park area with international standards was evaluated while general satisfaction as to the park was tried to be determined by virtue of surveys made with the users of the park.

Key words: Urban park, design standards, park site analysis, user satisfaction

Introduction

Urban parks, which are one of the important areas of the urban-fabric, can be defined as multi-purpose public spaces which provide social, economic and environmental benefits within the city (Carmona et al., 2008; Mambretti, 2011). While urban parks serve all ethnic or cultural user groups whether young or old, in group or lonely, rich or poor and male or female, they also provide opportunities as regards aesthetic experience, recreation, relaxation or playing organized sports games, art, music or other community events for the users thereof. When people decide to use the parks, they take into consideration other people who go there and use the park (friends, unsafe people, families, drug dealers, police patrols) more than the physical appearance of parks and their recreational requirements (Altman & Zube, 2012; Myerson, 2006).

The urban parks are considered as a value for cities and inhabitants of the cities. In addition to entertainment, urban parks provide spaces for both active and passive recreation. For example, a change in a person's lifestyle may increase the concern thereof incident to his/her health and fitness. This situation denotes the fact that more people may go to parks for making physical exercise. As such, requests for different recreation/relaxation areas and activities will affect a park's planning and design. On the other hand, urbanization denotes the fact that there will be more people within a city and this situation creates an important amount of demand for open spaces, family activities and programs related to the elderly and children. Urban parks are expected to fulfill all of these different requirements. If urban parks cannot fulfill daily social requirements, this can cause urban parks not to be used and ignored. As such, it is substantial to know the answer of the question how urban parks should be designed in order to fulfill the requirements of the users thereof.



Figure 1.: Parc de la Villette, Paris, 1982-1998 (URL-1)

Materials and methods

2.1. Objective of the study

Defining design standards of parks,

Defining expectations of users: Examining how parks and urban parks make contribution to enhancing the life quality of people living in urban areas, and especially examining the utilization ways in which different people groups utilize urban park types. Providing a reliable description as to how urban parks are utilized through different user categories and how they use the diversity of such areas. Researching what users request from city parks and to what extent they meet such expectations thereof. Examining obstacles which prevent different groups from utilizing city parks and playgrounds and determining basic factors which will encourage them use more.

Examining the design standards and expectations of urban parks in the province of Herat over the example of Taraqi Park.

2.2. Defining the Problem

Urban open spaces like public parks and green spaces are substantial facilities promoting health which play

an increasingly more critical role in terms of making contribution to the sustainable future of cities. At this stage, correct planning, design and maintenance programs with respect to parks have to be conducted. Taraqi Park, located in Herat province, is one of the oldest parks in the central part of the city and attracts the highest number of visitors in all seasons compared to other parks within the province because of its central location and easy access.

The subjects identified as problematic as to surrounding area and inside of Taraqi Park can be stipulated as follows.

- Gradually increasing population in Herat city and uncontrolled urbanization,
- Poor urban design strategies in the surroundings of the city,
- Inappropriate planning as to urban parks and green spaces,
- Lack of facilities or inadequate facilities including a playground for children,
- Existence of undesirable persons and activities like tramps,
- Concerns as to dogs and dog poops,
- Problems regarding security, vandalism and maintenance.

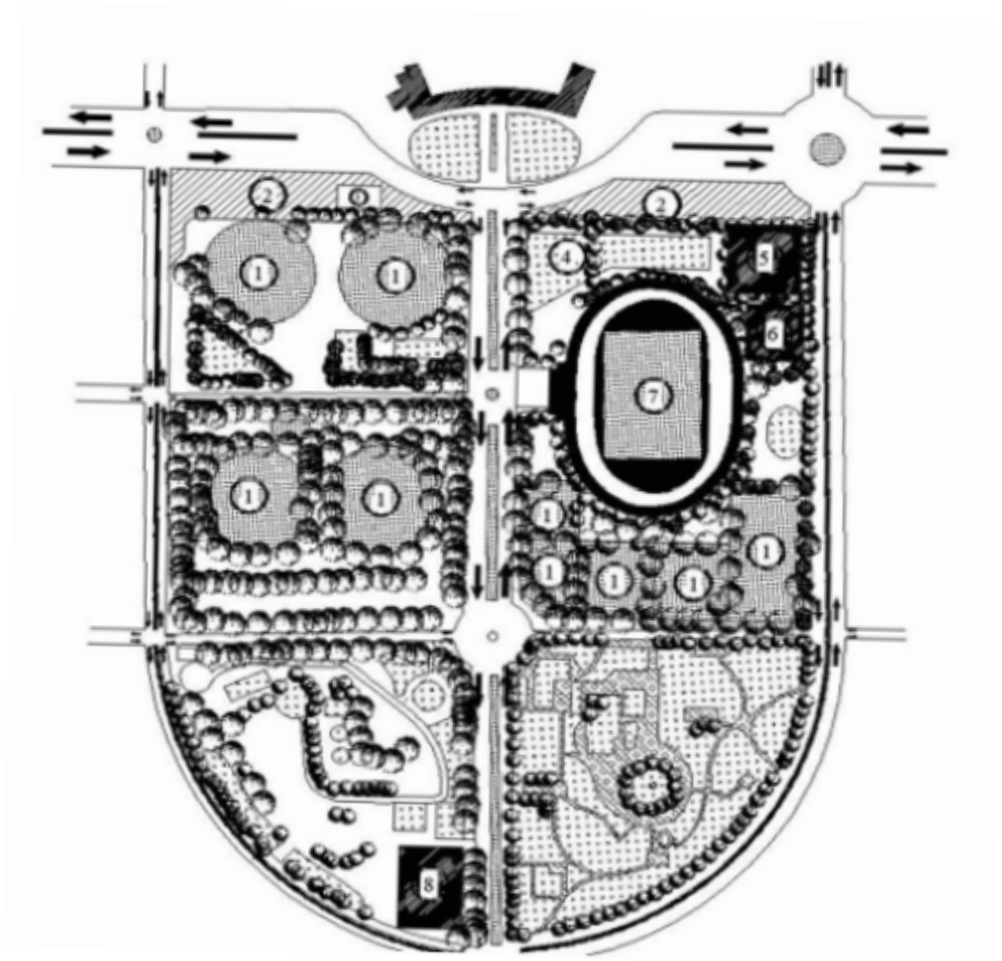


Figure 1. Top View of Taraqi Park - Google Maps : 1. Sports area, 2. Parking lot, 3. Library, 4. Amusement park, 5. Masjid, 6. Restaurant, 7. Stadium, 8. Gym

Much as Taraqi Park is the most visited park of the city, its design, facilities, management and maintenance systems are not adequate according to standard city park rules and regulations. The current situation of the park is examined and preparation of a survey in order to learn the visitors' behavior and expectations is recommended in this part.

2.3. Sample Area

Herat is the second most crowded province of Afghanistan following Kabul, the capital province. Herat is one of the 34 Afghan provinces and constitutes the north-western region of the country with Badghis, Farah and Ghor provinces. Herat is located in the valley of the Harirod River which flows from the central mountains of Afghanistan to

Turkmenistan's Karakum Desert. This region has a semi-arid and continental climate having cold winters and hot summers.

There are approximately twenty public parks which can be utilized for recreation purposes within the Herat urban area. Most of the parks are located in the central area of the city, between the main east-west road and in the 12th, 5th and 8th quarters in the north of the most improved land. Some of the parks in Herat are especially significant in city life, especially in the spring, including the Takht-e Safar Park. Mellat Park is located in a private area in north of 5th quarter. Mellat Park has numerous facilities including a pool, zoo, café, wedding hall and dining palace. Welayat Park and Taraqi Park, located

on the borders between 4th and 6th quarters, constitute the largest green area of the city together hosting the city stadium. Taraqi Park is one of the oldest parks of Herat province, located on the main street of the province. Taraqi Park was established between the years of 1962 and 1965 and it is a central park with a total surface area of 8 hectares (8000m²). Taraqi Park is accepted to be one of the most visited parks within the province due to its easy access and central location and the main football stadium located within the park in addition to several sports facilities and quiet places it has for walking and studying.

2.4. Method

Literature search, on-site determinations, observations and surveys were utilized as data methods in this study.

3.4.1. Field Analysis

Field analysis was carried out with on-site determinations in the park. Objectives of the field work; the current general situation of the park, the deficiencies in the existing facilities and the detection of parking maintenance issues.

3.4.2. Survey Study

A survey is an important tool for expanding participation as well as validation of inputs received by virtue of community response events. A survey provides both the participant (by providing open-ended opportunities in order to provide input to their programs and saying what they have to say) and the planning person or team the maximum flexibility among all planned activities, (surveys can be distributed in many forms and easily, and allows a large number of participants to respond at a very low cost because it is upon request). In this survey, 250 survey forms were utilized both in the internet and in a printed way. The surveys were mostly made in autumn 2018. 209 of the surveys were responded completely while 41 of them were responded partially. The objective of the study was to receive the opinions of various people from different ages, genders and professions. However, due to some limitations, most of the respondents were students of Faculty of Architecture and Design and Faculty of Law and Economics of Herat University.

The questions in the survey were designed to be associated with the most frequently pursued objectives of the thesis as well as the case study.

Order	Question
1	Gender
2	Age
3	Duration of residence in the region
4	How often do you come to this park?
5	What is your aim in coming to this park?
6	What are the issues you observe in the park?
7	What are the activities and uses you are interested in the park?
8	What are the activities and uses you don't like in this park?
9	What activities and uses do you want to be added to the park?
10	What is your general enjoyment level of the park?
11	How can Taraqi Park be developed?

Table 1. Questions of the Survey

The survey comprises two categories with an eye to understand the approaches of people towards parks and green spaces. The first category includes three demographic questions as to gender, age and residence period in the region. The second category comprises open-ended questions including the frequency of the park visit, aim of the park visit, the issues observed in the park, activities and uses which attract the attention of the users, activities the users do not like, activities they desire to be included, general enjoyment level of the park and recommendations for the development of the park.

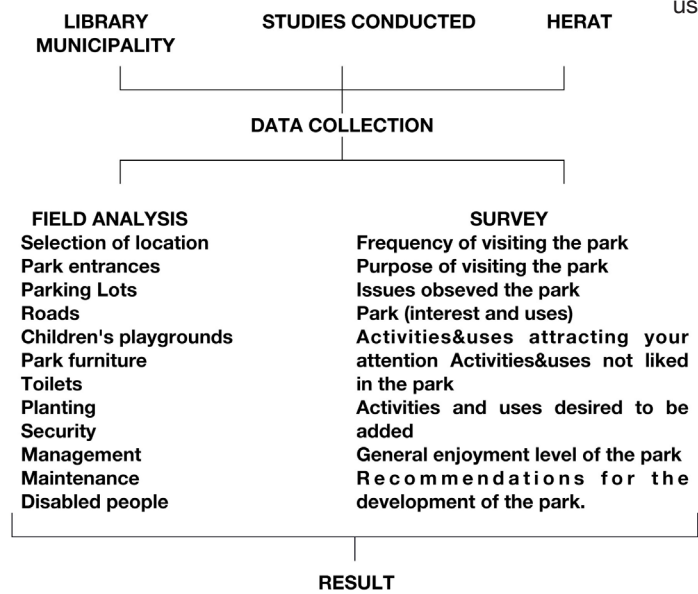


Figure 2. Data Collection and Analysis Chart



Figure 3. East and west of the park entrance

Parking lots: The parking lots of Taraqi Park are not managed well and are inadequate on busy days therefore many people have to use lower roads in order to park their cars within the park (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Parking lots in the south and north of the park

Roads: The main road and the secondary roads within the park are used as a transit road by drivers who do not visit the park and who only make a u-turn in order to decrease the distance. Parking roads can be used with payment with a view to prevent unwanted traffic on parking roads as a solution to this issue. There are no traffic signs to direct traffic and speed limiter elements on the roads of the park (Figure 5).

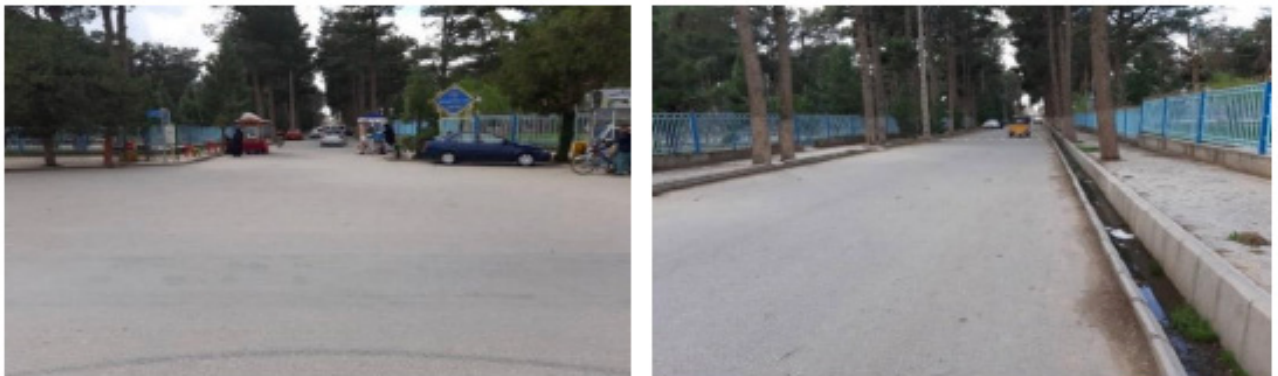


Figure 5. Traffic roads

Taraqi Park's pedestrian ways are designed to provide good connections to different parts. The roads are mostly built of natural stone and there are concrete walkways in some parts of the park. The biggest connection issue of Taraqi Park is that the park is separated by a road which creates problems for people and which is dangerous for children crossing the road in order to go to the other side of the park. The plants along the road side are rather well planned and designed. Lighting along the roads is not sufficient while most parts of the park do not have lighting poles (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Natural Stone pavement

The paths within Taraqi Park are well designed in general. The connections between different parts of the park are good, however there are some design errors observed both in the tracks and links. The tracks are generally constructed of natural stone and the connections in some parts are made of concrete. The width of the paths is insufficient in some parts and especially in the eastern part of the park. Furthermore, use of bicycles may pose danger on pathways inasmuch as there is no bicycle path. The plants along the side of the road are relatively well planned and designed. Lighting along the roads is not enough and most places do not have lighting poles.

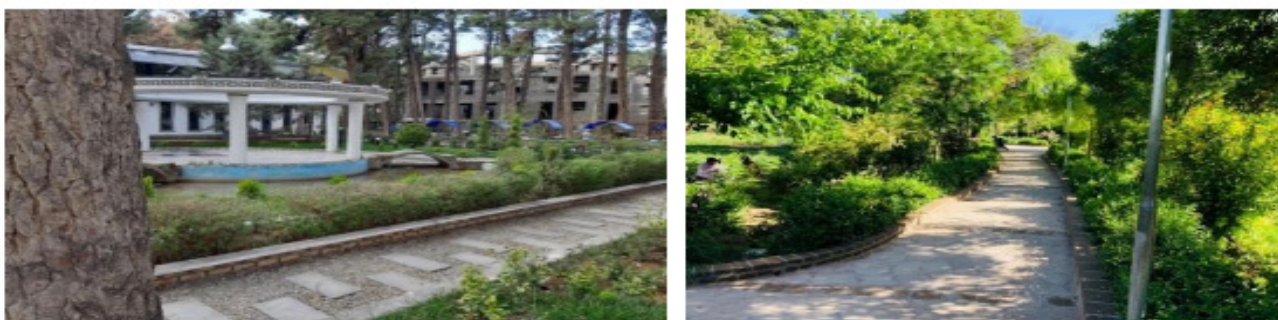


Figure 7. Left: pebble and stone material way, right: masonry stone material way

Children Playgrounds: There is a playground on the eastern part of the park (Figure 8). The playground cannot meet visitor demands inasmuch as it has small and simple equipments. The equipments are not in compliance with the standards. The area is uncared and not suitable for the usage of disabled people.



Figure 8. Views from playground

Park Furniture: The location selection and design features of park furniture of Taraqi Park were observed to be insufficient in general. The seating units in the park are insufficient compared to the number of visitors during intensive visiting times. Their selection of location and designs are insufficient. Some of the users of the park sit on the grass areas inasmuch as the number of benches is insufficient (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Seating equipments

The location and design of the trash bins are not in compliance with the standards (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Trash bins

The lighting system is not balanced well. Sidewalk lighting standards are not taken into account in placement of the street lamps. There is no lighting at the entrance and exit points (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Lighting equipments

There is no marking system in the park in general. There are no signposts along the entrances and exits, roads and hiking trails. There is not a water element within Taraqi Park. Toilets: There are two quite uncared toilets in the park (Figure 12).



Figure 12. Toilet

Plantation: The vegetative landscape of the park is in good condition. Plants with different sizes, forms, textures and colors are also used.

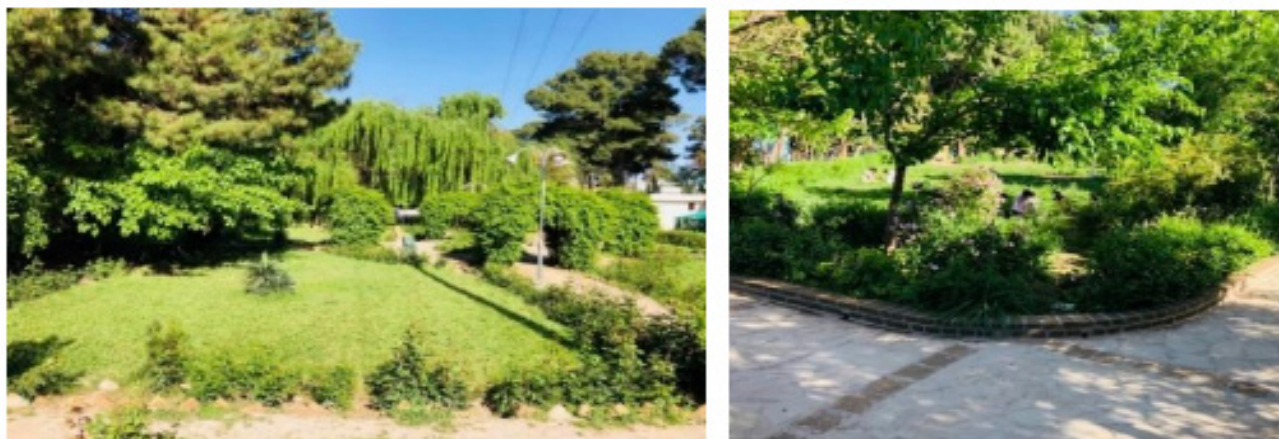


Figure 13. Views from park landscape

Security: Absence of signposts, ground designs of the playgrounds and poor lighting system adversely affect the security perception as regards the park.

Management: Herat Municipality's Green Areas and Parks (Verdure) branch manage the park directly. There is no central management system to include personnel management, waste management, statistics management (to analyze the number of visitors) and parking lot management within the park.

Maintenance: There is not a specific system for maintenance of the park and maintenance of the facilities is not performed within a certain period of time. The irrigation system of the park is the traditional irrigation system. The issue with this system is that a large amount of water is wasted and irrigation effectiveness is not uniform in all parts of the irrigated areas.

Disabled people: The park is not designed to be accessible for disabled people: no toilet exists for disabled people; no parking exists; no ramps for disabled people on the

roads, no chairs or seats for the disabled and playground for disabled people exist.

4.2. Results of the survey

Demographic characteristics of those who were included in the survey are provided in Table 3.2. Most of those who were included in the survey were male (58.9%, males and 41.1 % female). In general, most of the users (83%, 5) are between the ages of 20 and 40y; it was determined that only 2.9% of the visitors are between the ages of 15 and 20 while the majority of the park users live in Herat since 6-20 years.

Question	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	157	62.8
Female	93	37.2
Age		
15-20	7	2.9
20-29	116	46.5
30-39	39	15.4
40-49	54	21.6
50-59	29	7.11
60> +	5	1.9
Residence Period		
1-3	74	29.1
3-6	35	14.0
6-10	54	21.8
10-20	53	21.2
20 years and more	34	13.9
Total	250	

Table 2. Gender, age and residence period of the respondents

Visiting Frequency of the Park: It was found that 37% of the respondents visited the parks “several times a week” or “almost every day” and 14% of the respondents frequently visited the Taraqi Park (Figure 14).

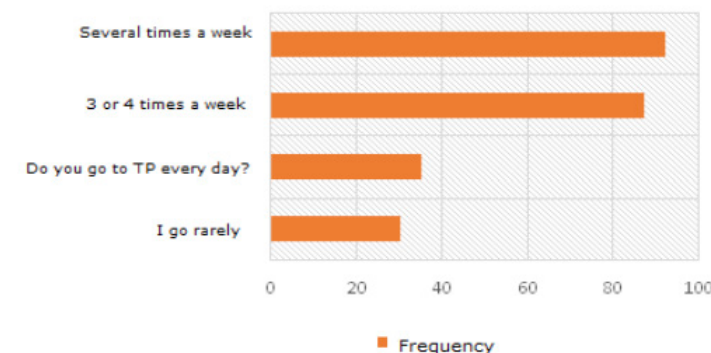


Figure 14. Frequency of Taraqi Park visits

Purpose of Visiting the Park:

Ranking of the visiting purpose of the visitors of Taraqi Park is as follows: “studying and walking” (42%); “making sports” (25%); “meeting with friends” (15%) and “its being the best and closest place to my home” (14%) (Figure 15). These results showed that study and walking, socializing and recreation are the main purposes of visiting the city's Taraqi Park.

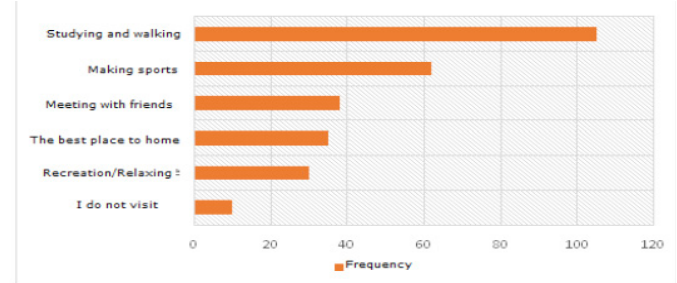


Figure 15. Main purpose of visiting the Taraqi Park

Problems observed in Taraqi Park:

It was determined that 56% of the users considered “management and maintenance” while 21% of the users considered “insufficient facilities” and 15% of the users considered “tramps” and 13% of the users considered “not having a special place for families or women” as problems.

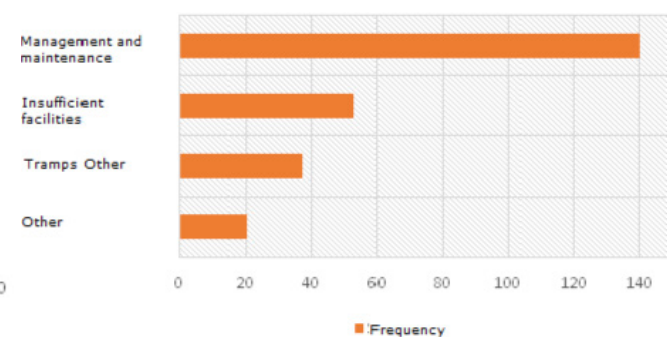


Figure 16. Problems in the Taraqi Park

Activities and uses you are interested in Taraqi Park:

The reasons for frequent use of Taraqi Park are determined as “its central location and proximity to home” (45%); “sports grounds” (30%); “its being a quiet place to study” (17%) and “its having a better environment than others park”(8%) (Figure 4.16). This result revealed the significance of ease in terms of distance and time when using parks.

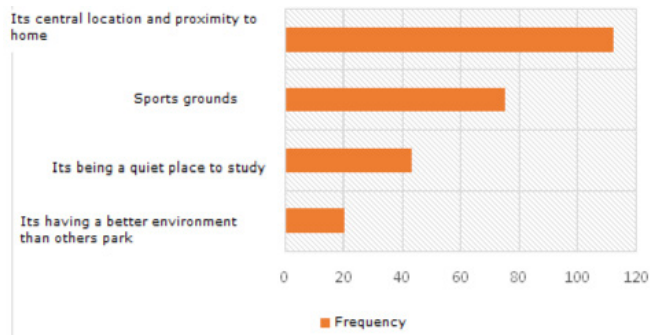


Figure 17. Reasons of using Taraqi Park frequently

Activities & uses not liked in Taraqi Park:

Activities & uses not liked in the park by users include “being disturbed by annoying people” (32%); “inappropriate management” (2%); “no separate facilities for women”(18%); “ not having facilities for children's hobbies” (10%); and other reasons (6%).

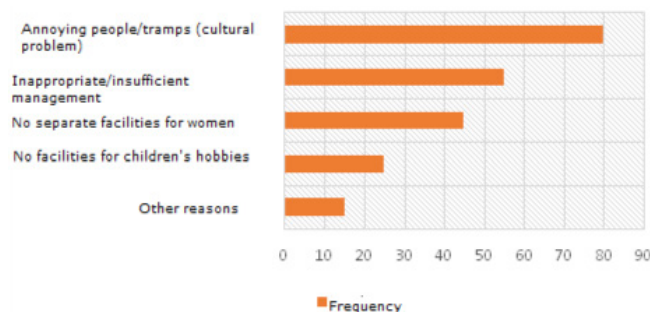


Figure 18. Disliked activities in the park

Activities and uses desired to be added to the park:

The most demanded park facility was determined as “separate facilities for women” at the rate of 37%. Other facilities to be added were listed as “private municipality”

at the rate of 22%, followed by “children playground facilities at the rate of 16%, and “brand cafes” at the rate of 10%. Other failures of the park were as to improvement of the existing playgrounds, traffic management, parking areas and illuminating the pedestrian roads.

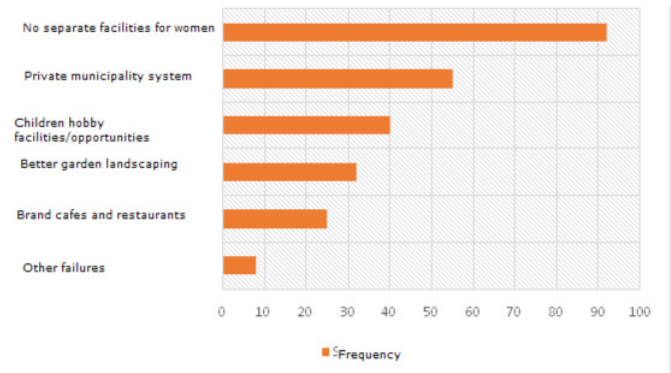


Figure 19. Activities and uses desired to be added to the park

General Enjoyment Level of the Park:

The majority of the respondents (55%) considered the park to be inadequate in terms of cleanliness and toilets. The park has only two toilet facilities; there are no separate women's toilets and rule plates (Table 3). Only 22% of the respondents evaluated the park as medium in terms of the aforementioned facilities, while 15% (most male participants) evaluated the park as good. These results have revealed the fact that overall performance of the management and maintenance system is unacceptable according to the visitors and that it has to be revised.

Overall Enjoyment	Frequency	Percent (%)
Bad	137	55
Medium	55	22
Good	38	15.5
Very good	13	5.5
No answer	5	2

Table 3. Evaluation of the park

How can Taraqi Park be improved:

43 % of the participants stated that the park should be redesigned while 27.5% them mentioned that operation of the park should be transferred to the private sector.

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Redesign of the park	107	43
Transfer to private sector	69	27.5
Modernization of existing facilities	30	12
Increasing taxes and transparent use of park revenues	33	13.5
Other	11	4.5

Table 4. Ways of improving the park

5. Discussion and recommendations

Urban parks offer a suitable environment for a wide range of recreational and relaxation activities in addition to enhancing the image and perceived value of the society. The design and management of the Park should consider the recreation needs of all target groups planned to be served (Chiesura, 2004). Urban parks can serve the requirements and desires of many subgroups of all kinds of people and populations: young and old, rich and poor, male and female, athletic or non-athletic people as well as all ethnic and cultural groups. This broad attraction gives urban parks social, behavioral and physical importance in efforts to enhance the urban life quality (Hayward, 1989).

This study has determined the urban park and green space demands of users and their overall assessments against these parks and green spaces by focusing on Taraqi Park located at the city center in order to provide relevant information for improving the quality of life and creating urban park strategies in future.

It was observed that the city improvement plans and programs in the city were inadequate as a result of the study. Herat city requires more recreational space in addition to insufficient green areas due to its growing population. The people require accessible, safe and well-maintained parking areas.

Most of the participants preferred the parks in their vicinity and stated that the vicinity to their house was a factor in their visiting the park. City parks have to include physical activities, small activity areas, separate facilities for women and children's playgrounds and fulfillment of various social

needs and functions, including recreational areas. Taraqi Park is located at the city center with easy access by virtue of public transport, however the park is not well designed and built.

Users of the Taraqi Park have shown studying, relaxation and sport as their reasons for visiting the park. This result can be used as a reference in future researches for determining the most required facilities in existing urban parks and take into consideration these facts in newly designed parks.

Users required separate places for families and women and playgrounds for children. It is very hard to build various parks to meet the requirements of citizens in small and medium-sized cities due to financial limitations. As such, the relevant authority should take into consideration the presence of necessary facilities in the existing parks in the city and include some of such facilities in the mini parks used by the society.

Missing and insufficient issues especially determined by the users in a park can be listed as follows.

Improper management of the park,

Its being designed not to meet the needs of the social structure; for example, most people are uncomfortable using mixed-sex facilities,

Lack of playground or facilities for children,

Presence of annoying persons in the recreation area and parks whom the police should check,

Neglecting toilets especially for women.

Field survey results as to Taraqi Park are provided in summary in Table 5.1. and as shown the park has received very low scores in terms of maintenance system and it has been determined that ,except for plants, there is no other contractor or a maintenance service system will make the maintenance of the facilities in the park .

The design of the park, as a result of field research, is the second criterion described in Table 5.1. and the park's design is poor according to the design rules of standard parks and the park does not comply with the standard design rules for urban parks. Entrances, exits, lighting elements, toilets, facilities for the disabled and parking lots are the most important facilities that are incomplete or not designed according to the standards.

The location of the park is quite good, it is located in the central part of the city and can be reached easily by virtue of public transport. However, as shown in Table 5.1., there should be many facilities which are not currently in the park or which are not well designed. Changing and redesigning parking lots, playgrounds, lighting elements and toilets are important issues which need to be considered.

	LOCATION	DESIGN	MAINTENANCE
Field Selection	-	X	X
Parking lot	X	X	X
Park entrance	-	X	X
Way	-	-	X
Play ground	X	X	X
Park Furniture			
Seating elements	-	X	X
Waste bins	X	X	X
Lighting elements	-	-	X
Signboards	X	X	X
Fountains	X	X	X
Toilet	X	X	X
Planting	-	-	-
Facilities for the disabled	X	X	X

Table 5. Results of field research

As such, these results can be taken into consideration in future park planning and management with an eye to maximize the quality of life in cities. However, because the statistics utilized in the study area are limited and the sample size which is analyzed is not big, current research results should be generalized only subsequent to a larger study carried out in order to understand the general approach of Herat fellow citizens to urban parks and green areas compared to citizens of other cities. Improving the park areas by taking into account the requirements and demands of the users and finding solutions to issues will increase the satisfaction level as regards the urban parks and the number of visitors who visit these parks. A comprehensive study has to be conducted on status of urban parks in Herat in order to help better planning of improvements as regards urban parks and on satisfaction and thoughts of citizens as to urban parks and green spaces in different regions in addition with a view to obtain the problems and achieve the objectives for this purpose.

RESOURCES

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URL-1: <http://www.tschumi.com/projects/3/>

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Mapping the Space Between

Rich Keville

Within the discipline of art therapy, the 'space between' often intense, time compressed therapist-client sessions is considered important and highly useful. Reflections and realisations are consciously integrated through engagement with the therapeutic process using expressive modalities and methods with the ultimate aim of mapping therapy experiences into daily life to affect an awareness of progression and change.

TEXT the word that represents and signifies all written words, is defined by one of the more curious semantic qualities as being autological, meaning it expresses a property that it denotes. Since I first began experimenting with TEXT as a word and moniker in 2015, it has evolved to function as an aesthetic and conceptual semantic device I often use in public space art projects and interventions.

Sensing the analogous nature of how time operates in conference settings where massive amounts of information are received and processed by participants, Mapping The Space Between was phase one of this experimentation, investigating how break times - the spaces between - SAUC conference presentations could be utilised to reflect upon, express and map my own and participant ideas and realisations generated through the experience of engaging with conference themes using non-verbal multi-modal methods.

TEXT, the word, and fragments of it, presented an aesthetic anchor to these experimentations and manifest as outcomes in both the conference context and public context.

The works produced spanned two distinct phases focused on the art therapy approach of 'aesthetic-expressive' (Lett, 2011) representation, which premises non-verbal creative expression of content, held both consciously and unconsciously, through visual modes. In phase one, this approach was adapted to encourage not only writing and illustration, but visual methods associated with graffiti and street art practices as we "mapped the space between" the conference proceedings over three days.

The textual layering of intersubjective dialogue over this period saw cardboard cubes simulate an urban wall inscribed with observations, questions and provocations that responded to conference presentations and broader socio-political themes, mixed with artistic expression in the form of statements, symbols, stickers and tags.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.

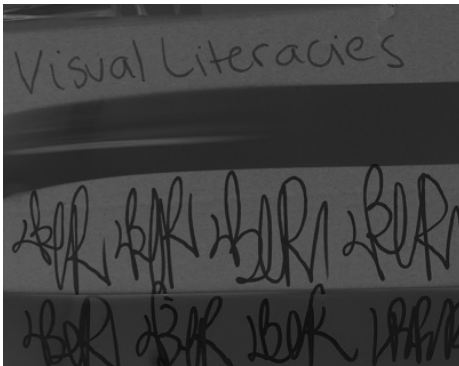


Figure 4.

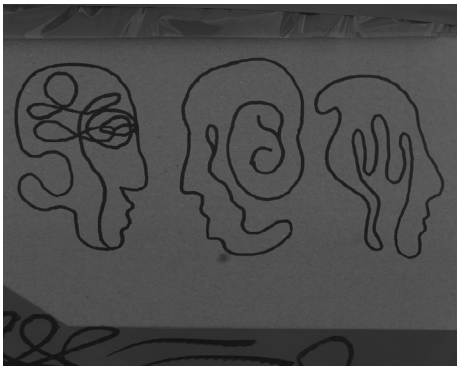


Figure 5.



Figure 6.

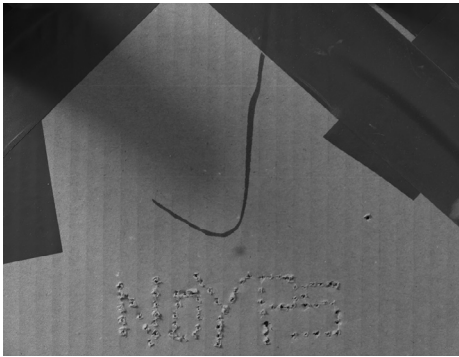


Figure 7.



Figure 8.

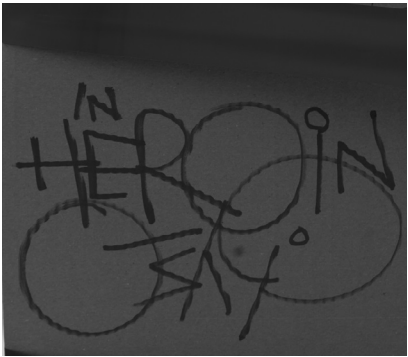


Figure 9.

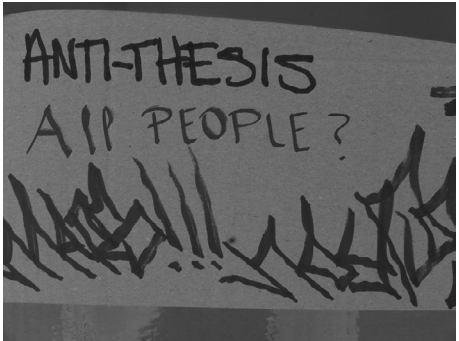


Figure 10.

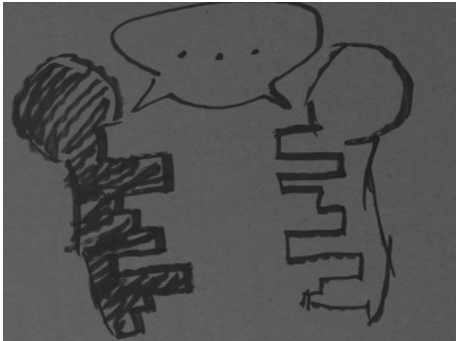


Figure 11.

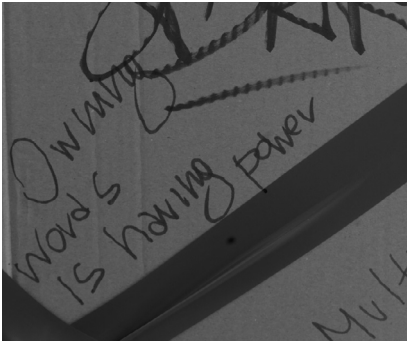


Figure 12.

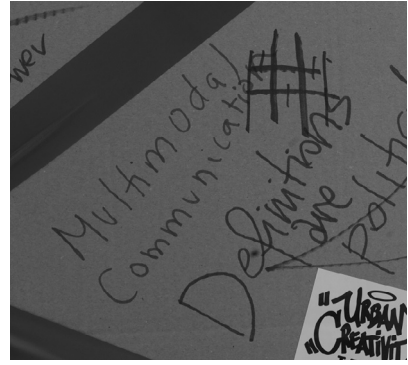
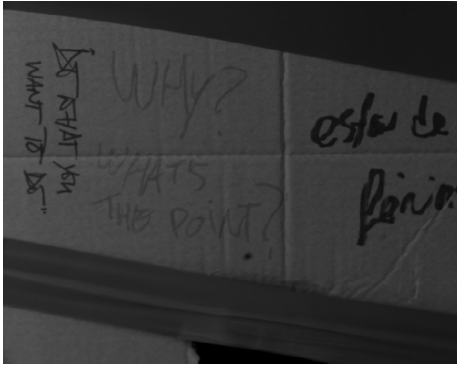
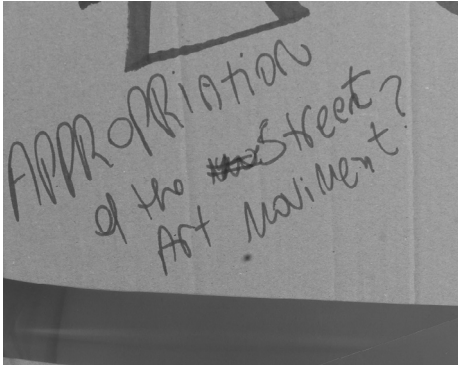




Figure 17.



Figure 16.



Figure 18.



Figure 19.



Figure 20.

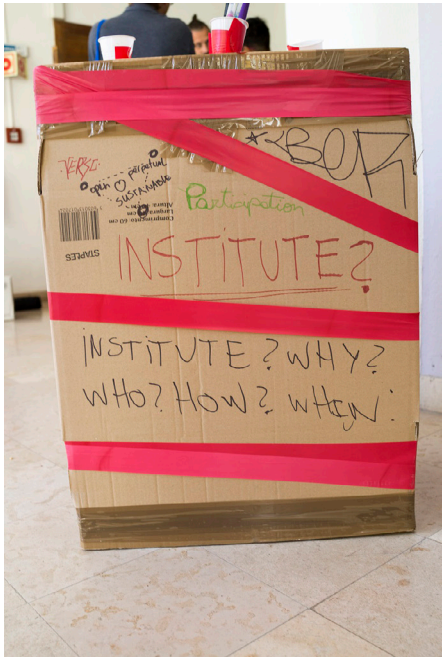


Figure 21.

Phase two included unsanctioned urban interventions executed in Lisbon, Porto and Praia de Valadares over a two-week period. These works elaborated upon the use of visual modes of expression whilst connecting to a more long-term experimentation with the word TEXT.

A TEXT mural created in Lisbon mapped participant responses collected from the SAUC conference in phase one, with an emphasis on experimenting with the reconfiguration, displacement and reduction of language, represented as textual forms. For this work, TEXT framed and juxtaposed the personalised, calligraphic nature of the writing painted inside its boundary.



Figure 22.



Figure 23.



Figure 24.

In Lisbon, Porto and Praia de Valadares, recycled found materials and glow in the dark vinyl tape were used to experiment with the form and function of TEXT; how, like a graffiti tag, it can disrupt the order of signs and objects located in close proximity and respond to and accentuate spatial and architectural elements in ways that encourage curiosity and interaction with the location of encounter.



Figure 25.



Figure 26.



Figure 27.



Figure 28.



Figure 29.



Figure 30.



Figure 31.



Figure 32.

The development and dominance of verbal language as the principal means of communicating is at times limiting. Visual expression more easily allows for the externalization of ideas so that they may then be considered and integrated into thinking. Albeit driven by radically different socio-political motivations and histories, and generally facilitated in contexts that are diametrically opposed, there exists an intriguing and under-explored relational confluence between expression, visuality and perception in the discipline of art therapy and in urban art practices, such as graffiti, street art and muralism.

Mapping The Space Between and related TEXT experiments represent an ongoing inquiry into liminality and non-verbal creative expression that seeks to depart from the notion of the art product or final outcome serving as the primary locus of value. Instead, arts' usefulness and function are articulated in the creative methods used to encode inner and outer experience, enabling a more nuanced sense and critical awareness of the world, as it is encountered in everyday life.

Images

Figure 1 – 21: MAPPING THE SPACE BETWEEN project images from SAUC conference.

Materials: cardboard; various types of electrical and packing tape; markers and plastic cups.

Lisbon, Portugal, 2019.

Photographs by Rich Keville, except figure 19, 20 and 21 by Malcolm Jacobson.

Figure 22 - 24: TEXT mural.

Materials: ink; spray bottle; markers; tape; 750ml silver chrome spray can and a 750ml pressurized can of 'Hauser' gap filling expanding foam.

Lisbon, Portugal, 2019.

Photograph by Rich Keville. Figure 23 and 24 by Malcolm Jacobson.

Figure 25: TEXT intervention.

Materials: found statue of Jesus; wooden cabinets and fragments; netting; string; electrical insulators and cable; marble; garden flowers and straw.

Praia de Valadares, Portugal, 2019.

Photograph by Rich Keville.

Figure 26: X MARKS THE SPOT intervention.

Materials: found electrical cable and electrical cable insulation.

Lisbon, Portugal, 2019.

Photograph by Rich Keville.

Figure 27 – 28: protoTEXT #1.

Materials: glow in the dark vinyl tape and glue.

Lisbon, Portugal, 2019.

Photographs by Rich Keville.

Figure 29 – 30: protoTEXT #2.

Materials: glow in the dark vinyl tape and glue.

Porto, Portugal, 2019.

Photographs by Rich Keville.

Figure 31 – 32: protoTEXT #3.

Materials: glow in the dark vinyl tape and glue.

Porto, Portugal, 2019.

Photographs by Rich Keville.

Reference

Lett, W. (2011) *An inquiry into making sense of our lives*. Melbourne: Rebus Press.

Rich Keville specialises in working creatively with text. Paint, ink, brush and roller are his primary creative vehicles: Phenomenology and Narrative the theoretical vantage points. Preferring the urban environment to that of the gallery, he has marked and painted his way across the streets, train lines, abandoned buildings and in community settings throughout Australia, Asia and Europe. His research interests and art projects in public space often engage themes focussed on environmental conservation, visual literacy and the aesthetics of written language using participatory and action research techniques. He has trained in art therapy methods at the Melbourne Institute of Experiential and Creative Art Therapy (MIECAT), graduating with a Diploma in 2012 and in 2018 he received his MA degree in Community Practice from Melbourne University. Rich lives and works in Melbourne, Australia. Details about his practice can be found at www.textura-arts.com.au.



As travelers come and go worldwide, many leave marks in a silent exchange, communicating that I was here, I exist. They embrace and taunt each other over time and distance, sharing in-jokes, and making rude gestures against surveillance and control. Marks about seeking community, personal bests, creating a customized, personalized experience of neighborhoods. This is ours. You are welcome. Some people and some experiences are still free.

Unsurprisingly, some graffiti and experience design professionals connect, emerge, cross over, and enhance the many disciplines in each. Artists bring graffiti writing and design skills to the digital, sculptural, and architectural worlds. Experience designers document, facilitate, and embrace graffiti culture and experience in their own lives and work, recognizing the importance of people owning, co-creating, and humanizing the artifacts and environments we share.

With this journal, we hope to illuminate some of the compelling work being done at these intersections of people, concerns, design, research, media, environments, liberty, trespass, and aesthetics.

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