

Urban Interventions, Graffiti & Public Sculpture

Course contact hours: 45

Recommended credits: 6 ECTS – 3 US credits

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Urban public spaces take a multitude of forms, and serve a wide variety of purposes. Due to privatisation, today's lack of public spaces leaves less room for a truly public discourse.

In the first part of the course, we will define what public space is, who has access to it, and how it is used. We will not only consider what the economic value of a public space is in our cities, but also view it from a social perspective. We will discuss how art can be used to renegotiate the use of public spheres as a platform for a multitude of voices that encourages democracy. We will also concentrate on the different processes in which the legal practice of Public Sculpture is commissioned for short and long term purposes in public spaces as well as private spaces that are for the public's use.

In the second part of the course we will learn about the less legal forms of Art practices and interventions that also contribute to the many layers that make up our cities: Graffiti, Post-graffiti, and Street Art. Graffiti is often associated with decay and communities out of control. In some cities it is legal, within limits, and valued as a social expression. Street art is often commissioned and sanctioned and has a firm place in many communities. It also can be an important form of "outsider" expression. We will look at examples of graffiti and street art that have had beneficial influences on communities and which have served as propellants of expression and dialogue. Where are they located? Can they be nurtured without undermining their essential outsider qualities?

Through a series of seminars students will develop an understanding of Street Art from the sixties to current times with references to the United States and Europe. The course combines theoretical and practical sessions, using Barcelona as a case study. Field trips are organised to view and practice Graffiti and Street art. This course will change the way you experience and interact with your home city and other cities you may visit in the future.

REQUIREMENTS

- Fluent English
- Field trips and Artistic projects are required components of the course in which students are expected to pay a small fee for the materials supplied to them in class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will learn visual ethnography, design analysis, and visual theory skills to critically analyse public art practices in urban spaces.
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of contemporary wall writing phenomena, from Graffiti to Street art and Muralism, and acquire an adequate language to evaluate their social, political and artistic standing.

- Describe components of prevalent public art genres and evaluate their effectiveness as mechanisms for community building.
- Understand and explore the function of and relationships between the artist - artwork - world – audience.
- Students recognise and appreciate the diligent labour involved in creating artworks of their own.
- Analyse information and research material from different sources so as to formulate critical and informed arguments through a process of reflection and evaluation.
- Recognition that art criticism and art history construct meanings.
- Demonstrate and use independent, critical thinking in discussions on art orally and in writing.

CONTENT

Public Space

- Defining Public Space
- What makes for good Public Space?
- How do citizens benefit from Public Spaces?
- The Privatisation of Public Space: how private interests take over public space.
- Students present on their Urban walk observations of a Barcelona neighbourhood.

Public Sculpture

- Legal forms of Public Art – Art as everyday experience
- What is Public Sculpture?
- Site-specificity
- Public Art Controversies

Graffiti, Post-graffiti & Street Art

- Street art from the sixties to the eighties: USA & Europe
- Street Art in the nineties
- Understanding the difference between Graffiti and Street Art
- Culture Jamming as critical public pedagogy
- Activism
- Street Art from 2000- 2010: the case of Barcelona
- Students develop their own Tag, Stencil, Wheatpaste or sticker

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Classes will be conducted in seminar format, and will include various activities, group work, discussion, visits, etc., which involve student participation. Historical context and artistic elements pertinent to the topics discussed will be taught in class. Reading material will be provided to students, which can be accessed virtually and is fundamental to achieving a greater understanding of the subject.

Practical Art projects will commence in class with the instructions and encouragement of the teacher. Students will continue to develop their artistic work outside class time. Ongoing feedback from the teacher is available throughout the artistic process. Student's works will be created on legal walls in Barcelona. A professional street artist in collaboration with the teacher will guide students in developing their technical skills.

Students own interest in developing their artistic perspectives is encouraged in all class work, creative projects and presentations. Assignments and presentations are set throughout the course. Attendance is not compulsory but is crucial to attain a satisfactory grade. Absences without justification will affect the final grade.

GRADING

Class Presentations 10%

Mid-term Project 20%

Artistic Projects 20%

Final Presentation/Paper 30%

Class Participation 20%

BIBLIOGRAPHY

During the course, selected academic articles will be provided virtually to students as essential reading material that complement the topics covered throughout the course.

REQUIRED READING

Finkelpearl, Tom. (2000) *Dialogues in Public Art*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press

Miles Malcolm, (1997) *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures*, Routledge

Young Allison, (2014) *Street Art, Public City: Law, Crime and the Urban Imagination*, Routledge

Novy Dumar, (2015) *What Do One Million Ja Tags Signify?*, Possible Books

RECOMMENDED READING

Gehl Jan, (1971) *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*, Danish Architectural Press

Gehl Jan & Gemzoe Lars, (2001) *New City Spaces, Strategies and Projects*, Danish Architectural Press

Knight Krause Cher, (2008) *Public Art: Theory, Practice & Populism*, Wiley-Blackwell

Low Setha & Smith Neil, (2005) *The Politics of Public Space*, Routledge

Mitchell Don, (2003) *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the fight for Public Space*, The Guilford Press

Moure Gloria, (1994) *Urban Configurations*, Ediciones Poligrafia SA-Barcelona

Berti Babriela, (2009) *Pioneros del Graffiti en España*, Universitat Politècnica de Valencia

Exhibition Catalogue Curated by Rubio María Oliva, (2008) *Graffiti-Brassai*, Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid

Seine Harriet, (2014) *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context & Controversy*, Smithsonian Institution

Knight Krause Cher & Seine Harriet, (2018) *Museums and Public Art?*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Mailer Norman, Naar J & Kurlansky M (1974) *The Faith of Graffiti*, Icon It , New York (2009)

Chalfant Henry & Prigoff James, (1987) *Spraycan Art*, New York

Cooper Martha & Chalfant Henry, (1984) *Subway Art*, New York

Castelman Craig, (1994) *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*, The MIT Press

Austin Joe, (2001) *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City* (New York)

Dickens Luke, "*Finders Keepers*": *Performing the Street, the Gallery and the Spaces In-between*, *Liminalities*, iv/1 (2002)
<http://liminalities.net/4-1/finderskeepers.pdf>

Manco Tristan, (2020) *The Stencil Graffiti Handbook*, Thames and Hudson Ltd

Macdonald Nancy, (2001) *The Graffiti Subculture: Youth, Masculinity, and Identity in London and New York*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Klanten Robert & Hübner Matthias, (2010) *Urban Interventions: Personal Projects in Public Spaces, Gestalten*, Berlin

Schacter Rafael, (2013) *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*, Yale University Press, New Haven

Young Allison, (2014) *Street Art World*, Reaktion Books

Abarca Javier & Chambers Thomas, (2018) *Punk Graffiti Archives: Madrid*, Urbanario – Unlock Book Fair

MacDowall Lachlan, (2019) *Instafame*, Intellect, Bristol, UK / Chicago, USA

Schacter Rafael, (2019) *Colossus: Street Art Europe*, Carpet Bombing Culture

Debord Guy, (1967) *The Society of the Spectacle*, Rebel Press, London

Lasn Kalle, (1999) *Culture Jam: The Uncooling of America*, Eagle Brook

Klein Naomi, (2000) *No Logo*, Picador

Bichlbaum Andy, Bonanno Mike & Spunkmeyer Bob (2004) *The Yes Men: The True Story of the End of the World Trade Organization*, The Disinformation Company

Coyer Kate, Downmunt & Fountain Alan, (2007) *The Alternate Media Handbook*, Routledge

Heath Joseph & Potter Andrew, (2010) *The Rebel Sell: Why the Culture can't be Jammed*

Delaure Marilyn, (2017) *Culture Jamming: Activism and the Art of Cultural Resistance*, New York University Press

Some Films

Style Wars (dir. Tony Silver, 1984)

Wild Style (dir. Charlie Ahearn, 1983)

Pintar i Córrer (Catalan Graffiti Documentary, TVE3, 1991, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ns2RxURk4kg>)

Exit Through the Gift Shop (dir. Banksy, 2010)

Graffiti Wars (dir. Jane Preston, 2011)

Banksy Does New York (dir. Chris Mourkarbel, 2014)

Imagining a Decade of Fire: The True Story of the South Bronx (dir. Vivian Vasquez, 2019)