

«GHETTO ART : THOUSAND VOICES IN THE CITY»

The graffiti subculture is a system of action that renegotiates the social significance of public space.

Certainly, the city is a structured space that mirrors social, economic and cultural forces in its organization and architecture.

Writing on the walls is the oldest way for human expression.

A means for expression (pictorial) that preceded language in primitive times re-emerged in New York's 1960s and spread globally as an artistic and political form of graffiti. Moreover, the graffiti subculture suggests that the city is either a no-man's land or everyone's territory.

In fact, graffiti deliberately separates itself from the dominant culture and creates an inaccessible discourse by transforming the language and writing through unreadable messages. Graffiti's 'unreadability' is partly due to the 'redesigning' of the alphabet, this is the different style of letters and colours. This design should be considered as a message in itself.

Graffiti has the ability to transform walls of protection/exclusion into walls of 'fame'. Moreover, trains constitute a special category in this subculture. The writers' names, identities and messages acquire recognition within the city. However, a writer needs an audience.

Accordingly, some sectors considered graffiti as a deviant and uncivil practice that obstructed the social order. Thus, some structures may feel threatened¹ by the ideology of this activity and the need to clean the walls means to leave the walls with no messages and 'cleanliness' in this case symbolises the annihilation of an alternative discourse. Miserably, a blank space denotes the absence of debate or the expurgation of facts.



Adapted from : <http://graffiti.org/faq/2006>

1 threaten : menacé

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