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DEVELOPMENT OF STREET ART  
IN AMERICA SINCE 2000

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Prohlašuji, že jsem svou diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně  
s využitím uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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## Abstract

The bachelor thesis focuses on the occurrence of street art in the United States of America in the 21st century. The primary terms are introduced as well as the progress in the evolution of this kind of art, since its birth up to newly formed production. The 21<sup>st</sup> century street art is divided into sections according to the city where it appears. In the United States, there are three main cities connected with street art – New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. The work also deals with the issues of protest and politics emphasized via street art and describes the aims of the artists.

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## 1 Introduction

There are circa 7,4 billion people living in the world. According to me, in every person, there is a part of an artist. Every person is unique and sees the world in a special way and that is the connection with street art and the answer to the question, why is my attention going to focus on this particular topic. Street art is, indeed, an extensive concept and it is possible to imagine a wide range of art under this term. What connects these forms of art might be, for example, the reaction of a bystander. A first look at a good piece of street art, for example graffiti, wakes up feelings. It can be surprising, amusing or also disconcerting. Street art is not only a kind of art, but it should be also perceived as part of a culture and cultural heritage. It touches on the themes of policy, life standards, people's feelings and finally, it demonstrates today's life. The difficulty might be seen in a thin border between uncommissioned urban art and a new form of cultural heritage.

The first part of this bachelor thesis introduces street art and its principles and describes distinctive features of street art and graffiti and urban art. The variety of techniques, from the more familiar stickers or stencils to the newly created art forms, such as installations, mosaics or video projections, are introduced together with their descriptions and demonstrations.

The second part focuses on the historical development of street art, since its modern beginnings in the 1960's up to the 21st century. The main artists of these times with their major artworks are not omitted and also the background of their work is included.

The last part of the work is aimed at development through the 21st century. Techniques such as clean-tagging, crocheting, origami works, and many others are included and described alongside artists that proclaimed them. The chapter is divided according to the three cities that are affected the most by street art and are worldwide famous for this kind of art. The emphasis is also set on the purposes and reasons of the acts which are presented in the last subchapter, called 'Street art as a form of protest'.

The bachelor thesis has the intention to introduce the development of this kind of art and its modern branches. Primarily, it is oriented to street art production, although it is impossible to omit graffiti and the superior term to graffiti and street art – urban art, from the work, as they went hand in hand in their growth and they also frequently pervade each other. Despite their shared history, it is necessary to differentiate between street art and

graffiti. Graffiti and street art have in common their illegality. Street art is much more communicative and embraces also the public, whereas graffiti community is considered much more secluded. Street art uses the public space primarily to express an opinion and point of view of the author. Also, political and social issues are very commonly presented throughout street art.

Because of the choice of a relatively new and unconventional topic, there is a lack of specialized literature accessible. Thus, the work is also based on a wide range of internet sources, such as internet magazines specialized on the topic of street art, other magazines, academic journals and official web pages of the artists.

## 2 Definition of street art

Defining the exact phenomenon of street art appears to be very complicated. At first, there is not a clear delimitation what street art might be and, secondly, the term tries to cover a huge diversity of artists all over the world with a variety of techniques. Every new article or book about street art defines it differently. Lewisohn explains that street art and graffiti are not the same. Even graffiti and graffiti writing are divided. While graffiti is, according to Lewisohn a “form of unofficial, unsanctioned application of a medium onto surface”<sup>1</sup>, graffiti writing is more connected with hip hop culture and in general it is only about a signature of the author – ‘tag’. Street art is introduced as a sub-genre of graffiti writing. However, Lewisohn admits that the genres do blur, and identification might be difficult because graffiti writing goes together with street art. For aesthetic reasons, stencils or fly-posted works are also in proximity to graffiti, which can improve the visage of the creation. Although the two terms might coexist on the same wall, each one may speak to a different audience. While street art can be understood by everyone, graffiti writers are mostly a closed community with their own language and are not interested in being understood by anyone.<sup>2</sup> Graffiti and street art can also be distinguished by the emplacement. Whereas graffiti is mostly created on the peripheries of the cities, highway bridges or trains and is based on writing, street art is actually connected with the streets in the form of painting.

In general, street art can be understood as a complicated interaction between an artist and his surrounding, typically of urban type, which is also an exhibition area of their work.<sup>3</sup> It comprises theatre, musical and other performances and living sculptures as well.<sup>4</sup> Nowadays this term presents mostly art production of stickers, stencils (these terms will be explained in subchapter 2.1), posters, installations, video projections and other artistic techniques which are connected by the fact that they are accomplished mostly illegally and without demanding a fee.

There are also different terms describing street art, for instance urban art or street deco<sup>5</sup>, which should indicate the decorative character of street art production or a close

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<sup>1</sup> LEWISOHN, Cedar. *STREET ART: The Graffiti revolution*, 2008, p. 15

<sup>2</sup> LEWISOHN, Cedar. *STREET ART: The Graffiti revolution*, 2008, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> WACŁAWEK, Anna. *Graffiti and street art*, 2011, p. 96–98.

<sup>4</sup> SIEGL, Norbert. Definition des Begriffs Street-Art.

<sup>5</sup> WOHLMUTH, Radek. Street art v Česku žije a má se xvětu, 2008, p. 1.



relation with urban areas. In consideration is also the term post-graffiti which is quite common in magazines or other media. This word was used for the first time in 1983 and according to Dolores Neumann, it symbolized every graffiti made on canvas.<sup>6</sup> Nowadays, this term is used more likely to emphasize the ending of one period, which is, according to some artists, not appropriate. It may symbolize that graffiti is dead, which is not true. The graffiti writer Onema from Cambridge *OMG Crew* also disagrees with naming post-graffiti and prefers Urban Art. He assumes that the word *graffiti* points out some people's thought that it is "just something that messes up their „pretty” architecture."<sup>7</sup>

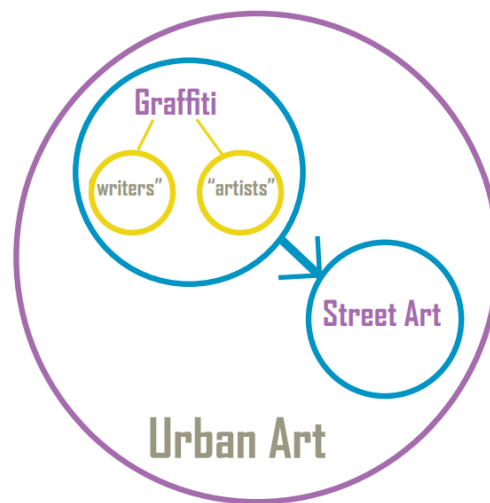


Figure 1 - Diagram of relationship between graffiti and street art

Lindsay Bates states that the term of urban art has been widely opposed, but then it increased in cultural acceptance, so it shouldn't be omitted.<sup>8</sup> Generally, because of an expansion of the term street art through all the world, most of art critics and art historians prefer street art as the main name.

Sondra Bacharach on the other hand, completely separates terms of street art, graffiti and urban art. In her conception, street artists show a different way of experiencing the territory around us and they are also trying to change the space from boring, bleak and impersonal environment that is unrelated to one's world into the public realm as one that is itself worthy of inhabiting, experiencing and enjoying. Graffiti, on the other hand, is called 'mere' graffiti, often connected with urban blight. Public art has its main difference

<sup>6</sup> WACŁAWEK, Anna. *Graffiti and street art*, 2011, p. 59–60.

<sup>7</sup> What The Hell Do We Call This Thing? .... More Responses, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> BATES, Lindsay. *Bombing, Tagging, Writing: An Analysis of the Significance of Graffiti and Street Art*, 2014.

from street art in sponsoring, where public art is supported by government agencies, while street art is not.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.1 The variety of techniques

Street art and its techniques do not focus only on typography. It is far more sophisticated. In basic, there are no rules saying what an artist can or cannot do. Fantasy and invention of every person play a big role. Mostly, artists are trying to send a message through a joke, political opinion, or poetry. The writer Key tries to describe the problematics subsequently:

There is no pattern for graffiti which can be constituted into market economy. Writers are doing their stuff in the shadow of society and without any claim to reward. Graffiti is classical technique of spraying the inscription on the wall – street art is everything else. There are more used senses, marks and links. It is more playful and more understandable for the general public. It can have a variety of forms, from templates or stickers through 3D objects, installations on the streets to illegal planting of the trees.<sup>10</sup>

### 2.1.1 Stickers

At its beginnings, there were mostly unobtrusive pictures drafted on self-adhesive labels. Successively promotional stickers and bigger posters were created. Nowadays, the authors make their own stickers and are also able to print them on their own. The advantage is that the author can prepare the product sooner, so it takes less time and is not so hazardous. The first draft is usually made by hand which is subsequently converted to the computer and then printed. As for the size, the works are usually of minor size, maximally of 10 cm. Another type of stickers is rather trickier. It concerns usage of colorful self-adhesive foils that are cut or carved by hand. It is more arduous but its durability and resistance against weather conditions are incomparably better. Stickers are considered to be the simplest form of street art, in addition to its severity of production and its placement in the city. Because of these benefits, they appear to be the most widespread one.

### 2.1.2 Wheatpasting

Wheatpasting, also called postering, is more difficult, because of its pasting. Wheatpasted posters are glued the same way as classic posters, by starch glue. One of the best-known

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<sup>9</sup> BACHARACH, Sonda. *Street Art and Consent*, 2015, p. 481 - 485.

<sup>10</sup> OVERSTREET, Martina. *In graffiti we trust*, 2006, p. 214.

artists of this artistic stream is Morley. His work embraces a man writing miscellaneous statements. Since 2011, his works have also been published under the protection of the art businessman Steve Lazarides.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.1.3 Stencils

Stencilling is a technique of spraying with usage of templates. It was originally developed by Xavier Prou in Naples, however, it was expanded in the 90's especially thanks to Banksy. Stencils are used particularly for the creation of characters such as figures and portraits. Another artist Blek Le Rat, later known as the father of stencil graffiti, started with a small motif of a rat and later evolved it into figures of life-size. His works show themes of social consciousness. In the 20th century, artists started producing images of homeless people to raise awareness of the global problem.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.1.4 Mosaics

Mosaic is a piece of art made from small pieces of colored glass, stone or other materials. This kind of street art doesn't damage or ruin anything, on the other hand, it takes a long time to make some design of it. This technique was expressively extended by French artist Invader and his adaptation of characters from Japanese video game Space Invaders from 1978. It is created in simple, 2D graphics made from small squares. The locations for mosaics are not random. They are observed and precisely studied and chosen for their visibility and connection between the place and meaning of the work.<sup>13</sup>

### 2.1.5 Murals

As a definition from Cambridge dictionary says, a mural is a large picture that has been painted on the wall of a room or building.<sup>14</sup> Since prehistoric times, murals have always been around as a kind of relevant illustration of life. The line goes from ancient cave paintings to the street art murals of today. Over the time, murals appeared in the interiors and exteriors of many palaces, temples, tombs, libraries and museums or churches. More currently they were spread onto the streets, but their meaning and purpose are still observed. They intend to show a picture of society. Nowadays, they represent a tool for freedom of expression and a social activism and play a substantial role in the relation

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<sup>11</sup> GANZ, Nicholas a Tristan MANCO, ed. *Graffiti world: street art from five continents*, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Graffiti history - 10 important moments: Blek-le-rat & stencils.

<sup>13</sup> COWICK, Carmen. *Preserving Street Art: Uncovering the Challenges and Obstacles*, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Mural. Cambridge Dictionary.

between art and politics. Murals also have other purposes, such as advertising or simply the pleasure of the eyes. In connection with urban art, murals are used for promotional campaigns and for that, big brands often participate with world-famous street or graffiti artists, such as Keith Haring, Shepard Fairey, Faile and many others.<sup>15</sup>

#### 2.1.6 Installations

Street installations are another form of street art which is not made on walls but uses three-dimensional objects. The important aspect of installations is the choice of a place. Installations can stand alone or may be also fixed to a wall. Street art installations may merge various techniques. An example can be a stencilled scene of a child pulling a wagon, created by the artist Snyder. The actual wagon part is included and attached to the wall.<sup>16</sup> Paige Smith uses different materials to fill out the cracks in the walls. Another installation in San Francisco is made up of laser-cut plastic, arranged to look like stitching with a sign 'Home street home'. It points at raising awareness of the rising number of homeless and is a reminder that for some people, the cement is a bed and streets are home.<sup>17</sup>



*Figure 2 Home street home installation in San Francisco*

#### 2.1.7 Video projection and video mapping

With the improvement and arrival of new technologies and new ways of communication, also view on art and artistic expression has rapidly changed. As the father of video art has often been called the Korean-American artist Nam June Paik (1932 – 2006) for his filming Pope Paul IV and his parade in New York City in 1965. Today, video art has many forms – projections, performances with TV sets, online streams and the most common form of video art today, installations. An installation could be seen at galleries or museums, but

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<sup>15</sup> Mural. The History and The Meaning.

<sup>16</sup> COWICK, Carmen. Preserving Street Art: Uncovering the Challenges and Obstacles, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Street Installations.

more often, it is a part of some wider work, connected with design, sculpture, or architecture.<sup>18</sup> Video mapping is a kind of audio-visual art that creates a projection outside or inside. The projection can be done on any object and a projector literally maps the object that the art is projected on. By this way, the used objects are enlivening in front of the audience.

## 2.2 Connection with hip-hop subculture

Hip hop culture has its beginnings, equally as street art, in the 1970's in Bronx. There were mostly Afro-Americans who were spreading this music style hand in hand with a new, specific, dance style called breakdance. The new styles depict highly dynamical self-expressions of young people, the atmosphere and creativity. It is the rhythm, dynamics and tension that are found in street art, street dance or street music. It is a connected culture and it should be seen also as a lifestyle. Writers are often influenced by the music they listen to and, on the other hand, the music can describe the street art lifestyle.<sup>19</sup> Throughout the 1980's, graffiti looked to the media hand in hand with the rap videos and soon it was incorporated to a group of "four elements" – hip hop, break dancing, rap and DJing. At this time, graffiti appeared in the media, via the magazines or movies. Much of this lifestyle is captured in Charlie Ahearn's film *Wild Style* (1983). The connection of graffiti and hip hop created a phenomenon which quickly expanded throughout the world.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Video Art Today - Where Are We Now?: The Beginnings, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> SMOLÍK, Josef. *Subkultury mládeže: uvedení do problematiky*, 2010.

<sup>20</sup> LEWISOHN, Cedar. *STREET ART: The Graffiti revolution*, p. 12.

### 3 The history of street art and graffiti

When defining the word graffiti, which is one of the earliest expressions of street art, we may find that it means “scratched or written public marking”<sup>21</sup> and it should be considered as the first example of human art – since prehistoric times. There were pictures of animals, haunts or battles people fought, painted on the walls of caves. It provided a view of people’s everyday lives, which was, for the time being, its only function. Inscriptions in public space were already known in Classical civilization. Mostly, names of regents, simple paintings, vulgarisms, or even electoral slogans were written on the walls of houses. It was not about art, but it ought to convey the thoughts, which is still the connector with nowadays street art.<sup>22</sup>

In its beginnings, graffiti was understood as vandalism that should be exterminated. On the other hand, it was the voice of the people. Gang members left there their territorial roll calls, children signed their names on the street corners or playground walls. Also, politics affected an appeal of the walls and lovers proclaimed their love. The positive attention appeared by the time of the 1960’s with artists such as Keith Haring or Basquiat. Graffiti began to be something more than crime and vandalism. It began to have its own values. Another name well-known in connection to the beginnings of modern graffiti in the 1960’s is the Philadelphian writer named Cornbread. Then it appeared in New York where the beginnings were in the character of „nicknames“, which consisted usually from a nickname and the author’s street number, for example Tracy 168, Taki 183 and Stan 153. That attribute evolved and through the time can be seen not only simple marker sketches but also a more elaborated and expressive style of lettering, known as “wildstyle“, which is large and highly coloured. It developed to visually complex calligraphic illustrations made with spray cans. The most tempting place for conveying complaints or, simply, thoughts appeared to be public transportation system and the New York subway in particular.<sup>23</sup> Graffiti artists liked its mobility, so a huge number of observers could admire the “masterpieces”. By the 1970’s, entire subway cars were covered with the paint<sup>24</sup> and the spray can art boom started to materialize with the leading members of the New York scene, such as Futura 2000 and Dondi White. The main desire

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<sup>21</sup> RODRIGUEZ-BONILLA, Sarah. *Graffiti Generations of the 20th Century*, 2014, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> GANZ, Nicholas a Tristan MANCO, ed. *Graffiti world: street art from five continents*, 2004, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> FARTHING, Stephen a Richard CORK. *Art: the whole story*, 2010, p. 552.

<sup>24</sup> GASTMAN, Roger a Caleb NEELON. *The history of American graffiti*, 2010, p. 48.

was for their art to be seen, so they were searching for the most lucrative places. The writer Soul's specializations were, for example, the upper floors of skyscrapers, so a common person should get the impression that Soul I can fly.<sup>25</sup> In 1971 *The New York Times* magazine came out with an interview with an unknown artist. That was the birth of a celebrity and ideal for his followers. His name was Taki 183. We cannot say that he was the one who started with this phenomenon, however, he was the one who "tagged" the whole city which could not be overlooked anymore.<sup>26</sup> The first followers of Taki 183 were mostly teenagers with low chance of getting a job. One of the writers, PASTA ONER, describes that by searching for a suitable nickname, writers were also finding themselves and their place in social and personal life.<sup>27</sup> The first writers were predominately black people from neighbourhoods such as Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens or Harlem, but this lifestyle was quickly expanded among middle and upper-class teenagers. Nowadays there is no pattern for street artists.

Together with the spread of the graffiti in New York, it looks almost like a competition. There is a lot of creations and it appears to be hard to come with something new. The style goes through big changes. The sizing is bigger, there are experiments with the thickness of the fonts, the finding of a free space is more difficult.<sup>28</sup> The influential moment came with the writer Super Cool, who in 1972 created the first colourful piece which became a sensation. Another big moment appeared in connection with 3D piece by the writer Pistol I. The whole city was impressed by this and everyone wanted to create something similar.

In a surprisingly short period, graffiti grew from simple nicknames and marker sketches to beautiful colourful murals made mostly by children under ages of eighteen. Their references were comic books or album covers, but mostly they took inspiration from their lives. Children from Bronx had hard lives and put their problems in the graffiti. They risked imprisonment or physical injury to create art, which we admire nowadays. For many of the New York children, graffiti was the most attractive and fascinating thing.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> CASTLEMAN, Craig. *Getting up: subway graffiti in New York*, 1982, p. 53.

<sup>26</sup> LEWISOHN, Cedar. *STREET ART: The Graffiti revolution*, 2008, p. 70.

<sup>27</sup> PASTA ONER, interview, 2013.

<sup>28</sup> LEWISOHN, Cedar. *STREET ART: The Graffiti revolution*, 2008, p. 20.

<sup>29</sup> GASTMAN, Roger a Caleb NEELON. *The history of American graffiti*, 2010, p. 23.

It was a fantasy as a little kid watching these giant names go by – I wanted to write my name big!<sup>30</sup>

As the sizing got bigger, the rule, saying that they can paint only in free areas, slightly disappeared, and the number of so-called Wholetrains have increased. These pieces of art are simply placed all over the train and they caused a great reaction all over New York. By this time, graffiti becomes a full-fledged subculture with its own, new and bright, stars.

The concept of street art is dated to the 1980's and it indicates any form of art in public space.<sup>31</sup> This form had much easier conditions of creation, people were already accustomed to seeing the colours and signs at the streets. At the end of the 1980's, a campaign against New York graffiti was initiated, which finally kept the underground relatively clean. On the other hand, a more aggressive and creative style was born at the background.<sup>32</sup> Artists came up with the sticker with the "Hello, name is" inscription and they wrote their tags there. This moment is considered as a connector between graffiti and street art. As was mentioned earlier, at the time of the 1980's, graffiti came in hand with hip-hop scene which helped spread the style throughout the world. Artists such as Fab 5 Freddy or Jean-Michael Basquiat appeared in hip hop videos and graffiti scene became more popular throughout the media. Similarly to hip hop, punk also found a connection with graffiti. The main idea was to spread messages with, for instance, anti-war, anarchist, feminist and anti-consumerist meaning.<sup>33</sup>

By the end of the 1970's, galleries started to recognise graffiti as a valid genre, so some artists started to display their works also in the galleries, including Basquiat, Haring or Hambleton. All of it started in 1972 with a student of sociology, Hugo Martinez, who set up a new organization, United Graffiti Artists (UGA), consisting of graffiti writers and all together they started something new. Martinez also established Razor Gallery as the first graffiti gallery in New York. The opening of galleries Colab and Fashion Moda came soon after and in 1980 those galleries organized the first isolated exhibition of graffiti in New York with the title "Times Square Show". This exhibition was special due to its prestigious locality and opening hours. The exhibition was open 24 hours per day.

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<sup>30</sup> GASTMAN, Roger a Caleb NEELON. *The history of American graffiti*, 2010, p.70.

<sup>31</sup> KLEIN, Radovan. *Kultúrna identita príslušníka subkultúry graffiti*.

<sup>32</sup> LEWISOHN, Cedar. *STREET ART: The Graffiti revolution*, 2008.

<sup>33</sup> 20th Century Graffiti - The Rise of Graffiti Art: Hip-Hop, Punk & Graffiti.



Writers began to be officially acknowledged and got their first official and paid orders. Many of the graffiti artists spend some time in galleries, although this was not for long. As Lewisohn describes:

Tagging is an often dangerous and potentially deadly pastime, but it is on this perilous illegality that the activity thrives. There are many differences between making legal and illegal graffiti. These differences are conceptual, stylistic, and time based. When the illegal element is gone, so is the adrenaline rush of illegality; all that's left is the adrenaline rush of creativity.<sup>34</sup>

Artists such as Jean-Michael Basquiat or Keith Haring were also part of the alternative art community and started their careers working underground in the subway long before they became art world names. Keith Haring worked not on train themselves, as his colleagues did, but on the blank advertising spaces within the subway stations. He even created his own style, similar to Aztec art. It was not based on repetition of his nickname, as was usual, but on drawn pictures that at the same time reacted to the surrounding advertisements and carried a message by themselves.<sup>35</sup> He is well known for his *Crack is Wack* (1986) mural.<sup>36</sup> In his work, one can observe the deflexion of tagging

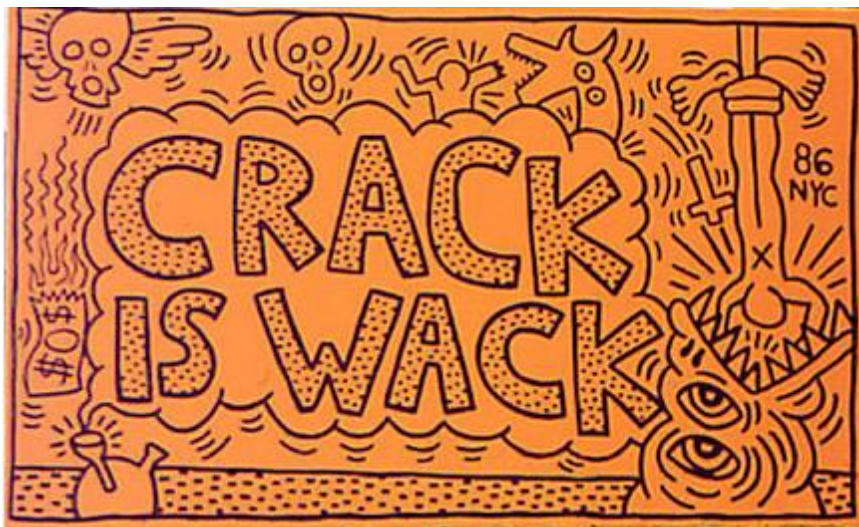


Figure 3 - Crack is Wack by Keith Haring

to figure production.

Jean-Michael Basquiat (1960–1988) started his career under the tag SAMO, which is an acronym for “same old shit”. His works were combined thoughts and forms of European masters, such as Da Vinci, with references to African and Afro-American

<sup>34</sup> LEWISOHN, Cedar. *STREET ART: The Graffiti revolution*, 2008, p. 42.

<sup>35</sup> VOLF, Petr. *Táta street artu*, 2007.

<sup>36</sup> FARTHING, Stephen a Richard CORK. *Art: the whole story*, 2010, p. 552.

culture.<sup>37</sup> Jean-Michael Basquiat was a celebrity from the streets and for a long time he lived almost on the street. He is a typical graffiti artist without any advocacy on the academic ground. He created graffiti for his need of self-expression. He was a symbol of a newly created wave of street art and graffiti although, on top of his glory, he denied any connection with graffiti at all.<sup>38</sup>

Thanks to the cooperation of graffiti writers and outstanding Pop Art figures, these men became some of the most famous artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>39</sup>

In the 1980's, two legendary films about the graffiti scene were released. The first one is documentary *Style Wars* (1983) where appeared artists such as Dondi or ZEPHYR. The second one is, already mentioned, the fictional *Wild Style* (1983).<sup>40</sup>

Another well-known and influential author is Shepard Fairey. He is an icon of the American contemporary scene. His career raised when he started to place his drawings on clothes, especially t-shirts, skateboards etc. He was one of the first authors, who began to use the street also as a kind of agitation field which is completely free. The usage of commercial advertisement in street art scene meant absolutely new opportunities and wider audience. His first and major work was a black and white image of the wrestler Andre 'The Giant' Roussimoff. Originally it was promotion of wrestling with a portrait of the fighter Andre, called the Giant. Later this work was stylistically and semantically altered into the OBEY Giant which become iconic. In 1989, a street campaign based on Fairey's design called Andre the Giant Has a Posse was created. The stickers featuring an image of André the Giant began to show up in many cities across America, distributed mostly by the skater community. It was said to be an experiment in phenomenology.<sup>41</sup> Fairey says:

The 'Obey' campaign had no meaning, except to cause people to react, to contemplate and search for meaning. The intention was to provoke people through disassociating words with images that normally have an underlying motive (i.e. to sell a product).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> PETRIČKO, Jan. SMRT SI ŘÍKÁ ROCK'N'ROLL: Jean-Michel Basquiat. 2014.

<sup>38</sup> LEWISOHN, Cedar. *STREET ART: The Graffiti revolution*, 2008, p. 103.

<sup>39</sup> BATES, Lindsay. *Bombing, Tagging, Writing: An Analysis of the Significance of Graffiti and Street Art*, 2014.

<sup>40</sup> 20th century - the rise of graffiti: Hip hop, punk & graffiti, 2015.

<sup>41</sup> Shephard Fairey: Shepard Fairey: OBEY Giant.

<sup>42</sup> Shephard Fairey: Shepard Fairey: OBEY Giant.

This artist emerged in the 1990's and got into the 21<sup>st</sup> century still on the top while keeping his place in graffiti history. OBEY Giant has become a global brand and as a motif, "obey" probably became one of the most commonly used characters. In 2004, Fairey crossed the line between street art and commercial production, when he applied to design new promotional materials for Coca-Cola Company. Since this year, Fairey has also been publishing a magazine about street art culture called Swindle.<sup>43</sup>

Lewisohn says that graffiti writing has always been a male-orientated activity. Over the years, making graffiti was always something that generally attracted young men. Pink Lady is considered as the first woman who had a real impact on the movement. The reason for this particular activity being mostly a male interest is quite simple. It is associated with the physical characteristics of graffiti production, such as cold and late-night activity involving the grime.<sup>44</sup> Pink Lady comments:

It is very hard, gruelling manual labour; it's scary; it's not as appealing to females and not as many females have the criminal streak that I do.

She also admits that she was often treated with mistrust and suspicion. She had to work harder and proved herself twice as hard to be even considered as equal, eventually, she earned respect and painted trains with the best of them.<sup>45</sup>

The last very important name from the world of street art is the British artist Banksy. He uses the stencil technique and his name becomes famous at the end of 1990's. His art is mostly black and white and gains diversity of sizes, from the small to the large ones, which can be seen for example on the railway bridges. He is famous for imitating famous artists by adding references to present society. For example, he added trash and shopping carts into the Monet's famous painting *Water Lilies* which shows humans' destructive behaviour to the nature. He added a yellow 'smile' to DaVinci's painting of *Mona Lisa*. By this motif were also completed The faces of soldiers of his stencil graffiti were also completed by this motif. Banksy's work is overall inspired by changing or adding of new context to already existing cultural values. For this theme can be added painting of Edward Hopper called *Nighthawks* from 1942. The painting is enriched by a character of vandal who had already broken the window of the café. Another interesting act from Banksy is definitely the smuggling of a prehistorical rock art imitation into the exposition

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<sup>43</sup> Swindle quarterly. The Giant: The definitely Obey Giant site.

<sup>44</sup> LEWISOHN, Cedar. *STREET ART: The Graffiti revolution*, 2008, p. 46.

<sup>45</sup> LEWISOHN, Cedar. *STREET ART: The Graffiti revolution*, 2008, p. 46.

of British Museum. His parody pictured a caveman with a shopping trolley and no one of the employees noticed anything wrong for a few days.<sup>46</sup> Another of his parodies includes replacing of the face of Queen Elizabeth II with that of Diana, Princess of Wales on the British £10 notes from the mid 2000's. At the top of the note, there is an elaborate script "Banksy of England" replacing "Bank of England".<sup>47</sup> Banksy's production is known all over the world, especially thanks to obvious anti-war and anti-consumerist messages expressed by the parodies of existing icons of advertising and consumerist world. By his illegal activities, Banksy gained more publicity than a lot of successful gallery painters and so took advantage of selling his works and earning money of it. Nowadays, his works are highly valued, for example, Space Girl and Bird was sold for £575.000.<sup>48</sup>

## 4 Development through the 21st century

Reaching the new century, everybody who is interested in art has to admit that street art has definitely exploded. It surrounds us everywhere we go. At the bus-stops, it covers billboards and serves as urban wallpaper in most cities. The most importantly, street art, apart from mere graffiti, gained its own social acceptance and completely separated itself from the public art and graffiti. Street art is defined as "consensually produced in a way that constitutes an act of defiant activism designed to challenge (and change) the viewer's experience of his or her environment"<sup>49</sup> and those two conditions are seen as necessary for the work to be counted as street art.

Street art became a ground for experimenting with different kinds of artistic methods, it gave birth to mural artists, to those who have combined usual street art with video art and other performative features of creative work of the streets. It has developed into a complex art form including various forms but what never changed is its rebellion.<sup>50</sup>

As for the newer examples of street art, there can be filed Mademoiselle Maurice with origami works pasted onto walls. These small and charming pieces can show their power when seen in masses. At the beginning, brightly coloured butterflies, fluttering around the walls, dulcify the grey atmosphere of the concrete city, but over time, they lose their power and disintegrate. This is a literal illustration of the struggle between

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<sup>46</sup> Banksy Places Fake Rock Art at British Museum.

<sup>47</sup> Ans Acquires Authentic Banky £10 Diana Note, 2016.

<sup>48</sup> Umění ulice - 2. díl Banksy. Street fame, 2015.

<sup>49</sup> BACHARACH, Sondra. Street Art and Consent, 2015, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> The History of Street Art: What about street art today?, 2014.

nature and urbanization and shows how neglecting of the environment can end in disaster for everyone. This artist is typical for today's world, where artists are using all sorts of different and unexpected artistic tools. Mundano, for example, points at the plight of trash collectors in Brazil with the project Pimp My Carroça. They are trying to beautify their carts and send a social message about waste, consumption, and its impact on those around us. Another group of modern street artists is called Guerilla knitters. These people make colourful outfits that are eventually clothed on ugly, urban structures, such as fences, fire hydrants or street lamps. Other, more radical guerrilla knitters knit over the guns presented on the public sculptures of war veterans. An example of this art may be a World War II tank entirely 'bombed' with charming pink crochet. This act might react to and fight against involvement in the war in Iraq. As Bacharach summarizes, all these people use the domestic craft arts and re-think their function and purpose by showing them to the public to assert their own political and social agenda.<sup>51</sup>

Clean taggers, also known as reverse graffiti artists, have the opposite thought, namely making art by cleaning dirt from walls. Their idea is that the dirt completes the background of the work and the clean parts complete the art itself. This kind of street art is very special for its beneficial part, elimination of dirt and grime of the city. Moose claims that it is more refacing than defacing and also very temporary. It is about restoring a surface into its original state, it glows for a while and then it fades away again.<sup>52</sup> Another kind of environmental artists are Guerilla gardeners, who take over abandoned parts of the city to create plentiful gardens. They also remove grass from the fringes of footpaths. Their purpose is to create productive gardens that can feed those who cannot feed themselves for any reason. Work like that brings the idea that the land of public property is ridiculously the very land that nobody values. Another question from this group goes to government and criticizes not using public green areas in a positive way, for example to grow food as a way of fighting against poverty and hunger in the world.<sup>53</sup> The authorities, on the other hand, are put in a moral quandary. According to Moose, one of the clean tagging technique pioneers, "Once you do this, you make people confront whether or not they like people cleaning walls or if they really have a problem with

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<sup>51</sup> BACHARACH, Sondra. *Street Art and Consent*, 2015, p. 482.

<sup>52</sup> MORGAN, Richard. *Reverse Graffiti*, 2006.

<sup>53</sup> BACHARACH, Sondra. *Street Art and Consent*, 2015, p. 483.

personal expression.”<sup>54</sup> Government hold the view that this kind of street art is illegal advertising and environmental damage and want to take strong action against it.<sup>55</sup>

One of the newest and the best-known examples of modern street art is definitely video mapping and video projection. While video projection is not new, it has become much more interesting thanks to the advancement in 3D projection mapping, a technology that creates an illusion of multi-dimensional movement. These projections do not require any special glasses to perceive them in three dimensions. Artists use spaces that most people would consider an eyesore. Whitewashed and windowless. The authors fuse hand-crafted art-forms with digital technologies and this kind of works surprises and engages audiences with its playful tone and interactivity. In New York, an artist called Mr. Skola created a work called “Space Monkey”. This enormous video of a dancing monkey (actually a five-minute loop of a friend in a costume) attracted people that stopped on the street to glare and take photos. This new technology enables artists to show their work in any location. Dave Haroldsen, a director for a global tech-arts festival, said: “It’s brilliant and shocking and new, and it really speaks to youth.”<sup>56</sup> Experimental video projection festivals have begun popping up throughout the whole United States and some personalities in the art branch concur that this medium can play a critical role in the evolution of public art. The 2012 Olympic Delivery Authority has commissioned United Visual Artists to cooperate in designing a stadium to be made purely of fabric and light. The 3D projections have also pervaded the area of music. Artists like Drake or the musician Skrillex have toured the United States with performances involving video mapping. Many corporate customers are using elements of 3D projection mapping in their marketing campaigns.<sup>57</sup>

As we can see, street art has definitely moved away from its beginnings, mainly connected with graffiti. Nowadays, we see graffiti as a gang-related territory marking often associated with fights and hassles. Primary motivation for doing graffiti appears to be territorial marking which is often dedicated to a specific group, for example another gang. This marking should say that ‘this space belongs to me’. The goal is to gain as much fame within the graffiti community as possible. They primarily use tags as a way of spreading one’s name throughout some area. Their pseudonyms can also be highly

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<sup>54</sup> REVERSE GRAFFITI: Street Artists Tag Walls by Scrubbing Them Clean, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> REVERSE GRAFFITI: Street Artists Tag Walls by Scrubbing Them Clean, 2014.

<sup>56</sup> DAY, Adrienne. *When Skyscrapers Are Your Screen*, 2012.

<sup>57</sup> DAY, Adrienne. *When Skyscrapers Are Your Screen*, 2012.

decorative, so called ‘masterpieces’. Graffiti writers have many differences from street artists. Street art embraces audience or the message they want to convey. Graffiti artists want to show the ownership of a given location and street artists show a social or political message. Public art is also somewhere else and radically differs from street art. Public art is sponsored by government agencies, using tax money, while street art is not sponsored at all.<sup>58</sup>

## 4.1 North America

North America is considered as a birthplace of modern graffiti and also has a substantial and lasting influence on public art. Street art theme is very extensive and for this reason, only North America will be discussed in this bachelor thesis. There are three cities, that would be individually profiled later, and their connection to street art, graffiti and public art is the profoundest. Especially, New York remains one of the world’s most important sites for public art and its connection to this “spray can art” is as tight as connection of New York to its iconic landmarks, such as the Statue of Liberty or the Empire State Building. It is a birthplace of many leading artists in the public art world, for example Blade or Dondi, and it is continuing up to the present with different kinds of work forms and doesn’t lose the authenticity and its spirit of innovation for which the city is renowned.

### 4.1.1 New York street art in the 21st century

“New York City, thanks to its graffiti writers in the 1970’s had a fifteen-year head start on the rest of the world in terms of art in the streets.”<sup>59</sup> As Schacter comments, no other city all around the world had such a cascade of rebellious artwork. Because of its location in subway system, the art had swiftly pervaded. Those artists, who worked on buildings, had to rely on their own photo-documentation.

The September 11 attacks in 2001 affected the street art in the same degree as it affected music or literary scenes. The appeal of street art around the world, but especially in New York, broadened. Artists, such as Swoon, Faile, MOMO and lots of others wanted to display a simple message of survival and a strong culture that would not be afraid.<sup>60</sup> In

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<sup>58</sup> BACHARACH, Sondra. *Street Art and Consent*, 2015, p. 482.

<sup>59</sup> SCHACTER, Rafael. *The world atlas of street art and graffiti*, 2013, p. 16.

<sup>60</sup> SCHACTER, Rafael. *The world atlas of street art and graffiti*, 2013, p. 16.

Manhattan's Tribeca neighbourhood is seen Banksy's street art tribute consisting of stencilled Twin Towers with a flower placed instead of an explosion.<sup>61</sup>



Figure 4 Banksy's tribute

Another symbol of hope for the city of New York is called *Tribute in Light* and it is a commemorative public art installation of two columns of light. It is said that the installation can be seen from a 60-mile radius around lower Manhattan. The tribute was designed and created by several artists and designers, such as John Bennett, Gustavo Boneverdi, Richard Nash Gould and others.<sup>62</sup>



Figure 5 Tribute in Light

Even though street art is still an outlaw form, often created under cover of darkness, the city now boasts with official works spread throughout the boroughs. We can see commissioned or memorial murals, painting project supported by the city, pieces of art that were ordered by stores or restaurants and now serve as their signs and lots of so-called permission walls. These 24-hours per day and seven days a week opened museums are for free and everyone can enjoy their shine and find their message.<sup>63</sup>

America, known as the melting pot of many cultures, has already shown its endlessness for all kinds of artistic expressions one can imagine. Many street artists rose from the bottom but then disappeared. Second group of artists emerged and influenced

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<sup>61</sup> Banksy - 9/11 Tribute.

<sup>62</sup> Tribute in Light. 9/11 Memorial and Museum.

<sup>63</sup> KENNEDY, Randy. *A Feast of Street Art, Luminous and Legal: Graffiti Art of the City, from the Bronx to Brooklyn*, 2013.



the whole street art community with something new, something that attracted the attention of everybody. In this part of my work, some of the most acclaimed artists from America will be presented. There is a wide range of artists, from the ones that taught themselves to spray to those with some artistic education. Some of them have already tried another type of art, such as illegal graffiti or, for example, tattoo art, others went directly from the art schools to creating for studios or exhibitions. Despite their different kind of arrival on the scene, all of them are now acknowledged artists all over the world.

Steve Powers, so-called Espo, was born in Philadelphia and uses Spray paint and installations as his artistic medium. Being the Fulbright scholar in 2007, Powers has developed from doing illegal work to highly conceptual installations and community projects. His style is shameless and witty and forms „an aesthetic that disrupts the fine line between artist and artisan, between art and advertising, and celebrates the beauty and sincerity of the vernacular within each project he undertakes.“<sup>64</sup> His love for graffiti led him toward Philadelphia’s University of the Arts and at the same time, he was also working on *On the Go* magazine, which was a publication that he ran between 1988 and 1996. Powers painted huge blocks of either white or silver on top of the existing graffiti and marked out his name in a negative space by using black. After having more than seventy of his designs in New York City, he was arrested. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, he stopped writing graffiti and became a full-time artist. He published a book *The Art of Getting Over* (1999) that introduced some of the most popular graffiti writers and also his exhibition “Indelible Market”, then led the project *The Dreamland Artist Club* (2004) and even repainted the official New York landmark —the Coney Island Cyclone. In Philadelphia, Stephen and his crew painted more than fifty walls in West Philly. The project was sponsored by a grant from the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage through the Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative and got positive reviews from the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and Art in America.<sup>65</sup>

Ron English is an artist that has been a chief architect of the culture-jamming movement since the 1980’s. According to Schacter, “deconstructing the boundaries between advertising and aesthetics, activism and art, pop culture and high culture, he uses his work to stage a willful rejection of modern US culture, a highly contemporary style

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<sup>64</sup> SCHACTER, Rafael. *The world atlas of street art and graffiti*, 2013, p. 19.

<sup>65</sup> About Steve Powers. Stephen Powers.

of agitprop termed “Popaganda.”<sup>66</sup> English uses popular culture to introduce crucial social and political themes into the public and through his art comments on the society. He is the most famous for Camel cigarette ads, where he presented messages such as s “The Cancer Kids” and “Camel Juniors” and also depicted Mickey Mouse stuck in a credit card mousetrap.<sup>67</sup>

Swoon is the nickname of Caledonia Curry, a well-known New York City street artist. Her art is based on paper cut outs of people she sees around her. Those cut outs are then placed on walls all around New York. She describes that she uses art to rebuild the communities and humanize today’s most pressing social and environmental issues. Her work is internationally famous and has been collected at galleries and museums, such as Museum of Modern Art, New York, or the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston.<sup>68</sup>

Olek, the Polish-born artist, came to New York to create. She uses a technique of yarn bombing or knitting which consists of covering surfaces and objects with crotchet yarn. She admits that she crotchets everything that enters her space. She had studied the science of culture so her work changes from place to place. As Olek comments on her art:

My goal is to produce new work and share it with the public. I intend to take advantage of living in NYC with various neighbourhoods and, with my actions, create a feedback to the economic and social reality in our community.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> SCHACTER, Rafael. *The world atlas of street art and graffiti*, 2013, p. 39.

<sup>67</sup> SCHACTER, Rafael. *The world atlas of street art and graffiti*, 2013, p. 39.

<sup>68</sup> About Swoon. Swoon studio.

<sup>69</sup> About. Olek.

This artist has on her account a lot of diverse artwork that cannot be overlooked. She is helping communities worldwide and wants to change the world filled with conflicts, wars and natural disasters. She wants to see the world filled with love. Among her other works, one can find a giant knitted page of The New York Times with the title about the oceans. The purpose is to raise awareness of the ocean life-support system of our planet, to deliver the alarming message about the disturbing state of our oceans due to the usage of plastic bags and bottles.



Figure 7 - Olek's work



Figure 6 "Turn the Page" in Virginia

#### 4.1.2 San Francisco

San Francisco, titled as the world capital of twentieth-century counterculture<sup>70</sup>, is home to thousands of street art installations throughout all manner of artistic disciplines. It ranks among top three cities in the country for murals, just behind Los Angeles and Chicago. Street art has lived in the Bay area's culture since the early 1980's and nowadays it is becoming even more widespread in its community. There has been established a fan base in the area of the Mission District, because of its large and frequent murals. San Francisco is also a homeland to one of the most famous pieces of street art "MaestraPeace Mural" or The Women's Building mural, and it serves as a "visual testament to the courageous contributions of women through time and around the world."<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> SCHACTER, Rafael. *The world atlas of street art and graffiti*, 2013, p. 58.

<sup>71</sup> MaestraPeace Mural. The Women's building.



*Figure 8 MaestraPeace mural*

San Francisco's street art is so widespread that a man could not cross the street without seeing one. Another piece of art is definitely the mural on Church Street by Mona Caron. The mural shows a wonderful glimpse of San Francisco's timeline and reveals different time periods of Market Street, since the 1930's to the future. This artist is focusing primarily on creating murals in public space through San Francisco. Her works are involved in activism and her focus is on "activating public space by simultaneously creating artwork and interactive street happenings, using the painting's narratives to spark conversations and critical awareness of the space we share." Mona's work involves narrative murals that reflect the past, present, and the future abstracts of the neighborhoods. In recent years, Mona is working on a botanical mural series titled "WEEDS" which should be a metaphor for flexibility and resistance. She collaborates with social and environmental justice movements, such as water rights groups, Zero-waste Detroit, Land is Life and others.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Mona Caron: About. Mona Caron.



Figure 9 The Market Street Railway by Mona Caron

Jurne, born in Portland, Maine, USA, is a visual artist working mainly in San Francisco, using calligraphy and abstractions of graffiti. He has been a full-time artist since 2011 and before, he worked in stem cell research. His work is special in using letters and purely textual forms that create images. He became active in graffiti in 1999, working on freight trains, without any art training. Throughout the time, he developed his skills by analyzing the East coast styles around him and was affected by artists such as Past, Rime, Dondi and Bear167. By 2006, he moved to Bay Area and established a style that was altogether simple and technical. He is using unconventional combinations of colour and composition.<sup>73</sup> Beyond graffiti, Jurne has presented his work also at galleries, such as *Klughaus Gallery* or *IamSF* and in 2014 published a book “*Beneath the Streets*” where he presents photos he took in New York. Additionally, he is doing non-profit graffiti workshops for children.<sup>74</sup>

#### 4.1.3 Los Angeles

Los Angeles has a wide range of street art, touching a wide variety of subjects. The city also has over 1600 murals, a lot of galleries collecting the murals, for example the *Chandler Outdoor Gallery*, and throughout the internet, a lot of maps showing the best street art or Los Angeles guides can be found. Murals had long been a part of Los Angeles’ culture and as the graffiti and street art boomed in the 2000’s, muralists such as Retna or El Mac all created their own personal mixture of graffiti and mural techniques. As street art extended around the world, Los Angeles became one of the centres of it.

El Mac, born in Los Angeles in 1980, is an artist that shows us a unique example of independent public art. He was inspired by classic European painters, such as Caravaggio and Vermeer, and also by symbolists Klimt and Mucha. With the mixture of

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<sup>73</sup> SCHACTER, Rafael. *The world atlas of street art and graffiti*, 2013, p. 65.

<sup>74</sup> Jurne: Biography.

contemporary graffiti and photorealism, as well as the Mexican culture, he developed his own exclusive style. He is focusing on a life-like interpretation of human faces and figures. His style is based on repeating contour lines that evokes an undulation. El Mac has also been painting large technicolor aerosol conception of classical paintings, which led to his being selected in 2003 by the Groeninge Museum in Brugge, Belgium, to collaborate. Since this, he has been authorized to paint murals across the US, Mexico, Denmark, Sweden, Canada and many other countries. His works have become local landmarks. The most of his works have been painted in LA.<sup>75</sup>

Tristan Eaton, an artist from Los Angeles, is highly influential in the world of advertising, equally to the world of art. He regularly works with the world's leading brands, such as Pepsi, Nike or Disney. He is also working on his elaborate street mural and is one of the leading characters in the Designer Toy Scene with his design of a Kidrobot. While designing Kidrobot, Eaton already created a studio called Thunderdog which cooperated with the Rolling Stone magazine on editorial illustrations and also with the President of the USA, Barack Obama.<sup>76</sup>

#### 4.2 Street art as a form of protest

In every age throughout the centuries, there was always something disconcerting and, on the other hand, there was always someone who wanted to fight against it. This may be the reason, why graffiti and street art have won so many hearts and souls. People, who were typically voiceless, began to use walls as a microphone for their political, social or other expressions. It grew into a very powerful form of social protest. Social movements used art as a reaction against oppression, violence, inequity, and discrimination with the requirement of social change. The purpose was to produce knowledge or raise awareness. Someone can see street art as a simple and offending vandalism, another one, who reads between the lines, can find a message or a piece of art.<sup>77</sup> Thanks to a variety of forms, street art can have a different essence. The scale starts with visually playful jokes and goes through provocative performances to activist protests. However, what remains is the intention not to remain neutral. "Its purpose is to advance the cause of an idea."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> SCHACTER, Rafael. *The world atlas of street art and graffiti*, 2013, p. 79-80.

<sup>76</sup> About. Tristan Eaton.

<sup>77</sup> PHILIPPS, Axel. *Defining Visual Street Art: In Contrast to Political Stencils*, 2014.

<sup>78</sup> COWICK, Carmen. *Preserving Street Art: Uncovering the Challenges and Obstacles*, 2015.

Public space and streets itself have always been attractive locations for varied forms of entertainment, artistic expressions, and many other activities. Nowadays, it gained even bigger popularity, especially visual interventions such as paper paste-ups, freehand drawings, cut-outs, stencils. The most politically active are probably stickers that commonly promote a political agenda or comment on a policy or social issue.<sup>79</sup> However, it is possible to say that street art's defiant and activist character is one of the most important features that are connected to this topic. Sondra Bacharach argues that the defiance is included also because of the risk involved in the very act of making street art. Challenging areas of high visible places or physically dangerous accessibility of the places can be used as examples here. The provocation is also contained in the fact that street art's effort is to weaken the authority of the property owner and the government. To show the street artists' rejections of the social norms or point out the socio-economic difficulties in a particular location.<sup>80</sup>

As was already mentioned, art itself appears to be an indicator of social problems and political connotations may be included, especially in street art, where messages are located in the streets and their canvas is mainly public space. As Lewisohn explains, the exploitation of the public space may underline the message more vigorously than if street art were in the galleries:

When placed in a gallery, street art can become neutralized, while non-political gestures will often gain a political dimension in a museum context. The circumstances in which street art and graffiti are seen are major factors in their meaning. In the same way that a frame can alter the meaning of a painting, the wall on which it hangs also adds to the meaning.<sup>81</sup>

Public space has always been especially a place of making statements. The manifestations of disagreements and resistance are taking place there. People always went to streets to say their opinion. This is the place of demonstrations and protests. The public space is the most frequent place, mainly in the big cities. A statement is seen by a huge number of people. For this reason, the big marketing companies are very interested in this space and street artists are mainly trying to get the space back to the people. They may also fight against the selling out of the public space.

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<sup>79</sup> COWICK, Carmen. *Preserving Street Art: Uncovering the Challenges and Obstacles*, 2015, p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> BACHARACH, Sondra. *Street Art and Consent*, 2015, p. 493.

<sup>81</sup> LEWISOHN, Cedar. *STREET ART: The Graffiti revolution*, 2008, p. 134.

Graffiti writers are at war with the urban developers, the architects, and all the other faceless decision makers. The city walls stand for ownership and authority, and graffiti is the voice of the unelected, fighting back against systems that are imposed on them. In many ways, graffiti artists see themselves as at war with society and they see their activities very much in terms of aggression.<sup>82</sup>

When focusing on the history, the form of protest can be seen in the United States already in 1970. In that time, college students protested at numerous universities around the country after President Richard Nixon's speech about the plans for the invasion of Cambodia. The Americans were angry because the United States was still in war in Vietnam and were planning another invasion of an Asian country. This and some other disagreements led many college students to protest. The University of California and some other universities set up silkscreen workshops. Almost thirty-five designs were created and placed on the campus grounds. Students also spread 50 000 posters to local neighbourhoods. The California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland even established a poster factory where the posters were printed in large. All the works were published anonymously, and the aim was to expose the issues that were not addressed by the media. The images had anti-war themes and it was the awareness of the atrocities of the war shown by the stark images that helped Americans to begin opposing the war in Vietnam. One of the founders of Feminist Art Movement, Judy Chicago, conquered a better position for women in culture through the large collaborative installations and it was art again that formed the cultural and political reaction to the AIDS epidemics during the 1980's. Artists, such as Keith Haring or Robert Mapplethorpe, were associated.<sup>83</sup>

Focusing on today's American artists, the Guerrilla Girls should be included. The group was formed already in 1985 in New York and their main purpose was to highlight gender and racial inequalities in the fine arts. The girls wearing gorilla masks and miniskirts created various kinds of protest artworks through stickers, billboards, posters and other forms. They have combined humorous pictures, flagrant visuals, and statistics and they are still very active. Their group has expanded and now they specialize in political criticism, especially conservative Republicans.<sup>84</sup> A Los-Angeles artist called Trashbird is another example of artist that is generally known and admired for his rebellion, wheat-pastes and his comments on politics. He uses humor and satire to depict

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<sup>82</sup> LEWISOHN, Cedar. *STREET ART: The Graffiti revolution*, 2008, p. 87.

<sup>83</sup> COWICK, Carmen. *Preserving Street Art: Uncovering the Challenges and Obstacles*, 2015, p. 33.

<sup>84</sup> *Protest art: From Picasso to Pussy Riot and Banksy, These are the Greatest Examples*, 2016.



today's world and its issues, such as selfie culture, our unhealthy interest in celebrities and our increasing addiction to new technological tools. His most known work is set in Los Angeles and the character is named the Clone. The thin silhouette hidden in a black hoodie and leaning inward is fixed to its phone. In the following lines, Trashbird comments on his reasons of doing street art.

I realized I could use street art as a form of activism. That was in 2010. The content was a commentary on the power of brand association. It was a wheatpaste of a photo I had taken of a McDonald's sign next to an American flag. I draw inspiration from everywhere. I find that I am deeply affected by social injustices and hypocrisies. I speak to this outrage through street art. An example of where inspiration comes from would be my outrage at the Militarization of the modern American police forces across the USA. The struggle and suppression of blue collar America are something that will probably always come up in my work. The outcasts and dissenters in society will always be a source of inspiration for me. I want people to see a mirror when they look at my work. The message of a piece holds value when it's genuine. The act of putting up an illegal piece of street art communicating an idea is a powerful, tangible, clear sign of protest and dissent. I'm tired of Instagram activism, I am tired of people hiding behind digital screens and filters. We all have voices, but barking on social media isn't really doing anything to change things.<sup>85</sup>



Figure 11 Trashbird's street art in Los Angeles



Figure 10 Trashbird's works

Art typically expresses social problems and may encompass political connotations in the form of a critique. An anonymous street artist says:

None of us is a sympathizer with any ideology. When politics is involved in our work it is always in reaction to a current event. Something that bothers us. For example, we have made some anti-war stickers. It is more about emotions you can 'shout' to the streets.<sup>86</sup>

People express their opinions and thoughts also in connection with presidential elections. A few years back, when Barack Obama was campaigning for his first presidential election in 2008, graffiti and street art showed the choice of the people.

<sup>85</sup> Street Art as a Sign of Protest and Dissent: Thrashbird in an Exclusive Interview, 2016.

<sup>86</sup> RYCHETSKÝ, Lukáš. Zaútočit na všechny smysly, 2007.

Barack Obama was depicted in superman clothes.<sup>87</sup> Later, during presidential elections of Donald Trump, throughout the streets of United States appeared a lot of anti-Trump



*Figure 12 Barack Obama in the streets of Los Angeles and Hanksy's Donald Trump mural*

street art. One of the most recognisable artwork was made by an artist named Hanksy. “The mural was a joke and so was Trump. Unfortunately, the punchline never came and it’s scary as hell,” said Hanksy about his artwork. The mural was early erased by the building’s owners but Hanksy said that he would happily paint it again.<sup>88</sup>

Throughout the whole world, one can see how the presidential elections affected communities. The president’s face appeared for example on a controversial Israeli separation wall. He is depicted wearing a skullcap, and a cartoon bubble next to him says: ‘I’m going to build you a brother’. Another drawing shows him hugging and kissing an Israeli watchtower on the wall. Another piece of art with the president’s face was spotted in Washington D.C. The circus-themed sticker has a sign ‘Welcome to D.C.’ and features Trump as a clown.<sup>89</sup> There also appeared a 15-foot-tall inflatable Trump-like rat, made by John Post Lee. The rat is orange faced with extra-large ears, pursed lips and buck teeth and a long tail, and is dressed in a suit with an unmistakable red tie. The author emphasizes that the Trump Rat is not intended to be a symbol of anger or hate but a tall satirical commentary on the president. “I’m trying to hold a mirror up to how this person behaves,” Lee says, “as a character portrait of the man.”<sup>90</sup> It is not the only inflatable animal, the president has been resembled. Between the White House and Washington Monument outgrew a big 30-foot-tall inflatable chicken with Trump-like hair. The intention of the creator was to protest against the president “being a weak and ineffective

<sup>87</sup> Writing on the wall: urban political graffiti from Brexit to Trump – in pictures, 2017.

<sup>88</sup> Writing on the wall: urban political graffiti from Brexit to Trump – in pictures, 2017.

<sup>89</sup> SCHWARTZ, Hunter. Political street art sightings from across the country and around the world, 2017.

<sup>90</sup> CAVNA, Michael. A giant, inflatable ‘Trump Rat’ will tower over Washington, 2017.

leader. He's too afraid to release his tax returns, too afraid to stand up to Vladimir Putin.”  
He also added that the president was “playing chicken with North Korea.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> SHAPIRO, Rebecca. Monumental ‘Trump Chicken’ Roosts Near The White House, 2017.

## 5 Conclusion

Throughout the centuries we can see that art is persistently changing and shifting its boundaries. The beginnings of street art were hard and, for a long time, it was not considered art at all. Due to its connection with graffiti, that was perceived as a mere vandalism, street art production still has difficulties in some spheres, but the positive approach towards street art is rapidly expanding. In comparison with official art, street art is in a considerable advantage thanks to its broader openness to the audience. Today, cultural institutions are not as popular as they used to be and so the art stepped out of the interior space of museums and galleries and shows its voice outside, where the message is more widely heard.

The work aimed to introduce new types and spheres of street art that can broaden the reader's knowledge about this particular topic. Nowadays, it is usual that official art and street art overlap and so a lot of graduated artists pass to unofficial production. Thanks to it, we may see well-designed pieces of street art that have some similarities to official art, and on the other hand are so dissimilar to each other. The line goes from precisely painted and long-term murals, through over-crocheted houses or trains, planting of flowers in unusual places and, on the other hand, there are Guerrilla gardeners and clean taggers with quite the opposite thought, to remove the dirt from the streets. Probably, street art is so popular among the whole population due to the usefulness of it. The intention is not only to please the eyes, but the purpose is to point out some idea, attitude, and opinion or to highlight a specific issue within the community. As Banksy had once written:

“If graffiti changed anything – It would be illegal.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> New Banksy In London: If Graffiti Changed Anything – It Would Be Illegal.

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## Appendices

*Figure 1: Bombing, Tagging, Writing: An analysis of the Significance of Graffiti and Street Art* [online]. Philadelphia, 2014 [cit. 2018-04-11]. Dostupné z: [https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1552&context=hp\\_theses](https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1552&context=hp_theses). Master's Thesis. University of Pennsylvania.

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*Figure 5: Tribute in Light. 9/11 memorial and museum* [online]. [cit. 2018-04-11]. Dostupné z: <https://www.911memorial.org/tribute-light>

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*Figure 10: Street Art as a Sign of Protest and Dissent -Thrashbird in an Exclusive Interview. Widewalls* [online]. 11.3.2017 [cit. 2018-04-11]. Dostupné z: <https://www.widewalls.ch/thrashbird-interview/>

*Figure 11: Bibliography of Trashbird. Widewalls* [online]. [cit. 2018-04-11]. Dostupné z: <https://www.widewalls.ch/artist/thrashbird>

*Figure 12: Writing on the wall: urban political graffiti from Brexit to Trump – in pictures. The Guardian* [online]. 17.5.2017 [cit. 2018-04-11]. Dostupné z: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/gallery/2017/may/17/writing-wall-political-graffiti-banksy-brexit-trump-in-pictures>

## Annotation

### ANOTACE

<b>Jméno a příjmení:</b>	Hana Hajdušková
<b>Katedra:</b>	Ústav cizích jazyků PdF UP Olomouc
<b>Vedoucí práce:</b>	Mgr. Petr Anténe, M.A., Ph.D.
<b>Rok obhajoby:</b>	2018

<b>Název práce:</b>	Vývoj street artu v Americe po roce 2000
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	Development of street art in America since 2000
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Bakalářská práce pojednává o vývoji street artové tvorby na území Spojených států amerických po roce 2000, přibližuje její relativně nově vznikající druhy a komentuje možné interpretace těchto uměleckých děl. Street art mnohdy není považován za plnohodnotné umění, převážně díky svému ilegálnímu charakteru a porušování dalších estetických i společenských norem. Jeho záměrem bývá provokace a upozornění na sociální problematiku.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	Street art, ilegalita, historie street artu, Amerika, 21. století, graffiti, umění, protest, politika
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	The bachelor thesis deals with the evolution of street art in the United States of America in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century, introducing its emerging types and commenting on possible interpretations of these works of art. Street art is often not considered a full-fledged art, largely due to its illegal character and violation of other aesthetic and social standards. Its intention is to provoke and warn about social issues.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	Street art, illegality, history of street art, America, 21 <sup>st</sup> century, graffiti, art, protest, politics
<b>Přílohy vázané v práci:</b>	
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	
<b>Jazyk práce:</b>	Anglický

## Resumé

Bakalářská práce pojednává o vzniku a vývoji výtvarného umění nazývaného street art. Práce se zaměřuje zejména na vývoj na území Spojených států amerických po roce 2000 a popisuje jeho nová odvětví. V první části práce jsou definovány základní termíny spojené s tímto tématem, také jsou představena různá vymezení a rozdíly mezi pojmy street art, graffiti a public art. V historické sekci se práce zabývá vývojem street artu od jeho prvopočátků, a to od pravěku po vývoj novodobého street artu v 19. století. Třetí část práce se zabývá street artem ve 21. století, a to zejména jeho rozmanitými provedeními. V práci jsou popsána tři města, která jsou spojena s tématem street artu, a to New York, Los Angeles a San Francisco. V této sekci jsou také zmíněni konkrétní umělci a jejich díla. Práce v závěru pojednává a diskutuje o různých motivech pro vznik těchto děl. Je zde zahrnuta kapitola o street artu jako formě protestu a aktivismu, která popisuje nejčastější důvody vzniku většiny street artových děl dnešní doby.