

Andrijana Danilović

Belgrade

CITY AND A PAINTING – THE IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF PAINTING IN PUBLIC SPACE

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Abstract: *Doctoral art research project City and a Painting – the Importance and Role of Painting in Public Space considers the topic of possible roles of painting interventions in public space through theoretical research based on the analysis of already existing interventions in the area of the inner center and several remote Belgrade settlements. This interdisciplinary project seeks to categorize representative examples of different types of interventions based on their function, in relation to the artistic, social, political, and context of relations with institutions. The research has led to the conclusion that Belgrade owes not only the rich diversity of painting interventions to artistic activity at different levels, but that the use of painting stimulated by non-artistic motives, which vary from simple commercial promotion to ideological propaganda and hate speech, is also hugely represented, thus confirming the relevance of the image in the public space of the contemporary city.*

Key words: *painting, public space, mural, street art, graffiti*

Introduction: About the Methods¹

This project thesis was defended in 2018 at the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade, and this text represents its reduced version. In its original form, the doctoral research consisted of a research (theoretical) part and an artistic (practical) segment, the latter of which is excluded from this text. The research consists of the categorization of representative examples of different types of interventions based on their function, in relation to their artistic qualities, social, political and the context of relations with institutions. The research as a whole is interdisciplinary, based on field research and various methods of theoretical research. The material gathered from the summer of 2013 to the summer of 2017 is categorized based on parameters that are not primarily based on

¹ Danilović, A. (2017) *Grad i slika: Značaj i funkcija slikarskih intervencija u javnom prostoru*, PhD dissertation, Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu, Fakultet primenjenih umetnosti.

visuals or aesthetics, but based on their content, i.e. meaning within a specific socio-spatial context, which is a key factor in understanding the function of specific work. In addition to the analysis of their visual qualities, works are subjected to analysis from the standpoint of its non-artistic characteristics, relevant for a specific example (time of creation, place, author), the socio-political and cultural context of their creation, and then grouped with other interventions carrying similar meaning, from where conclusions about their function are drawn. The grouping and conclusions are based on a theoretical method that is based upon an interdisciplinary approach and relies on social sciences that are relevant for specific examples, but also on media reporting as a source in a specific context and inductive-deductive method. The interview was deliberately omitted. The nature of street art and painting in public space is anti-discriminatory and implies direct communication with the observer and the absence of interpretation, therefore the involvement of mediators or interpreters (curators, institutions, authors) in the context of this research, seems to be contradictory with the very nature of interventions in the public space.

The starting point of the research is centered around the question *What is the role / function of the painting in public space?* or – *What is the purpose of the painting in public space?* Permanent placement of painting in space that people use every day imposes the painting as a factor of shaping the space, forming the very impression of it, but it also serves as a means of transmitting information indirectly – as a means for influencing and shaping opinions. The key points of this consideration are public space - its complexity and indispensability, the institutions that manage it, and the need to intervene on public walls.

Public Space, Institutions, Painting

The goal of leaving pictorial traces in public space, whether monumental in size or interventions of negligible dimensions, exceeds the mere need to aestheticize the public space and connects the visual effectiveness of the image with the possibilities its uncensored visibility in public space unlocks, placing it in a far more complex constellation. This creates a wide field of possibilities of using and misusing the painting on various levels. The modern city and contemporary society, whose functioning is based upon sets of established norms, rules, laws and sanctions for their violation, recognizes and seeks to regulate and channel apparent human need to intervene on the walls using painting, through the concept of art in the public space. However, the fact remains that painting and aestheticization are not the only goals of pictorial marking of public space.

Defining the concept of public space is not a simple task, because it is extremely complex, conditioned by a multitude of different factors as well as it is crucial for different spheres of human activity. However, my goal is not to settle on a single definition, but to set a theoretical framework based upon the requirements of this research that will serve as a tool to understand the pictorial content that we find on the city facades.

To define the concept of public, it is necessary to define its opposite, that is, the concept of private, intimate or personal. This distinction will serve as a starting point for

building the foundation of some of the key characteristics of public space that are important for the specific research. Personal, intimate and private are constructs that can serve as the opposite of the construct of public, and thus enable us to perceive and establish boundaries of what we intend to define from several relevant standpoints. Linguistically, the term personal, among other things, is:

a. one that refers to a particular person, person, own, private, personal – interest, card, ruble, property, doctor; b. relating to one's own personality, which stands out from the common, based on something of one's own, private – sacrifice, diagnosis, trust, personal reasons, aspiration; and the term public as undisguised, known, 2.a., which anyone can attend; b. which is intended for everyone – library, local, v. that took place in front of everyone – scandal; 3.a. relating to society, socially significant – works, interest.²

From the ownership standpoint, the correlation between private (property) and public (space) is delimited by the existence of the concept of ownership, i.e. the legal right of an individual to control or decide upon a certain space. Based upon this, a public space is one that is not owned by an individual i.e. one that is public or common good; the one that is used by the wider community.

Article 10 of the Law on Public Property of the Republic of Serbia defines common goods in general use as follows:

Common goods, in the sense of this Law, are considered to be those things which, due to their nature, are intended for use by all and which are as such determined by law. Everyone has the right to use common goods in the manner prescribed by law, i.e. by a decision of an authority or legal entity to whom such goods have been given for management.³

Theoretician of urbanism and architecture Ali Madanipour conceives the analysis of the relationship between private and public spaces by grading them based upon the criteria of autonomy and inviolability, exposure and intensity of social interaction. Gradation begins with the only completely intimate and inviolable space called the inner space of the mind, which is followed by the space of the body that directly interacts with the surrounding world. The size of the socio-psychological space or bubble that surrounds the body is dictated by social and cultural norms. He proceeds by considering intermediate values such as home and neighborhood, spaces of social encounters and ends with impersonal public space of the city.⁴ Particularly interesting for us are the intermediate values, “semi-public” spaces, overlaps of personal and public, such as

2 Вујанић, М. и др. (2007) *Речник српског језика*, Нови Сад: Матица српска 497, стр. 1034.

3 Закон о јавној својини, “Службени гласник РС”, бр. 72 од 28. септембра 2011, 88 од 6. октобра 2013, 105 од 3. октобра 2014, 104 од 23. децембра 2016 - др. закон, 108 од 29. децембра 2016.

4 Madanipour, A. (2003) *Public and Private Spaces of the City*, London: Routledge.

neighborhoods, exposed facades of private buildings, passages connecting residential buildings and such.

Based upon all of the above, the term public space within this research and further text will refer to the (physical) space of the city that is (physically) accessible to every member of the wider community, while neglecting the ownership of the object, except in cases where the presence of pictorial intervention in a particular place is conceptually and semantically connected in some way with ownership.

Describing the nature of street art, Martin Irvine uses the phrase *regimes of visibility*, explaining the influence of various institutions on regulation of visibility (of painting) in public spaces.⁵ Irvine sees these positions as positions of competing; street art with visibility regimes embodied in law and system of government on the one hand, and the regime of the world of art and ruling aesthetics on the other. Irvine recognizes the rules and restrictions imposed by both regimes as a systematic aspiration to determine and control who deserves and what has legitimacy (and where) to be visible and seen, and who (and what) will be labeled as a mere noise of the city life.

Understanding the level of “monopoly” over public space is significant because it helps deepen the understanding of paintings in public space. The first level refers to jurisdiction over the usage of common (city) goods, i.e. public space. An illustration of this type of monopoly over a common area is, for example, locking the gate of a park at certain times of the day. Thus, the time of stay in a common area is systematically limited, and violations of the rules are sanctioned. Same principle applies here - intervention on the wall is permitted with the appropriate permission of the managing institutions or are banned altogether, and self-initiated intervention is sanctioned. Louis Althusser defines this branch of organization of society, of maintaining the given models of functioning under the threat of sanctions, as an apparatus of coercion.⁶

The second level of the visibility regime refers to the criteria established by cultural institutions and art theory, by which something is recognized or not recognized as a work of art. In relation to this level of monopoly, certain forms of action in the public space are recognized as artistic, as opposed to vandalism or kitsch, and as such they are granted their presence and visibility in public space.

The simple division between art and vandalism, perceiving institutionally supported and legally recognized painting as an artistic activity, and intolerance towards any other model of action labeling it as vandalism, is not legitimate from the art theory point of view. This does not mean that every institution-sponsored intervention is artistic - on the contrary. In addition to institutionally supported, no less valuable is non-institutional, illegal and subversive artistic activity. The problem of defining concepts and distinctions between public (representative, institutionalized) and street art is complex, and

5 Irvine, M. (2012) The Work on the Street: Street Art and Visual Culture, *The Handbook of Visual Culture*, edited by Sandywell, B. & Heywood, I., London and New York: Berg, pp. 235–278.

6 Althusser, L. (2008) Ideologija i državni ideološki aparati, *Studije kulture*, edited by Đorđević, J., Beograd: Službeni glasnik, pp. 143–147.

the question of the legitimacy of their presence in the public space cannot be explained by the division into institutional / non-institutional, i.e. legal / illegal.

Defining street art, Alden Riggle emphasizes the use of public space as an artistic resource and an integral part of work, thus placing in this category exclusively those works for which the part of the space in which they are located represents a building element (in the conceptual and physical sense), for which any displacement from a specific spatial context would mean complete disempowerment.⁷

From the overlap of Riggle's and Irvine's views, public and street art could be defined as following - works of art that are placed in public space, with the support of institutions and the permission of the regime of visibility, that are to a certain extent conceptually dependent on public space, and that serve as a representative of the dominant cultural and ideological trends, fall into the corpus of public art. Works that arise without institutional support, and beyond the limitations of the visibility regime, by the initiative of an individual or group, that are of limited durability and for which public space is an indispensable material or artistic resource and integral part, belong to the corpus of street art practices. Nevertheless, even this formulation, in relation to the conservative division of *mural = art – graffiti = vandalism* requires further clarification.

The term *graffiti* is what causes confusion, and in common communication it implies a spectrum of different actions – from mere writing of a message on the wall, to murals executed by aerosol. Terminology of street artists and art theory uses *graffiti* as a term that refers to typographic works, in a visual sense defined by a certain writing style. Graffiti relies on the use of aerosols, but also on the use of façade paints and rollers. Graffiti is therefore a narrower and more concrete concept than the concept of street art, determined by different practices of action, different goals, explained by a different internal terminology and valorization of works.⁸ Early graffiti-movements from the 70s and 80s of the 20th century, set the foundation for street art. The opening of the doors of New York's alternative galleries to graffiti artists was also the opening of doors that led to the formation of the first generation of street artists who found themselves between the legacy of graffiti in terms of the subversiveness of the very act of self-initiated drawing on the street, references to earlier artistic movements and authentic artistic languages. Confusion in the separation of the terms mural and graffiti is partially

7 Riggle, N. A. (2010) Street art: The transfiguration of the commonplaces, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (Volume 68, Issue 3), pp. 243-257.

8 Graffiti subculture valorizes, evaluates and relates to works in different ways than it is the case with any other practice of expression through painting. Hierarchy and gained reputation among writers and groups, territory, complexity of work, and their gradation in terms of – what can be overwritten with which based on the complexity of work (more complex and demanding forms can cross over the less complex ones) – these are some of the key places of this practice. Some of the main types of graffiti are: *tag* – the signature of a writer which stands as an independent work, and the goal is to mark as much territory as possible with his signature; *throw-up* – a signature consisting of a contour line or contour line and one color with which the inner surface of the letters is filled; *piece* (short for Masterpiece) – a work (letter) consisting of at least three colors.

caused by the use of aerosols, because spray is traditionally associated with graffiti and vandalism.⁹

Many muralists, whether working under the auspices of institutions or on their own, often use aerosols. A painting or drawing tool or medium itself is not a relevant distinguishing factor here. It is often not even possible to tell which painting materials have been used on specific murals. Mural as a discipline of applied arts and a form of public, representative art is created with the cooperation and support of institutions, and street art and graffiti are created as subversion in relation to institutions. However, among the works created within the category of street art, there are works that are no less murals in a formal sense. Therefore, one can talk about the distinction between legal and illegal murals in terms of ways, reasons and motives for the creation, and even the durability and inviolability of works, but not in terms of the very nature of the art form. The mural, therefore, as an artwork, whether it is part of institutionalized artistic practices or street art, constitutes a separate category of painterly intervention in public space, the preconceived painting on the dry cement of the wall surface.¹⁰ Therefore, the mural, whether executed by traditional means of painting or aerosol, without losing its meaning and form by hypothetical displacement from a concrete spatial context, does not belong to the category of street art, but represents a separate category.

The question of authorship in the aforementioned categories has different values. The muralist in a formal sense signs his work with the name and concept of authorship that is intended to protect his work from alterations, abuses and destruction. The street artist, who most often under a pseudonym performs his work illegally, will not rely on authorship as a guarantee of the inviolability of his creation on the street, but possibly on mechanisms of avoiding the destruction of work. For graffiti artists, however, a tag, or belonging to a particular crew, is a matter of prestige and a measure of status, which gives authorship a completely new dimension. Endangering authorship by “crossing over” (full or partial overlay or crossing over someone else’s graffiti) has the gravity of personal provocation or insult and often implies counter-action of equivalent or stronger intensity. The aforementioned different notions of authorship, inviolability and evaluation of work are occasionally in conflict due to the inevitable overlapping in public space.

In addition to the considered sphere of paintings in public space with artistic pretensions (within muralistic and street art practices), the painting with no artistically oriented goals is also very common. By overlapping cheap and effective methods used

9 See: Kelling, G. L. and Wilson, J. Q. (1982) Broken Window – Police and Neighborhood Security, *The Atlantic*, March 1982 Issue, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/> (accessed 02. July 2024). The authors suggest a connection between the presence of self-initiated inscriptions and paintings in space with the appearance of crime, recognizing “graffiti” as one of the signs of the absence of care for space, and linking the neglect of space with lawlessness and marking it as fertile ground for petty crime. The essence of the text is the idea that by drastic punishment of petty offenses, the more serious ones are prevented.

10 This does not mean that the fact that murals can exist in interiors or spaces for personal use is overlooked. However, such murals are not the subject of this research.

by street artists and awareness of the strikingness and potential for conveying a message, painting interventions in the public space are common means of commercial or political marketing and integral parts of broader marketing campaigns. Mural-like practices, adapted to the social dynamics of a specific space, can become a means of demonstrating territoriality or the voice of the collective self.



Figure 1: Murals in Savamala: Never Crew, Super Timor, Miša Most
(photo: Andrijana Danilović)

Painting as a Means of Enriching the Space – the City as a Space for Exploring Personal Artistic Voices

The painting as a means of (artistic) expression without other intentions than the refinement of the space itself, influencing and changing its visual features and atmosphere and exploring one's own visual poetics within the context of urban environment, is firmly established through the history of public art in Belgrade, regardless of whether it is created in cooperation with institutions (whether cultural or legal) or as a result of the author's own initiative. I emphasize that the word *refining* in this context does not refer to skillful wall painting, banal decoration, the absence of artistic and conceptual qualities or poetics, but to the function of these works, which is aimed primarily at changing the impression of space. In this category we classify, without diminishing their value or significance, those works in which the artistic, aesthetic aspect is set as a primary or only goal. These do not insist on the message or social engagement, they are not a means of commercial promotion or part of a broader, non-artistic campaign.

Such works in Belgrade appear in various forms: permanent ones such as murals, combinations of murals and graffiti, stencils and paste-up interventions of limited durability. Whether they are works whose function of refinement is based on aestheticization and illustration of factual references and associations to the space in which they are located (e.g. school-fairytale-childhood) or that by their very presence they represent an additional visual, aesthetic and conceptual quality. Without losing sight of the legacy of murals from the eighties and nineties (Ljubović, Rabuzin, Miljuš, Protić, among others), it is important to keep in mind the changes in the artistic climate and the development

of street art. Interventions from the end of the first and second decades of the twenty-first century, which at the time of the beginning of the collection of materials for this research existed in the public space are those I am focusing on. The city as a set of personal impressions and public space in the physical sense are, in the context of street art, a space of research of personal visual language and poetics – an open-air sketchbook, in which there are often small drawings and quick interventions that are unpretentious in the context of sending a message, but by no means devoid of artistic qualities or visual effectiveness. These notes, often humorous and appealing, do not have the potential to greatly transform the appearance of the space as a whole, but to turn an ordinary space into a space of artistic activity simply by being present in it.

*Painting Intervention as a Means of Commercial Promotion,
Campaigns and Lobbying*

The dizzying technological development of information technologies and the emergence of mass media that are no longer exclusively unilateral offer an endless selection of content, and have led to changes that strictly profiled previously generalized target groups. The ability to choose appropriate and remove unwanted content made it difficult to reach the widest audience whose attention was once focused on a handful of television channels. Another drastic change of the former viewer or consumer of the offered programs is that thanks to social networks and various Internet services, they can now also be producers of media content. Nevertheless, despite the (seemingly) democratic nature of the virtual space of the Internet, due to the direction and self-direction towards certain types of content, the audience's attention is either no longer guaranteed or there are specific obstacles in obtaining it. Therefore, as the only remaining meeting space of the most diverse profiles of the audience, comes up the one that they inevitably have to use – public space.

Many of the interventions that make up the campaigns which utilize painting function independently, and could be analyzed as integral products of the painting activity. However, due to their function, they will be viewed and analyzed primarily as a media text. Physical, public space in comparison to the virtual one seems archaic. This is due to the fact that it does not offer the possibility of choosing content, it becomes a place where every user of public space, without the will or consent of his own, is being exposed to primitive forms of media campaigns that rely on pictorial interventions, which for various reasons have recognized the public space as important for their actions. Aestheticization and refinement of space, therefore, in the case of these works, are not primary, and visual effectiveness, receptivity, ease of understanding and clarity of the message represent their key elements.

*Image in the Function of Commercial Promotion –
Promotional Campaigns That Imitate Street Art*

For the reasons elaborated previously – impossibility of avoiding the content, accessibility, free of charge advertising space and very modest investments in terms of mate-

rial, lobbying campaigns and those whose goals are commercial in character, imitate street art or use murals as a means of promotion, and are common in public space. The use of a painted advertisement is not a recent practice – on the contrary. Before today's giant printed promotional banners and building wrappers became available, blind facades were painted with company logos and illustrations related to the services and products they offer. Some of them, as is the case with the preserved "C market" mural on the façade in Despot Stefan's Boulevard (late 1980s or early 1990s), are basically painted billboards – presenting the product range, from coffee to various food supplies the company used to produce, with clear emphasis on the company logo. However, compared to today's models of image use, despite its large dimensions, the old murals utilized as means of commercial promotion seem very moderate and unobtrusive. One of the reasons for the comeback of painting as a means of advertising lies in the interest in street art and mural, which has developed in the meantime, and which, among other things, is reflected in taking photos and sharing "catches" from the street, the development of technology that allows quick, easy and free documentation, and finally the development of social networks that enable endless dissemination of information.

Painting as a Means of Building the Image of Space

Murals, or legalization of painting freely in a specific zone, are tools many cities often resort to in the process of creating a certain image.¹¹ Berlin, after the fall of the Wall, along with New York, established itself as one of global centers of creativity and progressive artistic attitude, and have been maintaining such image partially due to murals and street art. Notable presence of public art, murals and street art sends out the message of cosmopolitanism and progressiveness, but such images can occasionally be unfounded. In addition to Berlin, the idea of "city of murals" and systematically planned public painting was adopted by cities such as Loggia, Tirana, Lion, and in our country, along with Belgrade on several occasions, Kraljevo and Užice.

In the history of public art of Belgrade, it is possible to clearly mark the stages of systemic, planned painting – in 1989, as part of preparations for the Summit of Non-Aligned Countries, in 2008 and 2009 as part of Belef (Belgrade summer festival) and starting from 2012, until 2015, with activities within Mikser festival. Each of them had the same goal – to influence the impression of the city by artistic means. The youngest of these actions achieved the most drastic result. The whole campaign was focused on a single neighborhood. Savamala is a part of the city that was gradually transformed by various means at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century; from transit and neglected, to what was described by phrases such as the *center of creative industry* and *Belgrade's new bohemian quarter*, which in a relatively short time became an important point on the tourist map of the city. To use the language of marketing – Savamala has become a brand, a package that offers art, entertainment and *the spirit of urban Belgrade*.

A significant role in this process was played by systematic painting. Even before the Mikser festival 2014, which was undoubtedly the most generous in terms of the number

¹¹ Kelner, D. (2004) *Medijska kultura*, Beograd: Clío, p. 418.

of works that were created, smaller projects started shaping the artistic image of Savamala. A cycle of street drawings Ghosts of Savamala (authors: Kriška Studio, part of the City Acupuncture project), and among them the most quantitatively memorable project Red Bull Door Deco (earlier edition of Mikser festival), in a very effective way marked the onset of this process. Painted doors and gentle and cheerful drawings of spirit-like creatures showed diversity, playfulness and joy – in short, they illustrated the desired image of the neighborhood. The works that were created as part of the Mikser program in 2014, and those that followed, determined and further developed this image. Apart from a few subtle details in the series Ghosts of Savamala (rainbow socks and hairy legs of two figures) and nominally the feminist nature of Femikser Street Art, a part of the Mikser Festival program from 2012, and the mural The People by the Russian artist Misha Most, there is a noticeable absence of social or social engagement of individual works, and their distinctly ennobling role. Concentrated in a small area of Savamala, the quantity of works whose primary function is visual enrichment and transformation of a large part of the neglected space, creates or establishes the image of the neighborhood as a space for art and space of art. The openness in the conceptual sense that characterized this action through the diversity of approaches, styles and motifs of the works that are its product, created in the physical space an atmosphere of artistic openness and provided a visual component in the process of branding Savamala.

Football Fans and Murals – Territoriality, Collective Identity, Politics

A separate category of interventions in the city area consists of football fans' murals, interventions that resemble street art and *marking* of the territory with colors. Although different fan groups are created by various groups, aesthetics and modus operandi, with rare exceptions, are the same. Skillfulness in their execution varies. To understand this group of works, just like for example graffiti, it is necessary to understand the subculture it belongs to - and in Belgrade, that subculture is massive. Territory, colors, social relations and interaction of groups, determinants of identity and collective identity, ideological determination are just some of the factors that must be taken into account when analyzing and determining the function of fan murals and other pictorial interventions. The category of *football fan* and the use of the *fan* in this specific context does not apply to mere liking of one club and healthy sports rivalry in relation to a rival club or clubs. Cheering and being a football fan in this case refers to belonging to a group in which collective identity is a key point, and belonging and loyalty to a group is a matter of social prestige, as well as a measure of social success within a relatively small community. The fan we are dealing with here is the one described by the colloquial designation "hooligan". Extreme football fans are commonly referred to in such a way, but what separates the fans we are talking about here from "ordinary" groups of football hooligans is their involvement in politics, ideology and crime. Ivan Čolović¹² and Ivan Đorđević¹³ dealt with the transformation of the collective self from the context of the stadium into the

12 Čolović, I. (1997) *Politika simbola: ogleđi o političkoj antropologiji*, Beograd: Radio B92.

13 Đorđević, I. (2015) *Antropolog među navijačima*, Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek.

collective self utilized in wars in the former Yugoslavia, providing valuable material for the understanding the generations of fans who are active today and seemingly illogical links between hooligan groups, right-wing politics and nationalism that is conspicuously present on their murals and other pictorial interventions.

With this in mind, the motifs that refer to medieval Serbia, the insistence on Cyrillic, which mimics Miroslav's Cyrillic lettering and traditionalism in the works of fan groups, among which Zvezda fans are leaders in this regard, becomes logical. Thus, in verbal inscriptions, the club is often referred to as "sacred", and dealing with the issue of Kosovo and "family values" becomes an element that, in terms of importance and frequency of representation, challenges the sport-related subjects.

Documentary and investigative television series *The Real Football Factories* and *Insider*, which dealt with the topic of football hooligan groups in Serbia, revealed a part of the brutality and violence that characterizes them, but also their connections with the criminal underground. A fan, therefore, in the context of modern fan groups in Belgrade, is not a fan of football who follows the game of the club he is rooting for on weekends, but a person whose primary identity determinant is belonging to a group that has political and ideological attitudes, who nurtures the image of a macho hooligan who is no stranger to violence.

In terms of technique and usage of visual means and symbols, the motifs of the works of these groups are very similar, with exceptions that are conditioned by the ideological determinants adopted by the group. Fans rarely resort to ephemeral materials and techniques. Façade paints, concrete paints and aerosol are all in use. The foundation of the works consists of the colors of the club (red and white for Zvezda, black and white for Partizan, blue and white for OFK Belgrade, blue, black and white for FK Rad, etc), coat of arms, in different ways typographically stylized slogans and the name of the club and the group. It's all about size and quantity. All four groups used stencils as a quick and inexpensive multiplication technique.

The portrait appears as a motif sporadically, in the function of paying posthumous tribute (there will be more talk about this function of the painting in a separate chapter) and in this case realism is pursued. Fan groups in their pictorial and propaganda activities abundantly use symbols that are not exclusively related to football (Celtic or Odin cross which is a global, racist symbol of white supremacists, the confederation flag that is also associated with racism, cockade, coat of arms with four S letters, coat of arms of Belgrade, Serbian flag, etc), all with the aim of demonstrating ideological convictions and demonstrating power. The use of symbols (some of which are extremely problematic) testifies to the ideological and political determination of groups and illustrates the claim that the spheres of activity and interest of hooligan groups are not nearly limited to sports and stadiums. One of the more radical examples of mixing fan and ideological propaganda is the works and activities of the fan group of FK Rad, United Force. An objectively small group drew attention to itself by participating in right-wing public rallies, conspicuously propagating racial, religious and national hatred.

Portrait as a Symbol – a Familiar Face in the Function of Representing Ideas

Portraits of famous, socially and media-exposed contemporaries and historical figures, whether triggered by current events or historical reminiscence, carry significant associative value, and can become a visual metaphor or symbol. For example, Bob Marley, a Jamaican musician, is the most famous figure in the history of reggae music and the Rastafarian movement; the mention of Bob Marley is associated with both, and his portrait ceases to be a mere visual representation of his face and becomes a symbol, because it contains more than immediate meaning. Similar examples include portraits of Adolf Hitler, Che Guevara, Marilyn Monroe, Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, and others. A portrait that has acquired symbolic value often appears in the public space as a carrier of a message relating to the current moment in the local space, which in some way refers to the values that such a portrait in a metaphorical sense represents. These examples have gained the status of global recognition, but the same principle applies to portraits of locally famous people and fictional characters. However, the consensus over the values that portraits represent is not always granted, so they are often subjected to additional interventions by those who do not share the same values. These interventions represent an illustration of a conflict of opinion, an uncensored and anonymous form of discussion in the public space. Sometimes it is a banal mockery, like drawing a mustache, and sometimes it has more complex content.

Painting as a Means of Posthumous Tribute – Memorial Portraits

Posthumously devoted portraits of people unknown to the general public are characteristic for Serbia, and especially for the facades of Belgrade. In the conventional sense, it is not about individuals who have in any way indebted the local community with their work during their lifetime, but most often about individuals whose often violent death shook a part of that community, or about individuals who had strong ties with a social group (most often football hooligan groups). Local-geographical determinants are of great importance for these works, as they appear most often within residential neighborhoods, in the spaces between buildings, in parks used by the neighboring community, or on school buildings in neighborhoods which the life of the portrayed person is associated with. What makes this group of works particularly interesting is that the very idea of these works represents a combination of elements of sacral, which is atypical for the contemporary image in the public space, and the elements of a specific brand of collectivity, which are one of the main reasons for their creation. From an anthropological point of view, speaking about contemporary verbal models of communication in the context of “beyond” and “sacral”, Ivan Čolović presents an argument that is fully applicable to visual language:

The study of communication in magic, ritual (sacred or secular), in myth or solemnity, shows that it takes place through special codes or sublanguages which enable man to establish a connection with the otherwise unfathomable world of the otherworldly forces, gods,

*heroes, and the same connection with other participants of that rite or feast. The peculiarity of these codes, verbal and non-verbal, is not something that is only reached by analysis, but it is, on the contrary, highlighted in the foreground.*¹⁴

The function of these portraits can most accurately be described as memorial, but the means in this case surpasses the traditional ceremony associated with burial and cemetery, which are expressions of personal grief or respect of relatives and friends. In this case, personal grief is transferred to the level of public, to the level of the entire community, that is, to the level of collective. The sacral or ritual element of which Čolović speaks, can be recognized in these works in several layers. Shifting the center of gravity of events from the level of personal to the level of public, i.e. the transformation of the personal sense of loss to the level of general loss. This way, the entire local community, without having any say of their own, becomes involved in the ceremony of grief for the deceased. Verbal messages accompanying these portraits, references to *the beyond* are also noticeable. In addition to the name, years of birth and death (information that appears on tombstones), messages not unlike epitaphs also follow these works, which further emphasize the sacral nature of these paintings which then reflects upon the part of public space in which they are placed.

The third level at which the elements of the sacral are particularly noticeable is communities' treatment of these paintings. Unlike other self-initiated visual interventions (especially in residential neighborhoods), they manage to avoid whitewashing, removal or subsequent interventions. Such an attitude of a local community that has previously been mobilized to participate in collective grief serves as an argument to the sacral nature of these works. Their destruction is not only an intervention in a common space, it is much more than that an expression of gross disrespect for the deceased, and as such much of an attack on a memory or "monument" than a trivial act of cleaning walls. Unlike the portraits of celebrities that appear at a specific moment, whose creation is due to media pomp regarding the news of their death, which appeal to empathy on a very generalized universal level, the portraits in question operate on a much more specific level, referring directly to the pathos of the very act of death of the individual, and the spiritual continuity of his connection with the neighborhood and the social group to which he belonged during his lifetime.

Memorial portraits dedicated to famous actors, those amongst them that are not being painted at the moment associated with the news of death, differ from memorial portraits-obituaries by not containing the element of pathos, but by being focused primarily at the public image and the work of an individual. It is notable that portraits of actors are often based on their roles, so, for example, the famous actor Danilo Bata Stojković, is paid tribute through the painting of Ilija Čvorović and Laki Topalović, some of the most famous roles he played.

¹⁴ Чоловић, И. (2000) *Бордел райника – Фолклор, йолиџика и райи*, Земун: Библиотека XX век; Београд: Чигоја штампа.

Painting as a Means of Ideological and Political Propaganda

Political and ideological propaganda is based on action in the public sphere, and the public sphere in this context implies not only public space, but also electronic and print media, and the virtual space of the Internet. However, only those examples of political and ideological propaganda that rely on painting and symbols in the physical, public space are relevant to us. Probably the most effective use of the image in public space in the service of political propaganda is the *Otpor fist*, by the student resistance movement. The symbol itself, a raised fist, is a reference to the anti-fascist struggle in the Spanish Civil War, and the raised fist and slogan *No Pasaran!* have become universal symbols of antifascism and non-abandonment. So, a symbol whose history significantly determines its meaning, in this case is a form of political propaganda that is clearly ideologically directed. In the period from 2013 to 2017, there were not many extensive or striking campaigns that rely on the symbol and multiplication, but this does not mean that the principle itself is neglected – on the contrary. Noticeably, the focus shifted from small, quick interventions (such as stencils) to murals as the dominant means. Political and ideological propaganda and symbols were abundantly found among football hooligans' works, either as independent elements or incorporated into larger compositions.

Hate Speech and Responses

Graphic signs (sometimes unrelated to the original meaning and context from which they originate) that are appropriated and incorporated into visual identities of groups and organizations that propagate racial, religious or national intolerance, have become independent associations – these are known as the hate symbols. Some of them are generally known, such as swastikas, and their presence provokes negative reactions from a large part of the public, and their use is punishable by law. However, an incomparably larger number of hate symbols that are not as commonly known or represent a “variation on the theme” of over-obvious hate symbols, appear often in the public space, either as parts of wider political and ideological propaganda, or as elements of fan murals and inscriptions, or independently. Unnoticed by most users of public space, due to a certain degree of coding, symbols of hatred, except for the most obvious ones, linger on the walls for a long time without causing particularly passionate reactions from the general public. In public space, they serve as tools of promoting ideas that are socially unacceptable and as such do not have open access to electronic media, printed media, social networks (because they sanction the language of hate to some extent), so the only spaces of propagating such ideas are personal blogs, semi-open forums – walls. This type of activity in public space is followed by responses, using the same means – spraypaint most commonly. Various groups and individuals engage in crossing hate speech over. These back-and-forth actions on certain locations have been seen to last for months.

Painting as a Means of Socially Engaged and Political Commentary

Socially engaged art, in the context of painting in public space, consists of works which in addition to visual qualities and personal poetics, hold socially relevant mes-



Figure 2: *Pravda (Justice)*, TKV
(photo: Andrijana Danilović)

sages and initiate an open discussion. What separates the works of socially engaged art from political or ideological propaganda, although they are often a political stance par excellence, is their goal, that is – the absence of striving for power as a goal of action. They may have an ideological connotation, but they are not utilized as a means of promoting the political activity of an organization or group.

Conclusion

A multitude of categories that have been established during a three-year period of researching roles of painting in the public space of Belgrade, lead to the obvious conclusion that painting is largely recognized as a powerful and suggestive tool in achieving various goals. The use of painting as a means of ennobling and transforming space from ordinary to artistic through the presence of a painting, as a means of commercial promotion, lobbying, building the image of space, marking the territory and demonstration of territoriality, building the image of a social group, promoting the idea and value system through portraits that have symbolic weight, demonstration of patriotism and constructs of collective identity, political and ideological promotion and as a means of sending socially engaged messages, confirm and firmly establish the initial assumption

that, apart from art-oriented motives, the image as a means is also utilized for non-artistic purposes.

All this serves as an argument that the image in the public space, despite completely different and often conflicting positions and reasons for which it comes to be, tends, and largely succeeds, to influence the way we perceive the space we use every day, but also the way we perceive our place in it. The widest spectrum of messages is being sent through the use of painting to each one of us, whether we are willing to engage them or not. These should not be overlooked, especially since each of them is a publicly stated attitude of an individual or a social group that fights for visibility, affection and mobilization of the like-minded. Understanding the function of the paintings that we encounter every day is a way to understand the people who live in that space, their habits, attitudes and behavioral models. They are also a way to draw attention to those topics that, for various reasons (tabooization, censorship or social unacceptability) are not represented in the media, but are very current among people who live in the observed space.

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Андријана Даниловић

Београд

ГРАД И СЛИКА: ЗНАЧАЈ И ФУНКЦИЈА СЛИКАРСКИХ ИНТЕРВЕНЦИЈА У ЈАВНОМ ПРОСТОРУ

Сажетак: У уметничко-истраживачком пројекту *Град и слика – значај и функција сликарских интервенција у јавном простору* анализирају се могуће сликарске интервенције у јавном простору кроз теоријско истраживање засновано на анализи већ постојећих интервенција на подручју ужег центра и неколико удаљених београдских насеља. Овај интердисциплинарни пројекат тежи категоризацији репрезентативних примера различитих типова интервенција на основу њихове функције, у односу на уметнички, друштвени, политички и контекст односа са институцијама. На основу резултата истраживања може се закључити да богату разноврсност сликарских интервенција Београд не дугује само уметничком деловању на различитим нивоима, већ да је у огромној мери заступљена и употреба слике из неуметничких побуда, које варирају од прости комерцијалне промоције до идеолошке пропаганде и говора мржње, чиме се релевантност слике у јавном простору савременог града вишеструко потврђује.

Кључне речи: слика, јавни простор, мурал, улична уметност, графити