

Aesthetic and Ethical Aspects of Responsibility for Mural Galleries (Comparative Analysis of Collections in Zaspá/ Gdańsk, Łódź and Dulwich/ London)

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to draw attention to the aesthetic and ethical aspects of responsibility for creating mural galleries. The three examples – Monumental Art Collection in Gdańsk/Zaspá, Urban Forms Gallery in Łódź, Dulwich Outdoor Gallery in London – have common original aims, directly related to the current problems of districts or cities in which they were created. The analysis of these collections should help us answer the following questions:

1. What happened and when to make such a visually intense and massive interference in a public space as mural galleries possible at all?
2. Are collections of murals actually galleries or is the term “gallery” just a conceptual metaphor



that facilitates actions taken in a public space?

3. What values – aesthetic, ethical, and correlated with them social, artistic, urban, cognitive, and educational values – can be associated with the phenomenon of murals?
4. Should we protect and restore murals or leave them to the “natural urban element”?

Keywords:

Aesthetics; ethics; murals; gallery; Gdańsk; Lodz; Urban Forms; Dulwich Outdoor Gallery; London; restauration; conservation

Resumen

Aspectos estéticos y éticos de la responsabilidad de las galerías de murales (Análisis comparativo de colecciones en Zaspá / Gdańsk, Łódź y Dulwich / Londres)

El objetivo del artículo es llamar la atención sobre los aspectos estéticos y éticos de la responsabilidad de crear galerías de murales. Los tres ejemplos- Monumental Art Collection en Gdansk / Zaspá, Urban Forms Gallery en Łódź, Dulwich Outdoor Gallery en Londres - tienen objetivos originales comunes, directamente relacionados con los problemas actuales de los distritos o ciudades en los que se crearon. El análisis de estas colecciones debería ayudarnos a responder las siguientes preguntas:

1. ¿Qué sucedió y cuándo hacer posible una interferencia tan intensa y visualmente tan intensa en un espacio público como las galerías de murales?
2. ¿Las colecciones de murales en realidad son galerías o el término “galería” es solo una metáfora conceptual que facilita las acciones tomadas en un espacio público?
3. ¿Qué valores, estéticos, éticos y correlacionados con ellos, valores sociales, artísticos, urbanos, cognitivos y educativos pueden asociarse con el fenómeno de los murales?
4. ¿Debemos proteger y restaurar los murales o dejarlos en el “elemento urbano natural”?

Palabras clave:

Estética; ética; murales; galería; Gdansk; Lodz; Urban Forms; Galería al aire libre de Dulwich; Londres; restauración conservación

Resum

Aspectes estètics i ètics de la responsabilitat de les galeries de murals (Anàlisi comparativa de col·leccions a Zaspá / Gdansk, Łódź i Dulwich / Londres)

L'objectiu de l'article és cridar l'atenció sobre els aspectes estètics i ètics de la responsabilitat de crear galeries murals. Els tres exemples: Monumental Art Collection a Gdańsk / Zaspá, Urban Forms Gallery a Łódź, Dulwich Outdoor Gallery de Londres, tenen objectius originals comuns, directament relacionats amb els problemes actuals dels districtes o ciutats en què van ser creats. L'anàlisi d'aquestes col·leccions ens hauria d'ajudar a respondre a les preguntes següents:

1. Què va passar i quan fer possible una interferència visual intensa i massiva en un espai públic com a galeries murals?
2. Les col·leccions de murals realment són galeries o el terme “galeria” és només una metàfora conceptual que facilita les accions dutes a terme en un espai públic?
3. Quins valors, estètics, ètics i relacionats amb els valors socials, artístics, urbans, cognitius i educatius, poden associar-se al fenomen dels murals?
4. Cal protegir i restaurar els murals o deixar-los al “element urbà natural”?

Paraules clau:

Estètica; ètica; murals; galeria; Gdansk; Lodz; Urban Forms; Dulwich Outdoor Gallery; Londres; restauració; conservació



It might be said that murals – large-format external paintings – have accompanied us in a particularly intensive manner for the last ten years, as it can be assumed that the year 2008 constitutes an important boundary line in this respect, which will be explained later in the text. Murals are not new, but they are currently being created in a very specific way, that is, in a more or less institutionalised manner. This means that this type of art is formed in clusters called galleries. Many more objectives are assigned to murals than just decorative, aesthetic or commemorative functions (as used to be the case). The universal presence of murals, however, has become problematic. Our attitude to this type of art is extremely polarised. Some wish to continue creating, protecting and preserving murals, while others would like to ban their creation.

An interesting example of the first kind of approach is the London Mural Preservation Society established to “protect, preserve and celebrate murals in the communities where they were created”². The Society has a website with extensive murals documentation, which is rare. It contains descriptions of works prepared in accordance with the museum convention, including the name of the author, the title of the work, its dimensions, technique, location, condition, as well as its founders and even the history of its creation. It can be said that this initiative treats murals very seriously and meets the expectations of art historians, endowing historical paintings with the status of “endangered species”. Aesthetic considerations are balanced here by ethical responsibility for preserving the memory of events and experiences of local communities. The legitimacy of this struggle for the preservation of murals is illustrated by the complex values of the series of works created in Brixton after the riots in 1981 which the London Mural Preservation Society has been taking care of.

On the other hand, there are many people demanding that the creation of murals should be stopped. Sometimes even the very same artists who until recently painted numerous murals themselves have started to wage a war against murals. A banner expressing literary this kind of sentiment “Peace unto Walls, War on Murals” was created by the Polish artist M-City during Katowice Street Art Air Festival in 2016 (Grabowska 2016).

It is therefore not surprising that the so-called mural galleries have become objects of criticism. I would like to analyse the structure, aims and values of three selected galleries in the following cities/districts: Dulwich/London, Zaspá/Gdańsk and Łódź. Basic information about the galleries is included in Table 1. This allows us to immediately compare the most important data. The very name of the institution

2.- The London Mural Preservation Society, <http://www.londonmuralpreservationsociety.com/about/>.



creating murals explains to a large extent the method of financing and the degree of involvement of municipal authorities or the scale of bottom-up activities. The number and the rank of institutions supporting the main organisers testify to comprehensive, well-thought-out, cooperation-oriented actions taken on the basis of the opinion of experts. The time of undertaken actions indicates that the second decade of our century is crucial. Data on the location and the largest distances between the murals constituting the galleries illustrate not only the territorial scope but also the integrity of the gallery and the aspirations of the organisers.

I have chosen these three examples as they have common original aims, directly related to the current problems of districts or cities in which they were created. At the same time, the manner of achieving these goals is very different, ranging from the location, the historical value of buildings, through the scale of objects, to the way of curating, financing and protecting the works.

This analysis should help us answer the following questions:

1. What happened and when to make such a visually intense and massive interference in a public space as mural galleries possible at all?
2. Are collections of murals actually galleries or is the term “gallery” just a conceptual metaphor that facilitates actions taken in a public space?
3. What values – aesthetic, ethical, and correlated with them social, artistic, urban, cognitive, and educational values – can be associated with the phenomenon of murals?
4. Should we protect and restore murals or leave them to the “natural urban element”?

Table 1. General information about the galleries/collections

The name of the gallery/collection	Monumental Art Collection	Urban Forms Gallery	Dulwich Outdoor Gallery
The name of the institution animating the murals	Instytut Kultury Miejskiej [City Culture Institute] as integrated activities of three projects: Monumental Art Festival, Gdańsk School of Mural and Local Guides	Fundacja Wspierania Sztuki Ulicy "Outline" [Street Art Support Foundation "Outline" (2 works) Activity continued under the name Fundacja Urban Forms [Urban Forms Foundation] from 10th January 2010	2012 – Dulwich Picture Gallery (cooperation between Ingrid Beazley and Stik) 2013 – a collaboration between the Dulwich Picture Gallery Education Department and Street Art London for Baroque The Streets: Dulwich Street Art Festival 2013; the Dulwich Outdoor Gallery is established
Location: country/ city/district	Poland /Gdańsk/Zaspa	Poland/Łódź /the whole city, especially the city centre	United Kingdom/London /East Dulwich
The largest distance between the murals	1.7 km (21 min walk)	9.6 km (2.20 min walk)	5.8 km (1.13 min walk)
Period of activity and important dates	1997 – last work in 2017 (with a long break) 1997 – first festival 2009 – revival of activity 2011 – Local Guides started 2017 – last work	2008 – last works in 2019 2011– projects realised under the name of the Urban Forms Gallery started	2012 – last works in 2019 2013 – Baroque the Streets: Dulwich Street Art Festival 2016 – the street art gallery/shop opened up for the Dulwich Festival
Financing method	Usually combined: 1. public: through special programmes/projects/grants; obtained from the bottom up by the local community or organisation; 2. private: local societies, housing communities, owners of buildings, sponsors, crowdfunding.		
	Public: essentially works commissioned by the Municipality of Gdańsk (via the City Culture Institute), some co-financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (via Gdańsk School of Mural)	Public: 6 works directly commissioned by the Municipality of Łódź, 2 works commissioned by the University of Łódź, 2 works commissioned by the Medical University of Łódź, 2 murals implemented as diploma works of students of Strzemiński Academy of Art in Łódź	
Organisational support (at various stages of activity)	Instytut Kultury Miejskiej [City Culture Institute], 39/40 Długi Targ St., 80-830 Gdańsk Plama. Gdański Archipelag Kultury 2 [Spot. Gdańsk Archipelago of Culture], 11 Pilotów St., 80-460 Gdańsk	No organisational support	The annual Dulwich Festival ² Street Art London ³ (Baroque The Streets: Dulwich Street Art Festival 2013) Artists' Open House event ⁴
Substantive support	Gdańska Szkoła Muralu/Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Gdańsku [the Gdańsk School of Mural/the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk]		Dulwich Picture Gallery, Gallery Rd, London SE21 7AD
Sponsors	In selected projects		



Institutionalisation of murals and the year 2008 proposed as the turning point in their recent history

The main reason for the creation of mural galleries is the institutionalisation of the process of creating this type of art. Four types of institutionalisation can be distinguished: museum-artistic, urban-activist, official-urban and Internet.

[1.] The first museum-artistic type of institutionalisation concerns the relationship between street art and fine art, and thus the transition of art emerging in the streets to the mainstream “world of art”. This “world of art” should be understood in accordance with the still existing (though criticised) institutional concept of a work of art proposed by George Dickie and its particularly interesting development proposed by Timothy Binkley (Binkley1976, 90–109). In a nutshell, the point is that: a work of art in the classificatory sense is 1) an artefact 2) on which some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain social institution (the art world) has conferred the status of candidate for appreciation” (Dickie 1971, 101). In practice, art experts associated with important art exhibition sites decide whether or not something becomes a work of art. Museums and galleries – thanks to a wide range of activities, including educational, research and publishing ones – are also places of professionalised art promotion. Above all, however, they are places of protection of works of art. Enormous, systematic efforts and substantial financial resources are behind such comprehensive care of art. The mainstream world of art knows what it does and knows the cultural and material value of its exhibits. It is not the case with street art. In my opinion, this is the main reason why the presence of street art in a museum is still a big event, and street artists, apart from the classics of the genre (Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat), are rarely presented at permanent exhibitions.

In connection with the museum-and-artistic process of street art institutionalisation, some attribute great importance to the famous Street Art exhibition at the Tate Modern from 2008. They believe that the London Museum for the first time openly “defined the problem of the absence of street art in the official discourse of art (at least at the level of the largest art institutions) despite its enormous impact on everyday reality” (Biskupski 2017, 50). In my opinion, the role of this exhibition is overestimated. It can be said that it was a one-time promotion of street art and that it had a very specific character. First of all, the Museum’s facade from the Thames side was decorated with – literary – six murals (created by a total of eight artists: Blu, Nunca, JR, Sixeart, and two artist collectives: Faile and Os Gemeos) for just three months. The murals were created on a specially prepared surface so as not to damage the walls and enable their efficient removal. Five other artists from Madrid (3TTMan, Spok, Nano 4814, El Tono and Nuria) were deployed at the time “in the street” outside the Museum (only maps with the locations of their works



were distributed there). None of the thirteen artists is listed in the Tate Modern collection (neither Keith Haring nor Jean-Michel Basquiat). I think that the Museum benefited from this cooperation much more than the muralists – obtaining an unusual facade, perfectly-looking on the Internet for promotional purposes. Street art was promoted as a way of identifying the place, the building or the city, as a role model to follow, an example of courage, or a symbol of modernity and change.

As Teresa Latuszewska-Syrda, the President of the Urban Forms Foundation, reminiscences: “In 2008, the London Tate Modern presented on the facade of its building the works of the artists: Os Gemeos, Nunca, Sixeart, JR, Blu and Faile. At that point, I thought to myself: why not do it here? Why not in Łódź? After all, the history of Łódź resembles the history of street art to some extent: Łódź is a young city, just like street art. Łódź is a city of revolution. Its golden age fell within the period of the great industrial revolution, the times when artistic revolutions were as frequent as technical inventions. Its traces can be seen everywhere [...]” (Latuszewska-Syrda 2016, 6). And in 2008, Teresa Latuszewska-Syrda established the “Outline” Foundation for Street Art Support, which later evolved into the Urban Forms Foundation.

[2] The activity of the Polish Urban Forms Foundation is, however, an example of the second type of institutionalisation of street art, which we can call urban-activist. It is about very intensive grassroots attempts to create a new value in the city space, to change its image, to create an alternative to a neglected, decaying city. At the same time, it is connected with a special kind of faith in the impact of art, in particular street art (regardless of doubts surrounding this assumption (cf. Danto 1985, 171–189). This belief is also shared by Eduardo Hermida, the creator of the gallery Las Meninas de Canido in the district of Canido in Ferrol (Spain), also established in 2008, who created a gallery dedicated to only one work – *Las Meninas* (1656) by Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez and who states: “[it] is an example of how art can change the morphology of a forgotten urban area and give hope back to a city affected by an economic crisis that has punished it for many years. Through the contributions of the local residents and other artists from different disciplines, the district is becoming an international reference of urban art” (Hermida, n.d.). Approx. 200 artists worked during the last festival in Cunido in 2018 and approx. 30,000 people participated in it (Ruiz 2018).

[3] Such successes should be of interest to municipal authorities. And this is indeed the case in some cities. Then the course of the institutionalisation process is slightly different and has somewhat different goals. This third model consists in taking control of illegal urban art, taming it and including municipal authorities in the programme



of its creation. The best example of this type of activity is probably the largest gallery of this type in Europe – the Galeria de Arte Urbana of the Departamento de Património Cultural [Department of Cultural Heritage] in Lisbon (Portugal), which was also established in 2008. The GAU can boast cooperation with 510 artists. The organisation also has its clearly defined mission, strategy and code of conduct.²

The year 2008 may seem doubtful as the turning point due to two other world-famous organisations involved in the creation of mural galleries. Probably in terms of the number of murals and the well-thought-out evolution of the organisational structure, the American city of Philadelphia is the most recognisable. The Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti Network, later known as the Mural Arts Program (as its branch existing since 1986), and currently Mural Arts Philadelphia (existing since 2016)³ may pass for the prototype of institutionalisation of street art in the official-urban version. However, the proof of the need for the professionalised commercial creation of murals is the French organisation CitéCréation which has created murals since 1978.⁴

The 2008 threshold may, therefore, seem arbitrary. However, in my opinion, the year 2008 indicates a certain special feature of muralism of the last decade. Murals arise from the special tension between street art and fine art. This type of art is not about decorating walls, preventing vandalism or pleasing people. The point is to promote a new (in the mind of the organisers) genre of independent, spontaneous, egalitarian, grassroots art stimulated by the urban element (see photos 1–18: various types of dialogues between murals and other genres of art). Ingrid Beazley, the originator of Dulwich Outdoor Gallery and the author of the thus titled book *Street Art, Fine Art* draws attention to the following problem: “There is a great deal of prejudice in the art world” (Beazley 2015, 12). Can muralism, however, overcome any prejudices? On the idealistic level, the organisers express the following hopes: (1.) that graffiti can be tamed, (2.) that murals will help educate the museum audience, (3.) that art historians will start to write about street art as seriously as about any other type of art. In my opinion, the more we argue for the dialogue between street art and fine art, the more we emphasise the polarisation of both these artistic worlds. And thus none of the above wishes comes true. In fact, muralism is so traditional and conservative in its aesthetic expression that it must constantly confront itself with what is clearly defined as art. Otherwise it ceases to be distinguishable as something new and original, desirable and worth investing in.

It is not even known exactly what a mural is, what distinguishes it from the two

2.- Galeria de Arte Urbana, <http://gau.cm-lisboa.pt/en/gau.html>.

3.- Mural Arts Philadelphia, <https://www.muralarts.org/>.

4.- CitéCréation, <https://citecreation.fr/en/>.



2. PGR ART Crew (Mikołaj R. Jurkowski, Sylwester Gałuszka), *Witkacy's Code* (the composition based on a binary coded quote from the novel "622 Falls of Bung or Demonic Woman" by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (aka Witkacy): "Art is a separate world, it is the ultimate reflection of the unity of being", Gdańsk, 8h Pilotów 9 St., 2009. Photo by Artur Andrzej.



1. Anna Taut, Justyna Posiecz-Polkowska, Anna Wrona, Alicja Piskorz, Alicja Czarna, Natalia Buza, Agata Kędra, Wojciech Woźniak, Emil Goś, Michał Węgrzyn, *Homage to Polish Painting* (the mural contains quotes from works by Tomasz Tatarkiewicz, Jan Tarasin, Stefan Gierowski and Jan Dobkowski, the diptych concept by Jacek Zdybel, Gdańsk School of Mural, Gdańsk, 9a and 11c Bajana St., 2012. Photo by Wioletta Kazimierska-Jerzyk.



3. Meisal (aka Meisal 461, Meisal Lasiem, Meis1), *Kobieta – JA – Opiekun* [Woman – ME – Protector], the artist's own technique, the painting combined with the installation, Łódź, 58 Żeligowskiego St., 2017. The 2nd edition of the Off Gallery Project realised by the Urban Forms Foundation. Photo by Paweł Trzeźwiński/Urban Forms Foundation Archive.



6. Opieemme, *Black Hole Sun (Tribute to Chris Cornell)*, 2017, Łódź, 5/7 Pogonowskiego St. Photo by Paweł Trzeźwiński/Urban Form Foundation.



4. Jankiel Adler, *Woman – a Tribute to Paul Klee*, 1940s, the artist's technique, plywood, 46.5 x 6 cm, Distinguished Jewish Artists. From the Collection of David Malek and Signum Foundation [exhibition catalog], Museum of the History of Lodz, Łódź 2004, photo by Mariusz Łukawski, p. 88.



5. The letters of Meisal's tag "found" in the painting by Adler (the initial phase of the project) reminding of the roots of Meisal's work, i.e. graffiti. Photo: Urban Forms Foundation Archive.



7. Stik, *Eliza and Mary Davidson*, 2012, view at night. 150 Court Lane, London. Photo by Wioletta Kazimierska-Jerzyk.



8. Tilly Kettle, *Eliza and Mary Davidson*, c. 1784, 127 x 101.9 cm, oil on canvas, London, Dulwich Picture Gallery. CC0.

most competitive terms "graffiti" and "street art" (detailed terminological issues are considered in Gralińska-Toborek, Kazimierska-Jerzyk 2014, 167–178). Nobody has determined how large a mural should be. There are records contained in Guinness World Records⁵, but from an axiological and cognitive point of view they are not important at all. We do not know what technique should be used to create a mural, there is no rule. Different types of wall decoration have been used for ages, and so has been the case with murals: we have simple paintings, anamorphoses, templates, reliefs, sgraffiti, paintings incorporating light, video mapping, ceramic mosaics, and various combinations of techniques using the structure of architecture. A mural can be laid vertically and horizontally, and not necessarily on a wall. Usually, it is created legally, but cities do not have the tools to control the quality of these works, their content or landscape values. Although the socio-political genesis of graffiti and street art has become blurred, it continues to come alive in discussions about murals, as graffiti lends contemporary urban artists the myth of urbanity. This myth is essential to maintain the relationship of this art with the city. And it needs to be noted that, unfortunately, street art may paradoxically not have anything to do with

5.- Guinness World Records has reported: "The largest spray paint mural by a team measures 5,728.62 m² [...] and was created by Eduardo Kobra (Brazil) and his team, displayed and measured at Cacau Show Headquarters, in Itapevi, São Paulo, Brazil, on 10 November 2017", <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/114466-largest-spray-paint-mural-by-a-team>; "The largest outdoor mural measures 23,688.7 m² [...] and was achieved by the Industry Promotion Division, Incheon Metropolitan City, Incheon Port Authority, Korea TBT Co. Ltd. and Incheon Business Information Technopark, Korea (all South Korea), in Incheon, South Korea, on 20 September 2018", <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/largest-outdoor-mural>.



the city: “Even the term ‘Street Art’ is problematic, as many works today are no longer created in, or for the streets”.⁶

To sum up, art emerging in the streets (of cities and villages) in a strategic (purposeful) manner has mixed the qualities of graffiti, street art and decorative painting. Ten years ago, Cedar Lewisohn optimistically called this impasse a “living dialogue” (Lewisohn 2008, 9). Today two features that effectively promote street art are mentioned openly: spreadability and accesibility, as the life of this type of art is not happening in the streets but above all on Web 2.0. The most important is everything that can be successfully “like-d” and “share-d” on social media: an excellent photography, a witty interaction between the site and the artistic interference (usually described not so responsibly as site-specificity), an interesting anecdote, or some sort of highest performance (something “the most”, “the longest”, “the first”, etc.).

[4] The above-presented phenomenon is an example of the fourth type of institutionalisation – the Internet type, which is conducted very differently than in the previously described models, where we observed the hierarchy of art, the transition from low to high, from worse to better. This process is not about vertical movement. Instead of the hierarchy of highbrow – middlebrow – lowbrow culture, nowbrow culture, has been mentioned for a long time (sf. Sontag 2001, 293-304), and in particular nowadays (in the era of the Internet and Web 2.0 (Seabrook 2001; Biskupski 2017)). Already at the end of the 1970s, Timothy Binkley noted that in the so-called world of art, not only institutions and their representatives were important, but above all the mechanisms they used. Binkley described them as specifying/indexing (Binkley 1976, 90–109). It is enough for artists to define their products as art and for the works to later find their way to the appropriate circulation in which they can be identified by means of an index. This may be an index of artists’ names or gallery names, but we might as well find something in the index of publications of an art critic. There are numerous options. This concept successfully anticipates the essence of network communication, the operation of search engines, or information hashtagging. Conceptual chaos is an obvious attribute of knowledge found on the Web. Graffiti, mural and street art are used interchangeably, and their popularity is determined by the environment. An ordinary recipient most often uses the term graffiti, regardless of the size of the work and its legality. Artists, on the other hand, know that graffiti is limited by the reach of their hand: “a mural is when you get a lift” (Litorowicz et al. 2016, 35). Street art is most often associated with the intervention type of independent and counter-cultural interference in a public space. Since, of all these words, the term “street art” is highly valued in the artistic circles boasting

6.- See: comments on the exhibition Art from the Streets (13 January - 3 June 2018) in the Art Science Museum in Singapore curated by Magda Danysz, <https://www.marinabaysands.com/museum/exhibition-archive/art-from-the-streets.html> (cf. Biskupski 2017, 67; 112).





of independence, and is a combination of commonly used words, it is most eagerly used as a general term that encompasses not only art but also urban lifestyle.

Wall murals in Ferrol, Lisbon and Łódź were created in 2008, when also the aforementioned Street Art exhibition at the Tate Modern was organised. Regardless of whether the status of street art was actually enhanced at that time or not, in any case it was at those places that giant murals were shown next to one another and the most significant creators of street art were gathered. It was a model of what mural galleries are aimed at – creating clusters of large-sized works, located on external facades, close to one another, with a view to creating a certain whole.

Many publications draw attention to the fact that institutionalisation of street art, both based on the municipal patronage and the grassroots initiative patronage, simply provides financial resources for the creation of such galleries. In other words, a new way of financing has created a new kind of art. This is an explanation that at the same time simplifies and distorts the heart of the matter. First of all, the possibilities of both types of activities are disproportionate. Constant income from the municipal office like in Lisbon or (until recently) in Gdańsk provides work comfort and enables more planned actions. However, not only money is the foundation of this type of art, as in general, the production of murals is not expensive in comparison with other cultural investments. And technically well-made murals are associated with practically no maintenance costs (unlike greenery or city furniture). Although it is true that mural galleries require specific, systematically provided funds, above all, they require constant commitment, nurturing and maintaining the timeliness and vitality of the gallery. These are organisational skills correlated with admiration for the city, a special relation to it. These are often feelings of personal regret that the city deserves more than the authorities have to offer, also feelings of solidarity with the inhabitants whose homes and streets have lost their former glory. Thanks to murals, they are again incorporated into the cityscape.

It should be emphasised that murals (depending on the size and often also the rank of an artist) can be created with minimal financial outlays borne solely in relation to the materials needed for their execution. This is the case of Canido, where the works are rather small, performed without a lift, often miniature, but their idea seems unbelievable. How many people can be convinced to create variations on the subject of Las Meninas? It turns out that more and more... A similar concept was implemented in Dulwich, where the idea was also monothematic, inspired by the collection of old paintings from Dulwich Picture Gallery. Although the works created there were often much larger (see Table 2), the works did not have a fixed budget. The artists were also not paid: “Their expenses [...] [were] paid,

paint, lifters/scaffolding, council licences, and if necessary board and lodging, and sometimes flights. It's good publicity for them if they want to sell canvases, print, etc. (Beazley 2015, 336–337).” However, in Łódź and Gdańsk, the situation was generally different. Remuneration for the artists was included, and the works were usually spectacularly large. In Łódź, an average mural is approx. 17 m high, the height of the wall of the nineteenth century tenement house measured above the building plinth. In Gdańsk, the murals are even larger, as they are created on multi-storey blocks of flats (see Table 3). Up to a point, the municipal authorities in both Polish cities supported (through various methods, direct co-financing or open tender competitions) mural festivals, assuming that a new, unique aesthetic and artistic quality was created in the urban space. Recent years, however, indicate that the cities have withdrawn from supporting mural galleries. In Gdańsk, it has been decreed that the creation of the gallery in the Zaspia district was completed in 2016. In Łódź, it has been decided that a larger number of murals will hurt the nineteenth-century image of the city and it has been essentially forbidden to create them in the city centre (cf. photo 16). In 2018, the Urban Forms Foundation did not receive any subsidies. Of course, these decisions have not stopped mural art, but they are an important impulse for reflection.

Painting walls was not the only aspect of external galleries in the places discussed here. Table 2 below shows how the murals were propagated and what activities accompanied them. The works were created in smaller or larger series during festivals, providing a sequence of artistic events. Tour programmes with guides were quickly launched and dynamically operating social media websites were created. The murals were addressed to people, and their gratitude and interest from year to year ensured the continuation of those activities. Why should this formula be exhausted? What is actually behind the changes that are taking place?

Table 2. Dissemination: events and media

The gallery/ collection	Monumental Art Collection	Urban Forms Gallery	Dulwich Outdoor Gallery
Art Festivals	<p>1997 – Festiwal na Tysiąclecie Gdańska [Millenium of Gdańsk Festival]</p> <p>2009 – Monumental Art</p> <p>2010 – Monumental Art: Freedom in the Times of Crisis</p> <p>2011 – Monumental Art: Love is Temptation</p> <p>2012 – Monumental Art: Is Everything for Sale</p> <p>2013 – Monumental Art: Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?</p> <p>2014 – Monumental Art: Road is the Happiness</p> <p>2015 – Monumental Art: Each Day Counts</p> <p>2016 – Monumental Art: Waiting</p>	<p>2011 – Urban Forms Gallery Festival</p> <p>2012 – Urban Forms Gallery Festival</p> <p>2013– Urban Forms Gallery Festival</p> <p>2014 – Urban Forms Gallery Festival</p> <p>2015 – Festiwal Energia Miasta [Energy of the City Festival]</p> <p>2016 – Festiwal Energia Miasta. Miejskie cykle: budowanie, niszczenie, burzenie, odbudowa [Energy of the City Festival. Urban Cycles: Building, Destroying, Demolishing, Reconstruction]</p> <p>2017 – Festiwal Łódź Czterech Kultur [The Łódź of Four Cultures Festival]: Alfabet dialogu [Alphabet of Dialogue]</p> <p>2018 – Urban Forms Festival: Miejsce [Place]</p>	<p>2012 – the annual Dulwich Festival⁵</p> <p>2013 – Baroque the Streets: Dulwich Street Art Festival (associated with the Dulwich Festival)</p>
Guided tours and facilities for visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 – till today • regular and free of charge hiking and biking tours three times a week in the summer season • you can also book a free tour by phone or email at agreed time • inhabitants are prepared to fulfil the role of guides, they have a special certificate and they are the ambassadors and the best source of knowledge about the collection. • map of murals • mobile application “Murale Gdańska Zaspą” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 – till today • hiking, biking and bus tours occasionally free and refunded from grants, usually in the summer season • you can book a paid tour by email at agreed time, interns and apprentices temporarily working at FUF are prepared to guide sightseeing • map of murals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • since May 2012 – till today • no regular free or paid hiking • 2017 – Street Art walk Dulwich Outdoor Gallery – you can book a paid tour by email at agreed time with a guide previously involved as a tour guide at Dulwich Picture Gallery • map of murals
Sources of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monumental Art Collection page: http://muralegdanskasp.pl/ • Institute of Urban Culture page: http://ikm.gda.pl/projekt/lokalni-przewodnicy-i-przewodniczki/ • Gdańsk School of Mural: http://gdanskaszkolamuralu.blogspot.com/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Forms Foundation page: www.urbanforms.org/ • Energia Miasta [Energy of the City], https://energiamiasta.com • most up-to-date website: https://www.facebook.com/urbanforms/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dulwich On View [local community page], https://dulwichonview.org.uk/ • most up-to-date website: https://www.facebook.com/DulwichOutdoorGallery/



A gallery or a metaphor of a gallery?

The concept of gallery and collection

Let us examine the terms “gallery” and “collection” which are often used in naming clusters of murals. These are commonly known words, so they should be understandable and properly used. Essentially, this is not a strange practice, as murals are simply art to most people. Why should we not collect or promote murals as galleries? The matter is not so simple though.

First of all, many words related to art, for example, an atelier, a studio or a salon are today greatly overused especially in marketing as names of enterprises, shops and services (completely unrelated to art). We can encounter, for example, an alcohol gallery, a nail studio, an atelier of taste, or a door salon. These are the so-called efferent texts, written in order to create a certain assumed image. Such types of names should in principle take into account the properties of the place. The terms related to art, its creation and exhibition lend their specific features to the described objects: they suggest large spaces, skilful performance of something and “sublime taste”. At the same time, they refer to the traditional and conservative concept of art in which aesthetic and technical qualities are its constitutive elements. Such brand image creation is an expression of fashion and often leads to ridiculousness (Rutkiewicz-Hanczewska 2014, 135–144). Secondly, the names of mural galleries which I analyse here are, like many other names, examples of chrematonyms, i.e. proper names of products (effects) of human cultural activity (Gałkowski 2017, 55–71). At the same time, however, these are specific cultural products. Firstly, because (as I have already mentioned) all the time they aspire to the world of art and compare themselves to it (e.g.: because of institutional distinctiveness, ephemerality, etc.). Moreover, in all three cases, mural galleries in Dulwich, Gdańsk and Łódź are also initiatives focused on local, specifically targeted promotion of a district or a city. They are, in a sense, brands, a kind of trade names that also connote the specific synergy of time, place and people. This is where the ambiguity in the assessment of these galleries/collections comes from, and hence the questions arise what exactly these names mean and what kind of expectations we should formulate towards these initiatives.

Thirdly, the use of names, especially common ones, does not have to be a conscious, calculated marketing operation, as “our conceptual system is not something we are normally aware of” (Lakoff; Johnsen 2003, 4). We can try to understand why this complex urban-social-artistic activity is expressed in the notion of gallery and whether and in what sense it is metaphorical. This is all the more interesting since

graffiti, which is generally a primary experience of muralists, and street art, still treated as the optimal combination of the urban phenomenon and spontaneous creativity, are expressed in metaphors conveying completely different messages of war, terrain marking and trespassing.

The word “gallery” is interesting and semantically complex. Its meaning, which derives from Medieval Latin, is connected with a specific type of formal architecture and its function. It is a kind of portico, divided rhythmically by columns. Hence, the gallery structure allows one to compare works with one another and works to compete with one another. The word “collection”, while also derived from Medieval Latin, means “a gathering together”. It is important that this is not associated with a non-reflective activity or simply accumulation of objects but with the fact that “a group of objects is viewed as a whole”. The collection has therefore its own purpose and meaning as a whole (cf. *Collins English Dictionary*). Summing up, murals as a collection in the gallery should be admired as an identified set of objects, having its value also due to the entirety of this collection. In practice, it is unachievable for many reasons.

First of all, it is not easy to describe these collections (even if we try very hard). Therefore, Table 3 below contains **only approximate information** on the number and type of works, the number of artists involved and general information on the size of the exhibits.

None of these three institutions has such a detailed description of their works as that offered by the London Mural Preservation Society mentioned at the beginning of the text. It is very difficult to just count these works in a reliable way. Without any arbitrary rules, one simply cannot do it. Here are some basic problems generated by the collections in Łódź, Gdańsk and Dulwich. It is not known how to count double walls – treat them as a diptych, i.e. one work, or two murals (photos 1, 9)? There are no rules for describing works created atypically, e.g.: palimpsest-style (one on the other) – are these two works or one (photos 12–13)? Are large-scale works on movable walls (e.g.: plywood) murals or installations? Multi-author works in underground passages that are compositions flowing one into another – are they several works or one? Should two different compositions on the same building, related to each other formally, be counted as one work or two (photos 10–11)? Are interior works considered murals since we are talking here about outdoor galleries? Should staircase decorations be considered monumental art?



Table 3. Works and artists – general data

The gallery / collection	Monumental Collection	Art	Urban Forms Gallery	Dulwich Gallery	Outdoor	
The number and type of works or the number of places (only works included in the gallery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 63 large format murals 19 decorations of the entrance to a block of flats [only outdoor paintings, three non-existing] elevations of the club “Plama” (changing and difficult to count, deliberately not covered by the name Monumental Art Collection) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90 large format murals [5 non-existing] many interesting works, such as small projects (stencils, ceramics), installations, paintings on trams, doors, works in underground passages, smaller interventions (some of them are deliberately not covered by the name Urban Forms Gallery) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 44 locations of outdoor works of different types (large murals, small panels, stickers, stencils, “chewing gum art” by Ben Wilson, installations by Christiaan Nagel) and 2 locations of complex indoor works: the Art House (non-existing), the Dulwich indoor gallery called The Dulwich Outdoor Gallery [except the Art House, 2 murals non-existing] 		
Types and approximate dimensions of works	The gable wall of a block of flats: from 5 to 14 floors – up to 36 m in height, the entrance to the staircase: approx. 2.5 m in height		Walls with different shapes and functions (including main facades), usually side facades of tenement houses, horizontal paintings on the pavement, up to a 12-storey block of flats: approx. 31 m in height	Walls with different shapes and functions, often gable walls of double or triple storey buildings (approx. up to 10 m in height (small parts of walls or panels only (including main facades), installations, miniature works		
The number of artists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Side walls: 72 authors engaged 8 works made by teams Entrances: 19 authors engaged 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 76 authors engaged (only making large murals) 24 works made by teams Authors working on large format advertising from the Polish People’s Republic period (so double-authored)- 2 works 121 authors engaged (including small works and the project of revitalising the fronts of houses in Old Town in Gdańsk⁶) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35 authors engaged Authors working as a duo – 1 work. 		

How to treat a total project such as the Art House – a house filled with works inside and outside – made available to the festival audience for three days during Baroque The Streets: Dulwich Street Art Festival 2013 (Siegrist 2013; M@ 2013) or the Dulwich indoor gallery called The Dulwich Outdoor Gallery (84 Dulwich Village St.) decorated inside (Begum 2016)? Artists often leave traces of their presence in the form of smaller works, templates or tags. Should they be included in the collection or not? And sometimes a smaller work (next to a large mural) or some kind of intervention is an integral element of a specific idea (cf. Kazimierska-Jerzyk, 2017). The fact that a mural is part of a gallery completely takes away from the context of the artist’s presence in a given place, one can even say that this fact distorts it.

It is also not known how to treat non-existent works, often being one of the most interesting and most significant in the collection. Generally, we read that

ephemerality and temporariness are integral features of this type of art and there is no point in debating this fact. This rather convenient solution is the basic assumption of the Arte Urbana Gallery in Lisbon. The question immediately arises why these groups of murals should be called a collection/a gallery if it is all accidental and not determined by the creators of the alleged collection. In turn, if this ephemerality is an immanent feature, is there any point in documenting this type of art in a way that works which are valuable because of their material status are documented? The GAU therefore considers – safely and in a less binding manner – as its duty to take stock of works (which means the indication of the author and address, even if it no longer exists). As a rule, galleries in Dulwich, Łódź and Gdańsk have informational media but they do not meet international standards for the description of cultural heritage objects, such as Object ID – a UNESCO tool used to describe and protect cultural property (*Legal and Practical Measures Against Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property. UNESCO Handbook, 2006*).

Let us consider these criteria (which are not at all complicated) in relation to murals.

1. Type of object. The organisers do not provide data about the genre of art, and apart from paintings, we have many interesting techniques, for example, assemblages, reliefs or sgraffiti. It is possible that currently the correlate of creativity and subject in street art should be considered as transmedial. This means agreeing to a situation in which artists no longer ask themselves how they create and are not interested in what place they occupy in the lexicon of genres of art. This situation is widely known in contemporary art, but murals, as I mentioned before, belong to the conservative mainstream of art. However, organisers of street art festivals are well aware of the diversity of genres and are eager to distinguish themselves by presenting their entire range – for example, the latest edition of Le Grenoble Street Art Fest.⁷

2. Materials and techniques. It would be necessary to explain what medium was laid, in what manner and on what surface. These are three aspects that determine the appearance and quality of work, or its maintenance. It is known that techniques used are of great importance, they are often completely original (e.g.: Cityzen Kane) or are combinations of various techniques (e.g.: Meisal, see photo 3), which is not reflected well in a postcard-size photo. Techniques are also often the leitmotiv of events. For example, the Urban Forms Festival 2018 gathered only artists working in 3D technology, which in turn (especially works placed in the close proximity) allowed recipients to see the wealth of subgenres of this technique.

7.- Le Grenoble Street Art Fest, <https://www.streetartfest.org/visites-guidees/>.





9. Aleksandra Adamczuk & Paulina Nawrot, *Jonasz [Jonah]*, 2015, Łódź, 49 i 51 Legionów St. (two addresses, one work). The 1st edition of The Off Gallery Project realised by Urban Forms Foundation. Photo by Michał Sikora/Urban Forms Foundation.



10. –11. Opieemme, *A Tribute to Władysław Strzemiński. Remanufacture / Herring*, 2017, Łódź, 3 Bojowników Getta St. (two works, one address). Photo by Karuzela Wspomnień/Mikołaj Zacharow/Urban Forms Foundation.



12.–13. Aryz, *Still Life*, 2012, Łódź, al. Politechniki 16, a whole work and detail, the palimpsest-imposed mural formally respecting the old advertising of the Łódź "Fonika" Radio Plant (detail: the address of the former enterprise is visible in the background, 16/18 Wróblewskiego St.). Photo by Michał Sikora/Urban Forms Foundation.



3. Measurements. In principle, no-one measures the works, only trivia about their size are given. The height and width inform us about the scale of the object. This is essential for tourist purposes (disinformation encountered in relation to the reproduction of images without proper descriptions is glaring). In many cases of spatial works, their thickness (depth) is interesting information, and the haptic and kinesthetic experience of this type of art is one of its bigger attractions. Unfortunately, only the main dimensions provided indicatively are most often used in informing about murals. Moreover, they have axiological significance, the larger the walls the more prestige for the artist, which is visible in the “numerical achievements” of Le Grenoble Street Art Fest 2019. The works are divided here into monumental, large, medium, and small. No importance is attached to the documentation of individual works, but it is known that *summa summarum* 2000 m² has been painted over this year in Grenoble (such promotion of street art is unfortunately quite common).

4. Inscriptions and Markings. Many artists place a great signature which is incorporated into the work or treated as a trademark. All works are often promotional logos. Meanwhile, the fact whether the work is signed at all is important not only from the point of view of an art historian (see item 9. Maker). Also, the fact whether the work has been dedicated to someone (which should usually be included in the subtitle) is an interesting piece of information. This triggers a series of intertextual associations, invisible at first glance (e.g.: Opiemme).

5. Distinguishing Features. It is important to describe the state of the objects but virtually nobody does it. In this respect, Ingrid Beazley distinguished herself by informing that she had herself renovated the damaged work of Stik called *Mrs Moody*, stolen later in November 2013. Documenting the renovation made it possible to later recognise the work on an online auction (Beazley 2015, 256–257). Many works have drastically faded and some are not made with the technique or media that the artist expected (e.g.: the lack of fluorescent paint to finish the detail). Numerous works remain unfinished (due to a lack of time because of their creators’ involvement in other current projects). The recipient does not have access to this information.

6. Title. There are often no titles, or they are added ex post. Unofficial names are then used, often in a shortened version.

7. Subject. Knowledge about the main theme or the convention (a landscape, a specific iconographic motif) may seem an unnecessary ballast. We know, however, that the iconographic method still remains an important reference point for numerous students writing their diploma theses on urban art, and one can find interesting conclusions based on this type of research (to which I will return in the next part of the article).



8. Date. The only piece of data we can be sure about. It is usually known when something was made, probably because it is easy to deconstruct such data on the basis of fanpages.

9. Maker. Usually, the projects are performed by artists themselves. However, more and more often they work in teams or commission specialised companies to do the work. In addition, there are many mistakes in names and aliases, as they are abbreviations, often similar to each other. The point is not the fact that street art has appropriated the anonymous type of creativity but the problem of elementary identification of the creator.

The experience of the galleries

Another issue is the physical impossibility of seeing the collections. In Gdańsk Zaspą, murals are located on a relatively small area of 1.22 km², while in Łódź and London the distance between the furthest objects is difficult to cover during a one-day tour (Table 1). In general, guides choose their own preferred route, offering to show no more than 25 works. Experiments with bus, bicycle and running tours are relatively rare. They also have other functions: recreational, sports and sightseeing-related. However, they do not do their job well in terms of what murals have to offer due to their unique nature. It is good to look at murals from different perspectives, observe them from a distance, and after coming closer, note how they co-create the urban landscape. It is amazing how artists are guided in their works by the qualities of their surroundings, the colours, the perspective of the street and the optimal viewing angle of the passers-by. In photos taken from a lift or a drone, which dominate the Web due to their spectacular nature, the context of the environment eludes us completely. The work seen in such a photograph seems to be only another uninspired picture. It is interesting that in the real space a mural generally gains in attractiveness due to the context of its surroundings.

Conducting many conversations about this type of art (doing research, organising tours as well as workshops with various age groups and classes with students devoted to murals), I learnt that those who had not experienced murals were the most prejudiced against them. Others (regardless of their age or education) admit that they cannot indicate the case in which the work should not have been created, and they also usually indicate where such a work should appear, i.e. where it is needed.

In the assessment of murals, it is therefore very important that a specific type of tourism, combining art tourism and urban tourism, has developed. It involves tours



focused on works in the urban space and meetings with artists and animators of this type of art. Many people decide on such a way of getting acquainted with the city, and hence need information about a given place, its history, culture and even people (Świeściak, Matulewski, Makohonienko, 2015: 51). A special offer for visitors (Table 2) has been systematically established and maintained (despite the completion of works in Gdańsk and a significant slowdown in Dulwich) in Gdańsk Zaspą, Łódź and Dulwich. First of all, the offer includes tours, which are enjoying growing popularity, organised by persons directly associated with the activity of given institutions, committed and competent.

Gdańsk, where the social and educational project “Local Guides” was launched in 2011, probably holds a unique position in this field. Thirty residents were prepared not only in terms of knowledge about murals but also the history of the city as well as the urban planning and architectural concept of Zaspą. They also draw on their own experiences as persons accompanying artists at work. A small, but complete in terms of the number of large objects, Gdańsk guidebook, created in 2019, reflects this specific atmosphere of creating art for someone (not just for artists themselves) which is then appreciatively shared with tourists. In these stories, the history of the city, adventures of artists, stories of ordinary residents and such figures as Nobel Prize winners Lech Wałęsa (living in Zaspą in the years 1974–82) or Czesław Miłosz are interwoven (Orłowski 2019, 7;8;39).

The Urban Forms Foundation published a catalogue containing a calendar of activities and a list of works in 2016 (*Galeria Urban Forms 2009–2015*, 2016). Previously, only mini-catalogues with photos of murals were published successively. Dulwich Outdoor Gallery boasts undoubtedly the most visually attractive album, re-issued and improved (Beazley 2014, 2015), containing very short theoretical introductions, impressions of artists and the curator Ingrid Beazley, as well as her interesting FAQs along with artists’ biographical information. Both publications are incomplete due to the time of the creation and, *de facto*, describe the murals in a casual or anecdotal way. Fanpages on Facebook (Table 2) remain the best source of information in Łódź and Dulwich, though selective and addressed to the online community. I guess it can be considered surprising that there are no current phone applications in any of the cases discussed. Initially developed applications have not been updated, and the offer created independently of these institutions is substantively unsatisfactory.



14.–15. Thierry Noir, *Homage To Nicholas Poussin*, 2015, 71 Elm Grove, Peckham, London SE15 5DB, mural respecting colours of nature, inspired by *The Triumph of David* (c.1631–33) by Nicolas Poussin. Photos by Wioletta Kazimierska-Jerzyk.



17. Mehdi Ghedyanloo, *A Castle and its Proprietors*, 2015. 21 Kinsale Rd, London. The mural referring to the look of architecture (shapes and colours). It is an interpretation of David Teniers the Younger's *A Castle and its Proprietors* (c.1640s–1660s). Photo by Wioletta Kazimierska-Jerzyk.



16. Klone Yourself, *Midnight Lovers*, 2017, Łódź, 41 Legionów St. The 2nd edition of The Off Gallery Project. The work inspired by the lithograph by Marc Chagall *Heaven of lovers* (c.1950). Mural respecting the look of its surrounding esp. bright architecture. Photo by Paweł Trzeźwiński/Urban Forms Foundation.



18. Roa, *Landscape with Sportsmen and Game*, 2013. 77-79 Choumert Road, London. Mural referring to the shapes seen in the street. The figure of “pooping dog” inspired by *Halt of a Hunting Party* (early 1660s) by Philips Wouwerman and *Landscape with Sportsmen and Game* (c. 1665) by Adam Pynacker. Photo

Curating street art and values of mural collections

The specific way of curating street art or the lack of curating it is not conducive to perceiving the gallery as a whole and understanding it as a collection. The collector is, according to the old concept, a metonymic image/figure of a highly regarded curator. Walter Benjamin's well-known remarks about the value of the collection emphasise the role of the person of the collector: "one thing should be noted: the phenomenon of collecting loses its meaning as it loses its personal owner. Even though public collections may be less objectionable socially and more useful academically than private collections, the objects get their due only in the latter [...] — ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to objects. Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them" (Benjamin 2007, 67). Wall murals have their founders (in Gdańsk: Rafał Roskowiński and Piotr Schwabe, in Łódź: Teresa Latuszewska-Syrda, in: Dulwich Ingrid Beazley [1950–2017] whose work now is continued) and caretakers who know each wall and every view angle.

Meanwhile, many authors draw attention to the fact that "from the street you cannot see everything" and that street art gains "completely different public visibility" on the Web (Biskupski 2017, 38). In other words, as already mentioned, the Internet provides complementary visibility, if not the only proper perspective of looking at this type of art. As Richard Howard-Griffin points out: "street art is direct in presenting a stream of art and ideas to the public that are uncurated in the traditional sense. This stream of art in the public consciousness, when combined with the internationalism of the discipline's key protagonists and the power of the Internet, has created a massive popular movement, that is, by its very nature, yet to find real influence within the elite levels of our society" (Howard-Griffin 2015, 14). Halim Bensaïd explains this phenomenon from the organisational and financial perspective in the following way: "Today a phenomenon produced by globalisation has appeared, which is transforming some urban territories into a global art gallery! Some cities, in their fierce competition for greater visibility in the field of territorial marketing, are rushing to create the umpteenth Festival of Street Art, in the same way as others have already gone for "the buzz", courting the large international brands to implant them in their city centres [...] This is the time of Street Art. These artists and their worldwide reputation on the net allow the city and its festival immediate and inexpensive media presence. In turn, these young artists use the city as a marketing medium: they profit from this visibility, with gallery owners seeking new opportunities as they no longer have access to the extravagant prices of contemporary art" (Bensaïd 2016, 117).

Street art is therefore served, received, commented on and managed differently than museum art. This "social circulation of culture" is constituted by the following





elements: democratised digital technology, universality and accessibility of visual messages exhibiting a great advertising potential as well as the possibility of integrating art and everyday life to a large extent on the Web. In this sense, the term “street art” is already misleading today, as there is no street in it. Urban art woven into wider cultural processes is commercialised and arises as a result of the interaction of numerous entities communicating on the Web. They produce intangible goods having a symbolic value which is attractive on the Internet. This value, generally in the form of branding, creates and provides a re-segmentation of identities and symbolic communities. These communities, in turn, in their choices do not use the old hierarchy of low and high art and do not reflect such division of the audience. Instead, we can observe many smaller and rather unequal communities sharing some preferences formed by various factors, such as types of aspiration or wealth. These are often very individualised and niche communities, creating different cultural circulations and different lifestyles, that do not use agreed art definitions or descriptions of creative practices. Street art is one of such styles, one of such varieties of practices created and catalysed by social media that sequence innumerable subgenres (usually brands, artists, festivals, sponsors, etc.). Bensaid and Biskupski rightly point out that one cannot show off this lifestyle in the highest price segments of the art market. Street art is the domain of communities focused around this type of art, often competing with one another in one city. It is particularly interesting that street art in a participatory culture loses its specific urbanity and materiality. Prosumers strengthen only the creators of images (less frequently their content), and not the medium, i.e. the street. Research shows that the knowledge of artists is negligible among urban residents, but the sense of integration with the place, the street with the mural or the surrounding area is very high. On the Internet, it is the other way round: the artist’s identification does not entail the address of the work, at most the name of the city or festival is given. As a result, the work loses its materiality as its binding feature. The Arte Urbana Gallery, in fact, by cataloguing photographs and attaching importance in its mission to the comprehensive dissemination of its works and building the awareness of the ephemeral nature of this type art, is a model case of the world described here. Such works and their creators do not need galleries understood as collections of permanent exhibits, nor do they need curators. The curator is responsible for the design and organisation of the exhibition, determines the selection of the exhibited items, the topic of the exhibition, the layout of the works at the site of the project and their public dissemination, composes the catalogues and often writes their texts, is able to and should work in the long-term perspective, having a programme mission. In the global gallery of street art, recipients primarily watch (mainly

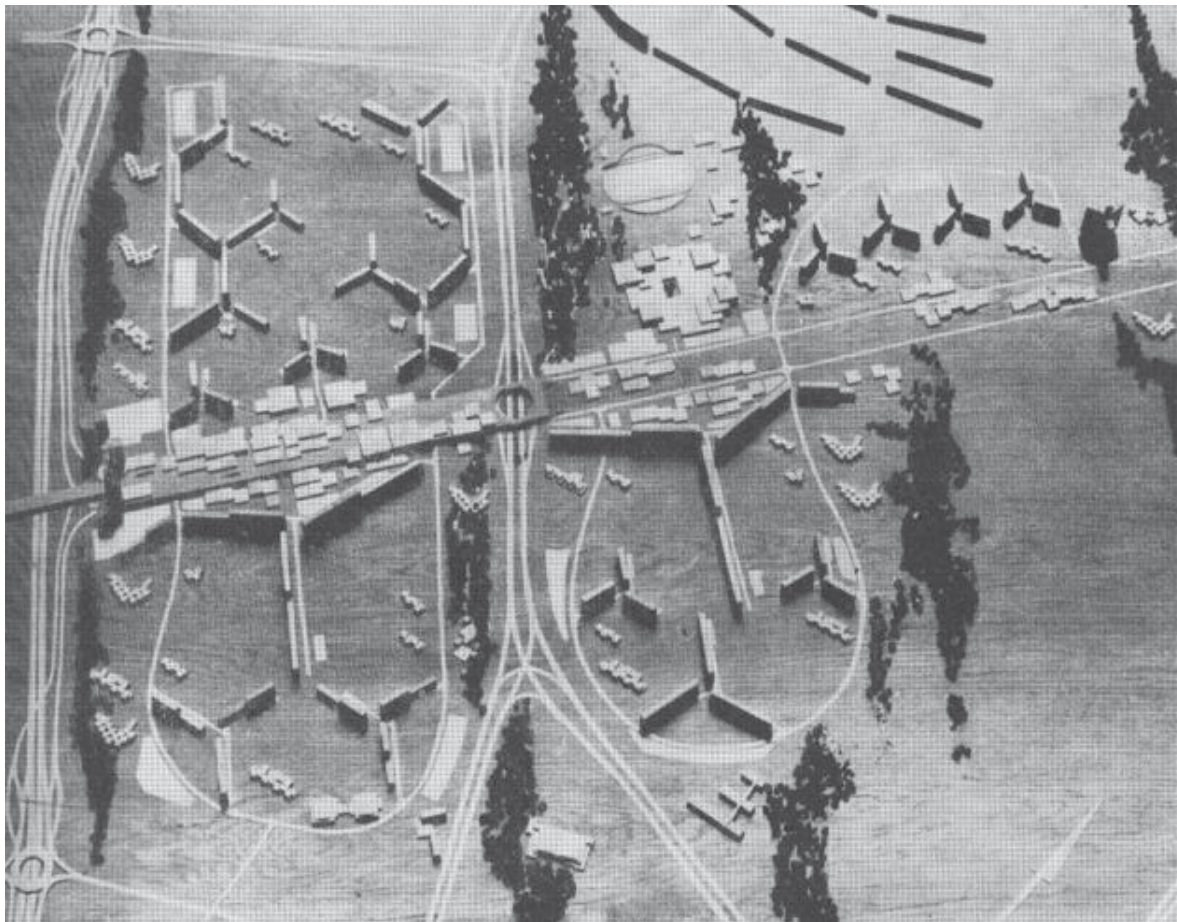
hundreds of “making of” films) instead of reading, visit on the Web what others recommend, arrange the order of works in the gallery, and by subscribing and sharing the content, create own arrangements of virtual collections. This explains why the world of street art is very neglected in historical and artistic terms and why it still has to aspire to being the world of art. And because it lacks basic information, spreadable to museum professionals, art historians, appraisers and collectors, there are not many people who would like to write about it. The time that needs to be spent on reconstructing data is disproportionate to cognitive satisfaction and aesthetic pleasure (as we do not interact with works but mainly with manipulated visual data).

The galleries in Dulwich, Łódź and Gdańsk are competing with such practice of street art. All three display an innovative way of curating, on the one hand, based on the experience of the city, and on the other hand, on the contemporarily understood idea of art correspondence.

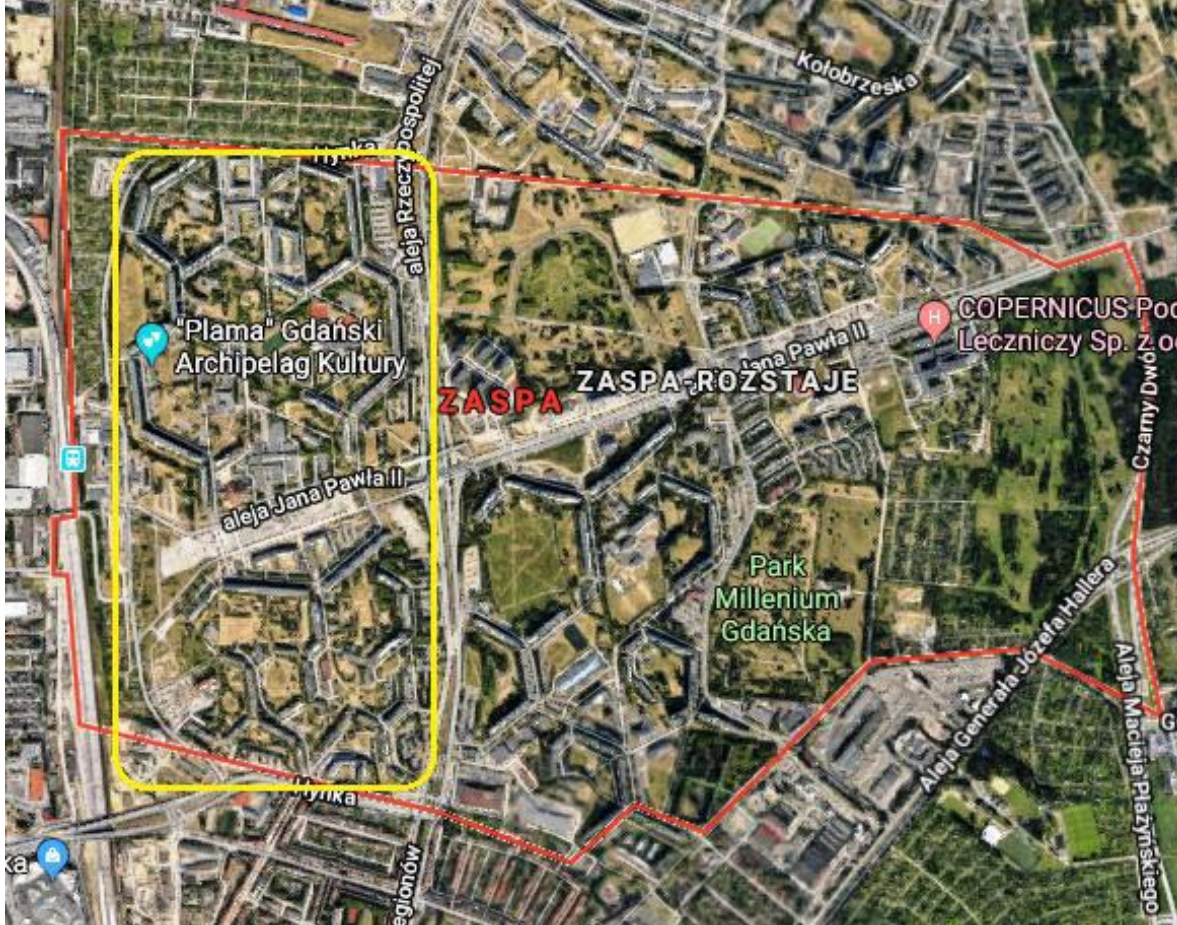
Gdańska Zaspą is an important place in the post-war history of Poland.

Here President Lech Wałęsa lived at 17, Pilotów and Pope John Paul II celebrated a field mass in 1987. The gable walls of blocks of flats were covered then with huge religious banners. Rafał Roskowiński pointed out that those walls were like canvases waiting to be painted over (Rutkiewicz 2013, 10). Ten years later, he organised there a festival for the thousandth anniversary of the city of Gdańsk (Table 1) and the first 10 murals were created. At the time, the blocks of flats were grey, moreover, this particular estate is additionally characterised by topography in which it is easy to become lost. It is also an unfinished realisation of the vision of a perfect modernist urban planning assumption in which blocks of flats are laid out on lines in the shape of honeycombs (photos 19,20). This means that the gable walls of the blocks of flats face one another at a certain angle, in pairs or threes, creating interesting layouts of dialogue images (photos 1, 21, 22).

In Łódź, the main impulse for the creation of the gallery was connected with the appearance of one of the main arteries of the city, combining Zachodnia and Kościuszki Streets, along which some of the buildings were demolished after the Second World War in order to expand the thoroughfare. The outbuildings and their blind side elevations were revealed which for years showed mindlessness, neglect and emptiness. Adjacent walls along one street inspired an idea of a gallery suggested by Łukasz Biskupski to the founder of the Urban Form Foundation – Teresa Latuszewska-Syrda. The gallery has spread to numerous walls in the city centre, largely in the corners of the streets, where there are undeveloped plots, waiting for the representative townhouses with two expensive main facades. The murals were



20. Roman Hordyński, Stefan Grochowski and Teresa Opic, Urban design of the Zaspá estate, author of the mock-up: Zygfryd Wiklend. Source: Gruszkowski, 1970, 277.



19. The map of the Zaspá estate in Gdańsk. The red line indicates the area of the Zaspá district and the yellow line indicates the area of the Monumental Art Collection. Source: Google Maps.



21. Gdańsk, Ząspa. Two interacting walls: Licuado Crew (Camilo Núñez and Florencia Duran), untitled, 2015, 12f Nagóskiego St.; Mazu Prozak, untitled, 2011, 14a Pilotów St. Photo by Wioletta Kazimierska-Jerzyk.



22. Gdańsk, Zaspá. The mural skillfully filling the gap between two blocks of flats. Same84, untitled, 2015, 13a Pilotów St. Photo by Wioletta Kazimierska-Jerzyk.

made on the walls which should not be visible at all and which no-one had cared about.

In Dulwich, the history of the gallery begins in 2012 with the collaboration of Stik with Ingrid Beazley – the art museum curator, author, editor, and educationist based in Dulwich and working in the famous Dulwich Picture Gallery. The graffiti artist from London, known for his large stick figures drawn with at most six lines and two points, translated into his visual code only general expressions (body positions, gestures, facial expressions) of people depicted in the outstanding Baroque works (photos 7-8). His works are not large and figures are more or less life-size. In East Dulwich, there are not as many blind walls as in Łódź (although they can be found). This impoverished district marked by gentrification is characterised by picturesque but monotonously looking buildings. Typical terraced dwellings are double storey houses with double height projecting bay windows (see photo 17). Stik populated fragments of elegant facades with his recognisable figures, taming the space and providing the houses with their own identities. These figures, as they are very similar to one another, create their own story, becoming new street characters. That was what was needed in Dulwich – a bridge between the world-famous gallery, conceived by its founder as the first public art gallery, and the city inhabitants. Beazley, apart from the development of the outdoor gallery project, also founded the community-run blog-based online magazine “Dulwich On View”, associated with Dulwich Picture Gallery. This portal constantly works and promotes not only museum and street art events but also all creative activities, grouped in the following areas: Culture (Art & Design, Books & Poetry, Dance, Music, Exhibitions, Film & Video, Photographs, Theatre, Street Art), Life & Style (Food & Drink, Green Living, Health & Fitness, Homes & Gardens, Fashion, Gifts, Podcasts, Shopping), Around Dulwich (Dulwich Park, Local History, Local areas, South London, People, Virtual tours, Walks & Cycling).

From the artistic perspective, Dulwich Outdoor Gallery is a monothematic exhibition based on the free interpretation of the works in Dulwich Picture Gallery (photos 7,8, 14, 15, 17, 18). The dialogue of old and contemporary art emphasises the differences between the two genres and is supposed to eliminate prejudices and teach mutual tolerance. Thanks to the murals, street art enthusiasts gain the motivation to visit the picture gallery in the first place (most participants of the mural tours do not get there on their own initiative). On the other hand, murals provide admirers of works of old masters with interesting tips for the observation of these works both in terms of content and form. For instance, it may turn out that the controversial topic used to belong to the repertoire of ordinary motifs in the paintings (cf. photo 18). Murals also make it easier to track the composition, as the large formats viewed from the distance show in a synthetic way the main lines.

From the point of view of artistic assumptions, in Gdańsk, the importance of the content has always been emphasised. The murals were either related to Gdańsk and the region, or implemented in thematic cycles whose author in the years 2009-2016 was the next curator Piotr Schwabe (Table 2). The gallery had two aims: to build the largest in Europe collection of large-format paintings of recognised artists from around the world and to educate and promote adepts of the Gdańsk School of Mural. This is not a school in an institutional sense, but a platform created for discussion, improvement of skills and integration of the community, with a view to restoring the mural to its original function of socio-political art. The authors of this idea, competing with the globalising trend of contemporary street art, are Rafał Roskowiński and Jacek Zdybel.

The first steps of the Urban Forms Foundation consisted in engaging artists with whom it managed to establish a good relationship. The creators began to repeat themselves, creating very similar works. The Foundation did not have any central idea during the organisation of festivals in the years 2013–2015 apart from the arbitrary intention of “saturating” the city with images. Moreover, it was emphasised that, as a rule, no consultations with residents were carried out, because the autonomy of the artist was the main value in that process. In this way, murals were confronted with large format advertising, as murals did not serve any purpose and were goods selflessly brought into the city.

In practice – what the critics of murals have drawn attention to from the very beginning – these works are mainly a form of gigantic promotion of artists. The study of the community of the creators of monumental painting in Poland (Litorowicz 18–75) indicates that the motivations of artists in general are not social, conciliatory or particularly mission-oriented. Instead, they are strictly focused on expressing their own selves, communicating their own views and “their own universe”, “marking the territory” (analogously to graffiti), and “owning a wall in the city”. For mainstream Polish muralists, each mural is another challenge, a risk that is an integral part of functioning in the public space and their lifestyle: “We are as free as possible, we do what we want and dictate everything ourselves” (Litorowicz 2016, 41). Two aspects of the process of aesthetisation that are difficult to accept among those who assign the role of spiritual and cultural guidance to art meet at this point: object-related – associated with the addition of random and ostentatious artistic aspect to cities; subject-related – referring to the way of being in which the term “aesthetic” has only negative associations: accumulating experiences instead of actually experiencing something, detachment from reality and a lack of responsibility (Welsch 1997, 15). In 2015, the Foundation changed its strategy. Festivals with a theme started to be organised, creators were selected in terms of a particular message and

works were created where the residents asked for it, often in the backyards on barely visible walls. In 2016, the “Energy of the City” blog was launched, explaining artistic ideas. At that time, the first two editions of OFF Gallery took off – a project inspired by Ingrid Beazley (photos 3, 4, 5, 9, 16). It was addressed to the residents of Stare Polesie. Its aim was to increase participation in culture and competences in its perception among residents of the area threatened by social exclusion and undergoing intensive revitalisation process. The institution providing integration with the cultural tradition was the Museum of the City of Łódź. Artists who were invited to create any, in terms of technique (mural, graffiti, installation, mosaic, etc.), large-format works inspired by specific paintings were obliged to participate in meetings with residents and to refer to comments made by them during the workshops. It was not assumed that the artists would fulfil those residents’ wishes, but that they would get to know one another and refine the project together (if necessary). The location was not chosen arbitrarily but with the support of the Stare Polesie Society of the Socially Engaged which indicated places and communities in need or directly desiring such interference. In this way, some of the most interesting works were created, located close to one another.

Conclusions

In thousands of cities around the world there are currently clusters of murals – more or less legitimately called galleries or collections. Works change and deteriorate, the vast majority of organisers and artists assume their short-term existence. After euphoric acceptance by a wide audience, it is time to reflect on whether and for what reasons we should protect or select these works. The global point of view is as follows: some murals disappear while new ones appear; let us enjoy them while they are there and restore murals just like ordinary elevations replacing them with something else; let us take photos and keep them alive on the Internet – this way we do not lose anything. The point view of residents, who have come a long way from accepting a new interference in their space (usually arbitrarily imposed) to feeling a sense of pride, refers to a completely different spectrum of experience. Let us compare the values of street art generated and favoured by a participation culture and those that manifest themselves in the physical fabric of the city.

(1) Symbolic values. Street art, which – paradoxically – became known thanks to the Internet and has its largest audience there, generates a symbolic value. The materiality of a sign that appeared in the street (if that was actually the case) disappears and becomes fixed as an aspect of brand equity (of a given artist), building a network of fans, which can ultimately result in a financial success. The

symbolic value in a city refers to the site, not the creator. The artist often remains anonymous for residents, but the place that used to be devoid of its own properties gains its own identity. Thanks to a mural, the area without topography attains specific addresses. This does not translate into any material effect (it is not Banksy or Stik!), but the sight of people who photograph murals every day means that we are in a place important for someone.

(2) Social values. The most important social value on the Internet is activity. The sum of activities, regardless of their purpose and quality, creates symbolic values, just by visiting websites or subscribing. Supporters of participatory culture emphasise that it may have a different culture-creating and subversive sense (Biskupski 2017, 64). In the city, everyday activity associated with the inevitability of the experience of murals is not measured. Nobody checks or appreciates how much aesthetic pleasure, cognitive satisfaction or happiness derived from being “noticed and cared for” by art is provided by murals. Some residents strive for the creation of a mural for years (e.g. in the place on photo 16), they prepare their home and surroundings for it⁸, and then they have to do many things to protect the mural. The sums of efforts of individual people or communities are also not measured.

(3) Aesthetic values. The most exploited aesthetic value of murals on the Internet is their size. This is a very wide category, combining mathematical and metaphysical quality. It connotes infinity, perfection and dignity (Stróżewski 1994, 5–30). Georg Simmel has already noted how vulnerable to manipulation it is (Simmel 1968, 135–148). In the online reception of murals, the size is reduced to its spectacular aspect which is created by photos, and the basic manipulation consists in reproducing images without their landscape context. The architecture context, the elements of the painting which interfere with the structure of the building and create an additional illusion of space, is the most spreadable on the Internet. This is usually referred to as site-specificity (cf. photos 16, 18). This way, however, this intriguing concept becomes reduced to playing with the existing physical structure (Biskupski 2017, 74). The site-oriented category is much more important in the city. It is not based on the superficiality of a visual joke (Kwon 2002, 93). The more contexts connect inhabitants with the creation of the work and its final form (which does not mean imposing anything or acting as a censor), the more it is conducive to aesthetic satisfaction, as it is associated with understanding, interest in other works and independent activity.

(4) When it comes to artistic values (formal qualities, content, technique, etc.) sanctioned on the Internet, they are almost irrelevant, as they do not refer to

8.- And not the other way around, as they are often accused of, i.e. that the mural is considered as a sufficient facelift.



material objects but rather to their reproductions. The most important here is the association with art, some sort of guarantee that we are dealing with art – usually it is the artists and their intermediaries’ reputation that determines this fact. Its specific quality, distinct from museum art, is stimulated by authorisation and aurisation factors (Biskupski 2017, 111). In the city, however, the artist remains almost anonymous, and artistry is the resultant – as in the case of aesthetic values – of numerous contextual factors. As mentioned before, art historians lack data for their description. They can be judged on the basis of social processes – internalisation and externalisation. We can observe whether and how mural galleries are taken care of, whether they are enriched and popularised, or whether other values are built on them, for example, when they serve education, integration or revitalisation.

(5) **Moral values.** On the Web, they are related to the level of responsibility for the structure and quality of the message. Firstly, this responsibility disperses between the participants of communication. Secondly, its experience generally neutralises the virtual nature of the often collective activity. This favours the recognition of what is fundamentally worthless (e.g.: dankmemes) as worthy. In the real public space, residents do not invest money or time to create the best mural of the worst quality. On the contrary, more and more effort is being made to protect the most original street works from both destruction (Feuer 2018) and unlawful use. The universally assumed ephemerality and inclusivity of street art are beginning to become a heavy burden to everyone. Although the responsibility for maintaining these works is shifted from the organisers and artists (making everyone responsible), it means that profits and credibility of co-creators of something important and individual are also taken away from both parties. The latest work carried out by the Urban Forms Foundation is in the form of twin murals created in the place of previously existing works which, due to poor surface preparation, have been significantly damaged. The community of residents asked the Foundation for help in their restoration. The first steps were directed to the authors of the original works. Four of them decided that they were not interested in the fate of their works, that they had given the murals to the city, so they did not see any role to play for themselves. Ultimately, the Foundation decided to create a new work based on comprehensive cooperation with the inhabitants (the event has been propagated since April 13, 2019, see <https://www.facebook.com/urbanforms>). Guido van Helten is carrying out a project based on reflections of the residents on what art is about for them. These reflections show that it is something permanent for them in both symbolic and material sense.

Artists entrusting their works to museums are not responsible for their storage and maintenance. It is not decided who should do it in a public space. This is not only an issue of the survival of the works but also of the necessity to experience their

destruction, a default consent to this devastation, and thus the co-formation of everyday experience. In addition, decisions about what is protected and what is not are very important for the dissemination of content, which, despite the accusations of superficial aesthetisation, is what recipients are most concerned about. People primarily read murals. Living among them, they read them every day. In one of few texts by art historians devoted to mural galleries, Lorena Arévalo Iglesias notes that works can be divided into two groups: artists' auto-presentations and deep quasi-philosophical fears. These can be interpreted as multidirectional processes of mutation, adaptation and disobedience (Iglesias 2014, 565–575). It seems that hundreds of inevitable sights in one city, acting like advertisements or calls for action, deserve more attention than just the conclusion that they should be left to the element of the city.

There are many indications that the following actions should be taken:

- Murals need to be freed from archaic comparisons with museum art, from this unnecessary confrontation which means that they must function in an atmosphere of prejudice – either aesthetisation or vandalism.
- Murals need to be popularised in the form of exhibitions and substantive studies, which means that a description of material objects must be required, otherwise it is only an interference in a public space. Why are so few institutions and artists doing it? Because it is difficult, systematic and meticulous work. Also, political aspects along with cognitive skills of city authorities lead to the situation in which murals are most often promoted as novelties. There is a reluctance in indicating a continuum of artistic practices in the historical sense (e.g.: interwar decorative art, quasi-advertising forms of the Polish People's Republic period or sgraffiti and mosaics in Poland). Cultural entities in the city have their own internal criteria for assessing the value of art and are not partners for one another, consequently important works are being destroyed. I believe that if knowledge of large format art were better documented, the level of debate would be much higher.
- Murals need to be protected due to the fact that they fulfil important functions. The project of preserving works of artistic, urban and social value should be considered. Emphasising ephemerality can be an advantage if you want to create a permanent space of performance. How many such places, however, are needed in a city? Ephemerality has become devalued, since the Internet records everything anyway. In avant-garde art, ephemerality has always been associated with some sort of remarkable context, a conceptual solution that cannot be repeated in another form. In contrast, in the city, ephemerality bears the mark of an advertising billboard.

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