

Proximity and Complicity: Graffiti and the Cinematographic Apparatus

Benedita Salema Roby

IHA (Art History Institute), NOVA University, 1069-061 Lisboa, Portugal; E-mail: beneditaroby@gmail.com

Abstract

The reciprocity between the two practices can emerge on various levels, and since it is impossible to fully explore all of them in this article, two hypotheses will be formulated regarding the affinity between the two arts. The first chapter considers the proximity between graffiti and the cinematographic apparatus, particularly in the production of *another* visibility, or a counter-visibility (Mirzoeff, 2011). The next chapter analyzes the complicity between graffiti and the film medium, in the production of an alternative history (Rancière, 2009) or a counter-public sphere (Sholette, 2017).

Keywords

cinematographic apparatus; graffiti; visibility; counter-visibility; counter-public sphere.

1. Introduction

Cinema is immense. Cinema is not THE film. It manifests itself in millions of ways.

— Lucien Wahl

It took me too long to recognize the correlation between graffiti and cinema, primarily because it took me perhaps even longer to understand cinema, or rather what cinema *is*, and what it *can* do. I would like to begin by mentioning that the proximity I propose between the (artistic) practices of cinema and graffiti descends from a body of theory that asserts the *right to the real*. Rooted on critical thinking about vision and visibility, the right to the real is informed, to the extent of this article, by *The Right to Look* (Mirzoeff, 2011) and *The Right to the City* (Lefebvre, 1967). Both arguments invoke counter-visibility frameworks in order to provide a *locus* of speech, *i.e.* a political *topos* for the proletariat: “a place from which to claim a right and to determine what is right” (Mirzoeff, 2011:474). These complexes produce a set of social operations and processes engaged in contesting the hegemonic project produced by visibility, and refuse to allow the interpretation and distribution of the sensible to be conditioned by the authority of the ruling class, first as law and then as aesthetics. I don’t intend to attribute

agency to visibility but, as Mirzoeff (2011) considers it as a discursive practice of representation and regulation of the real that produces material effects.

Perhaps it would be better to first introduce the concept of visibility before diving into the antagonistic term. Nicholas Mirzoeff, professor of media, culture and communication at New York University, defines it as follows: “Visibility is an old word for an old project. It is not a current terminology meaning the totality of all images and visual devices, but is in fact a term from the early 19th century, meaning the visualization of history” (Mirzoeff, 2011:474). That being said, it is an imaginative practice, rather than a perceptual one, and visibility is not just made up of visual perceptions in the physical sense, as it is too substantial to be ‘seen’ individually. Instead, it is conceived from information, images and concepts. As such, it is a process constituted by a set of relationships that articulate information, imagination and perception in the interpretation of physical and psychic space. When I mentioned the right to the real above, it was precisely because visibility - as already mentioned - is a discursive practice of representation and regulation of the real, with material effects. These effects derive from a series of operations that legitimize it. First, (1) classification, by naming, categorizing and defining the real, what Foucault defined as “the articulation of the visible”.

Second, (2) segregation of classified groups, as a means of social organization. Finally, visibility makes this segregated classification seem natural and right, and therefore (3) aesthetic. As Frantz Fanon explained, this continuous experience of visibility generates an “aesthetic of respect for the status quo”.

The right to look and *the right to the city* claim autonomy from the authority of visibility, refuse segregation and spontaneously invent new ways of producing meanings, or of manipulating the distribution of the sensible. The methods I call upon and which act as the central scope of this article are therefore cinema and graffiti. Both operate as heterotopias, not in the Foucauldian sense of the term, but in the Lefebvrian interpretation of the concept, which considers that the heterotopic context “delineates liminal social spaces of possibility where ‘something different’ is not only possible, but is fundamental to the definition of revolutionary trajectories”. This ‘something different’ refers, on a less conscious level, to attitudes, feelings, and articulations that don’t fit into the (urban) choreographies of common sense. These behaviors, when repeated over time, become practices. These practices, which prove to be counter-hegemonic, create heterotopic spaces in any place subordinated to the totalitarian coercion of the non-place. What Lefebvre really intends to portray is that these spaces are revolutionary, that they build a counter-visibility (or alternative visibility) autonomously, without depending on a great revolution to constitute them as such. In fact, it is precisely by virtue of these autonomous attitudes and spaces that Lefebvre characterizes a revolutionary movement: when disparate heterotopic groups suddenly recognize, even if only for a brief moment, the possibilities of collective action that allow them to create something radically different.

1. Proximity

That being said, in what way do the cinematographic apparatus and graffiti construct these heterotopias, these revolutionary spaces, these counter-visualities, in an identical or at least analogous way? By this I don’t mean to argue that both are equivalent (i.e. that graffiti is cinema, or vice versa), but that they can have similar purposes and ontologies.

Allow us to consider Salomé Lopes Coelho’s doctoral thesis, *O gesto da travessia e o contacto com o ritmo vital: Sobrevivências do ekstasis no cinema* (2020). While the scholar builds an argument about the relationship between the cinematographic discourse and rutilmanalysis, she does so considering cinema to be an apparatus of visibility. It’s important to note that she does this because she bases her thesis on cinema as a continuation of scientific studies and medical methodologies, such as La Tourette’s footprint method and Salpêtrière’s photography methods. It is also worth mentioning that she distinguishes between visibility and visibility. Politically, she considers the sensible as the distribution of visibilities, while she envisages cinematographic visibility in a more complex way. In line with the reflections of Clottes and Lewis-Williams, Agamben and Didi-Huberman, she considers the hypothesis that the appearance of cinema is related to a fixation and rescue of lost gestures (of the bourgeoisie) and the regulation of uncontrolled movements by industrialization and capitalist acceleration. However, contrary to what Agamben (2009) argues, Coelho states that although cinema is in the continuity of the forms of visibility mentioned above (scientific studies and medical methodologies), this transition – to the consolidation of cinema - is not related to the emergence of so-called modern society in Europe.

In other words, cinematic visibility did not accentuate the attempt to rescue the lost gestures of the bourgeoisie, but rather the journey and contact with the vital rhythm. In this way, Coelho relates cinematographic visibility to the “gesture of the ritual crossing of worlds” and to the contact with the vital rhythm. In this sense, we can consider that the forms of visibility of which the academic speaks, more specifically cinematographic visibility, are in line with the concept of visibility advocated by Mirzoeff (2011), which goes beyond the physical visual domain to the psychic. As a result, the foundation that distinguishes visibility from visibility becomes obsolete – as she herself clarifies when transporting Rancière’s (2009) considerations to the presences (visibilities) and absences (invisibilities) of cinema. Since the “visibility” associated with the distribution of the sensible is dependent on devices of visibility – the mediating nature of the

cinematographic gesture can allow access to a “hitherto hidden visibility” (Coelho, 2020:163), another visibility, or a counter-visibility.

To clarify this somewhat long introduction to Salomé Lopes Coelho’s thesis, her use of the term “visibility” does not reject or distort the concept popularized by Mirzoeff (2011), but rather moves it into the cinematographic sphere by contesting the theories of Clottes and Lewis-Williams, Agamben and Didi-Huberman in this respect. What she also achieves – in the hypotheses she formulates throughout her thesis – is the possibility of thinking about the visibility generated by the cinematographic apparatus, in close proximity to the experience of a passage (between worlds). Her aim is to trace a continuity between the cinema and the

ritual, more specifically the shamanic ceremonies of the indigenous people of South America, in the ingestion of the ayahuasca plant. In other words, she once again translates visibility from the physical to the psychic realm. This is to say that the experience of the passage, through the conception of an other-visibility, or a counter-visibility, only operates in its entirety in the psychic domain, since any physical counter-visibility is usually absorbed or repressed by visibility complexes (fig.1):

“These counter-visualities are not always visual, you might say. I didn’t say they were. I’m saying that they are and have been visualized as objectives, strategies and imagined forms of singularity and collectivity. If they don’t seem realistic, that’s the extent of the success of visibility (...).” (Mirzoeff, 2011:485)

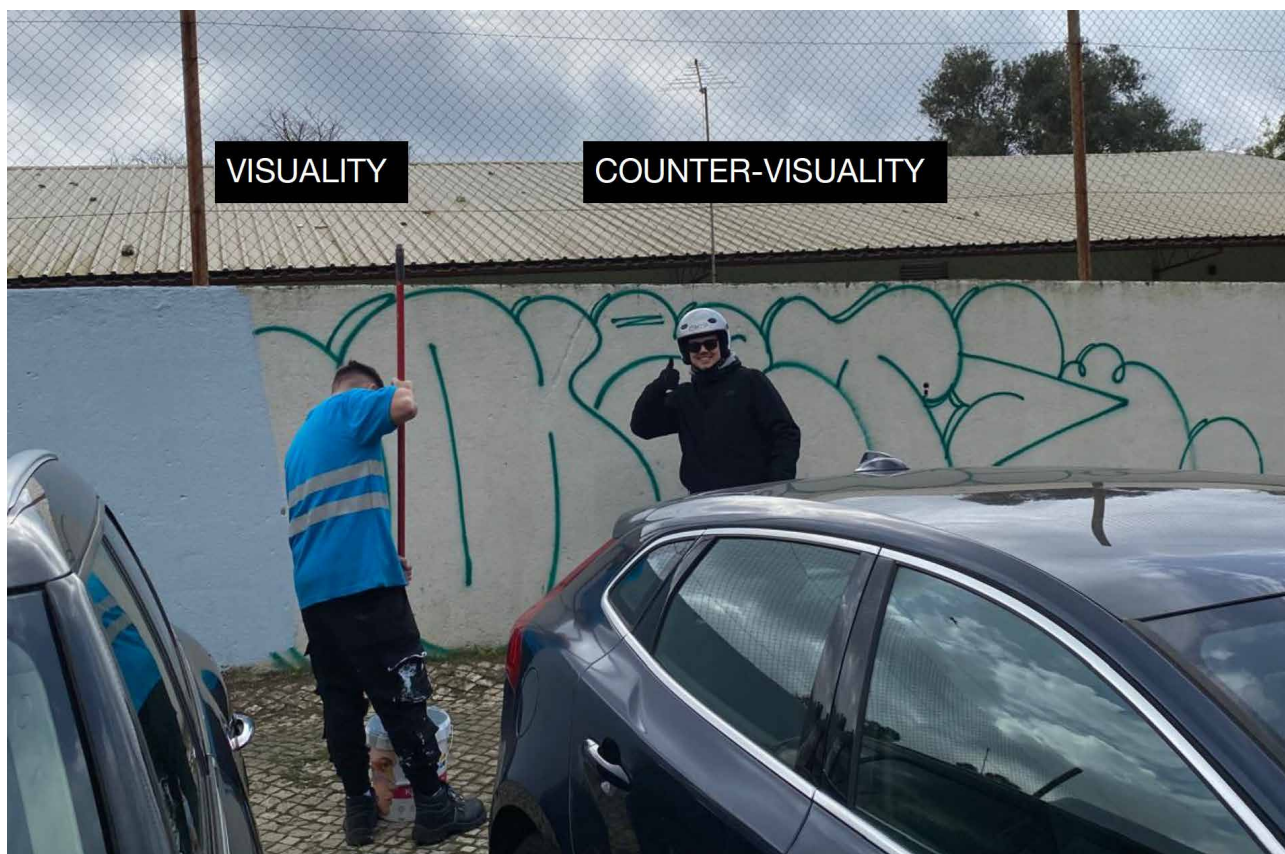


Figure 1. Illustrative image of the authoritarian gesture of re-appropriation of visibility over the autonomy of counter-visibility. Personal Archive

I realize that Coelho is referring to the physical (counter)visuality of the experience of crossing, just as I intend to do when constructing an analogy between the cinematographic apparatus and the transgressive creative writing of graffiti. However, it is important to note that the construction of counter-visual complexes requires strategies that go beyond the (physical) visual, in order to construct an (other) reality that is constantly in the process of becoming:

“Faced with this dual need to apprehend and counteract a real that exists but should not exist, and a real that should exist but is still becoming, counter-visuality has created a variety of realist formats structured around these tensions.” (Mirzoeff, 2011:477)

Note that, as the Portuguese researcher instructs, one of these strategies, or formats, can be *rutmanalysis*:

“The *rutmanalist* inhabits precisely the antagonistic and irresolvable multiplicity of what is and what is not at the same time: he is crossed and crosses, he is present in a time that erupts in multiple temporalities (immemorial and simultaneously present), and he walks in a landscape that at the same time transforms his inner landscape. (...) The *rutmanalist*, as Lefebvre pointed out with regard to the first stage of a *rutmanalysis*, trains himself to question, confront and modify his perceptions of the world, space and time. (...) *Rutmanalysis* is part of a family of practices linked to creation - literary, artistic, architectural and urban - which has a critical contribution. Developing *rutmanalysis*, documenting and restoring its experience requires, as such, means traditionally associated with art.” (Coelho, 2020:100)

Following the logic of *rutmanalysis*, in agreement with Coelho, I consider it possible to draw an ontological parallel between the (counter)visuality of cinematographic art, as a presentation or recreation of the crossing between worlds, and the (counter)visuality of the gesture of the experience of the limit that constitutes the (artistic) practice of graffiti. When I hypothesize that cinema and graffiti construct another visuality, or a counter-visuality, it's because they both understand the liminal gesture of crossing between worlds. It is also

because of what has already been mentioned with regard to the thesis of Rancière (2009) and Mirzoeff (2011): the surrender of the real world takes place visually through the distribution of the sensible. The right to look and the right to the city, advocated in the scope of this article by the cinematographic apparatus and graffiti, present themselves as the possibility of claiming the right to the real, through the reclaiming of the means of production necessary for the re-distribution of the sensible, by intervening in the production of another visuality. This is how the liminal gesture of crossing between worlds materializes. What Coelho calls a crossing between worlds, and João Mário Grilo (2014) calls a passage, in the scope of this article we call it *liminality* – a disposition between the current configuration of reality and one that is imminently in the process of becoming. As noted by M. I. Spariosu, “*liminality* (for Turner) is a form not only of transitivity, but also of potentiality” (Spariosu, 1997:133), because *liminality* shows not only the isolation of consolidated structures, but the potentiality to form alternative structures.

This potential can be identified in some of the properties that are intrinsic to both of the artistic practices that I have been discussing – cinema and graffiti. The analogy I propose is based on the proximity between these two visual apparatus, given their mutual predisposition to produce a counter-visuality.

Despite the consensually associated with the cinematographic apparatus's commitment to revealing, presenting, or representing another visuality, it is not always counter-visual. This is because cinema can also be, or is also, a device of visuality. Even so, it has an autonomy – of production and circulation – that prevents it from persevering as an institutional apparatus, that is, as “pure visuality” (Mirzoeff, 2011). Graffiti, on the other hand, is pure counter-visuality, precisely because of its absolute aesthetic and ethical autonomy.

Despite the different intensities of autonomy, both are capable of producing another visuality with the ability to free the distribution of the sensible from the authority that is inherent to visuality. Both evoke the right to look and the right to the city, albeit on different screens. While cinema depends on the representation of the real

—whatever it may be, the actual or the becoming— in order to formulate a visibility, the possibility of another visibility or counter-visibility does not exactly depend on the representation of the real, but on a realistic aesthetic. It is the screen that separates the real from realism. However, it is also through the screen that we find the possibility of this other visibility, capable of producing a counter-visibility, an “other” reality that ceases to become and becomes effective in the projection of a sequence of images, or gestures (Grilo, 2014), onto the screen. And this can be revolutionary when it encourages the collectivity of spectators, or observers, to engage in the Rancièrian techniques of counter-visibility: education (as opposed to the classification of visibility); democracy (as opposed to segregation or separation) and the aesthetics of the body and gesture (as opposed to the aesthetics of power). Essentially, it is the collectiveness of viewing, in other words, it is the circulation of cinema and the cinematographic apparatus that makes these techniques work — and this generally requires and demands an urban dimension. This is where the right to look and the right to the city meet in the cinematographic sphere. Lefebvre (1967), already by the second half of the last century, warned us that revolutionary movements often, if not always, take on an urban dimension.

Taking into account all the considerations put forward up to this point, we can consider that graffiti can also be a cinematographic apparatus . At least, it can have similar ontologies and purposes. It acts on reality through direct action and creates an applied utopia , which is essentially nothing more than a counter-visibility. As a result, it projects another visibility onto the canvas of urban surfaces. You could now reply that graffiti produces nothing, it only corrupts — and therefore it is neither real nor realistic . In this situation, I argue that direct action, through this visually and socially committed practice, which operates on and within the limits of architecture, urban planning and art, opens up a liminal terrain in the city. Graffiti opens up the possibility of a place, anywhere subordinated to the totalitarian coercion of the non-place . Since architecture and urbanism — at least until the end of capitalism, which will come after the end of the world

— will remain an institutional apparatus, without much room for divergent and discrepant praxis , graffiti attempts to reclaim the city by applying the theory of spatial democracy, which will end, or at least deconstruct, the world-as-exhibition . This “place” produced by graffiti results from the (counter) visibility of the pieces left behind by the writers. That said, we can consider that it comprises the same liminal visual ontology as the cinematographic apparatus, by allowing access to a hitherto hidden visibility, through the creation of Lefebvrian heterotopias. And so the right to the city is visually materialized, by claiming some kind of power to act on the processes of urbanization, on the ways in which cities are made and remade, and by doing so in a fundamental and radical way.

All that's left in the scope of this article is to articulate the proximity between the cinema screen and the screen that is erected on the walls and surfaces of the city. The movement of this screen, not through the acceleration of images (fig.2) — which constitute the so-called mechanical art that is cinema (in Ranciè's words) — but through the acceleration of other mechanical devices (such as the car or the train), creates a cinema effect when we observe the graffiti, which rises up before our eyes, before the once “empty” and familiar canvas of the city's surfaces (fig.3, 4 and 5). This cinema effect, through the visualization of the construction of the right to look and the right to the city through graffiti, generates another visibility over the reality and visibility we already knew . Framed under the windows of a vehicle, this canvas mimics the effect of the moving image, which transits horizontally in front of the spectators, through the flow of the vehicle that simulates the flow of the image in the cinema. This cinematic experience has its main device in the urban flow. Cinema is, in fact, immense and doesn't only materialize through film.



Fig. 2 - Prisma (2022), Vhils, MAAT (Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology) | Personal Archive

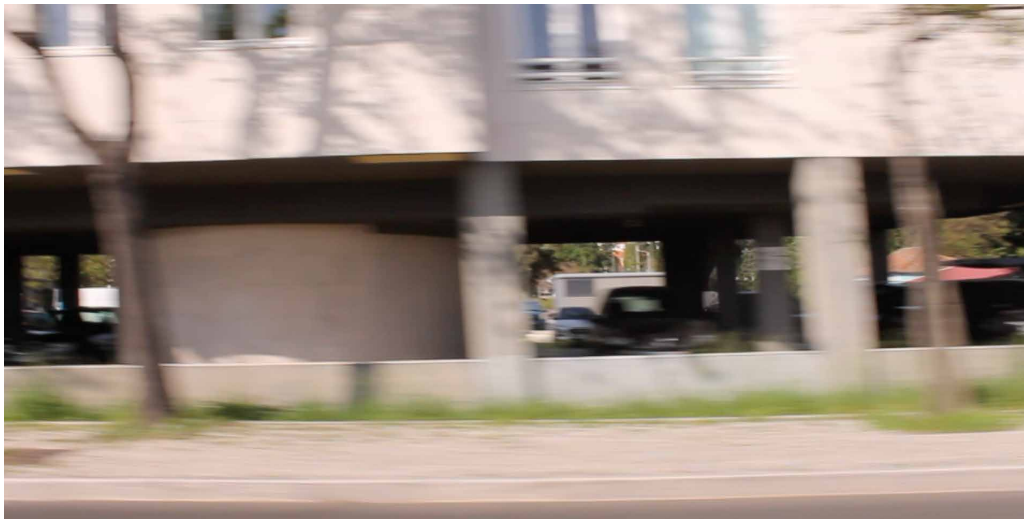
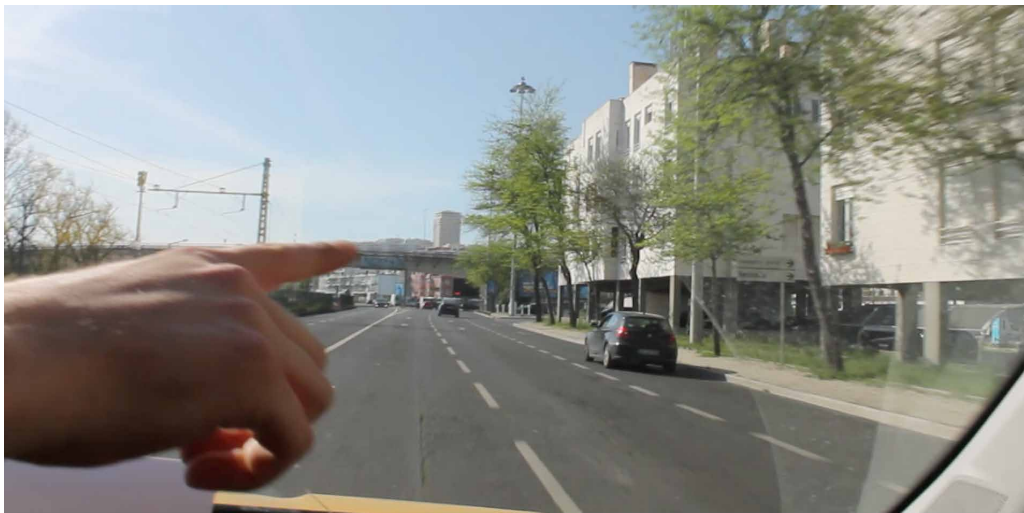


Fig. 3, 4 and 5 - Illustration of the cinema effect produced by graffiti, through the acceleration of a mechanical vehicle. Personal Archive

3. Complicity

(...) The construction of a counter-public sphere will require us to move away from the long concern with representation and towards an articulation with the invisible.

(...)

If the domain of representation has until now belonged to those with the power to decide what Jacques Rancière refers to as the distribution of the sensible, then the politics of invisibility will require an investment in the representation of the marginalized and of what is structurally invisible.

– Gregory Sholette

In light of what has been said and what remains to be addressed throughout this article, this short chapter is committed to thinking about the complicity between graffiti and film, in the construction of a new history (Rancière, 2009) or the counter-public sphere (Sholette, 2017). Since graffiti can be (thought of as) a cinematographic apparatus in itself, bringing it into cinema, that is, into the *medium* of the film, can be redundant, unnecessary, or even boring. This phenomenon of impressions is not due to contempt and animosity towards the graffiti movement, as might be assumed. In fact, people in general also loathe war and crime and it doesn't stop them from consuming these genres of cinema. However, at the same time, the cinematic capacity of graffiti doesn't necessarily exhaust the possibilities of a potential film production. What I intend to make clear is that the complicity that can be outlined between the medium of film and graffiti is, in fact, a reciprocity between cinema and the practice of graffiti. Likewise, it is a symptom of ontological reciprocity. In other words, if graffiti already fulfills the ontological power of the cinematographic apparatus, intrinsically, the medium of film becomes superfluous in this commitment. In the same way that films are not subordinated to the logic of showing works of art – that's what museums and galleries (or the street) are for – neither are films made to show graffiti. What is important to report on, instead, is the practice of graffiti – that which is invisible to any

viewer involved in the urban cinematographic experience constituted by it. This invisibility is transversal to visibility and visibility – in Coelho's distinction of terms – or to what Mirzoeff refers to only as visibility and Rancière as the distribution of the sensible, which can be summed up as the discursive and visual practice of representing and regulating the real, with material effects. Having said that, how can the film counteract or disrupt these complexes of visibility that grant invisibility to the practice of graffiti?

Firstly, one should mention what Rancière had already warned about in relation to the legitimization of the anonymous through the mechanical arts: "In order for the mechanical arts to be able to give visibility to the masses, or rather to the anonymous individual, they must first be recognized as arts. That is, they must first be practiced and recognized as something else, and not as techniques of reproduction and diffusion" (2009:46). The fact that cinema is consolidated as an art is indisputable, but the cinema that claims to represent graffiti is not. But it exists – perhaps more than any other. Due to the ephemerality, spontaneity and inventiveness of the practice and its final by-product – audio-visual self-recording is a constant among graffiti practitioners. However, I am well aware that there is a distinction between filming and film. So is this consolidation a problem of production, or perhaps circulation? Evidently, this must be the case, but not due to a lack of potential on the part of those willing to produce, but possibly because of the success of visibility and its complexes, which build up a cultural arrogance in the face of sub-cultural practices and devices. This arrogance is responsible for building a distance between art and the object.

Given the impracticality of this circumstance, some short films that take on this arrogance have emerged, appropriating it to build and consolidate a cinema of graffiti or urban creativity. They are, for example, *The Subconscious Art of Graffiti Removal* (2001) and *Spots: A Way of Seeing* (2024). In both films, a fictional entity outside the practice they represent is created (fig.9). A voice-over, distant from the sub-cultural reality it reports, leads us through the invisibilities of the city – suggesting that exclusively through this method, there is a possibility of the artistic (and historical) legitimacy of these practices – of graffiti, and of the graffiti film.



Figures 6; 7 and 8. Frames from the film *The Subconscious Art of Graffiti Removal* (2001). Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDCGkrnbSSw&t=3s>



Figure 9. Frame from the movie, *Spots: A Way of Seeing* (2024). Fictitious research group, which conducts the narration of the film, conceived by the director, Daniel Paese. Retrieved from: <https://vimeo.com/946693818>

In *The Subconscious Art of Graffiti Removal* (2001), a comic touch takes over the premise of the film, which, in the impossibility of approaching graffiti as an art for the general public, approaches its cleaning as such (fig.6, 7 and 8), ridiculing the process which, in the war against the counter-visual, proves incapable of returning to pure visuality. Implicit in the images it shows of this war is the impossibility of returning to an original stage, prior to graffiti. This situation corroborates the potential of counter-visibility, as well as the Rancièrian techniques of counter-visibility: education (as opposed to the classification of visuality); democracy (as opposed to segregation or separation) and the aesthetics of the body and gesture (as opposed to the aesthetics of power). In other words, once counter-visibility has been visualized, it can no longer be reversed into invisibility. However, due to the dispersion of counter-visualities, the counter-public sphere and the proletariat, an agglomerating tool can and should emerge, capable of enabling the visibility of the new history and the anonymous:

“The technical revolution comes after the aesthetic revolution. And the aesthetic revolution is first and foremost the glory of the individual (...). It is not cinema and photography that have determined the themes and modes of focalization of the ‘new history’. It is the new historical science and the arts of mechanical reproduction that are inscribed in the same logic as the aesthetic revolution.” (Rancière, 2009:48/49)

4. Conclusion

When Gregory Sholette (2017) calls on the historians of darkness, in addition to what Hayden White had already demanded last century in *The Burden of History* (1978), he does so by asking them which tools will be necessary to go beyond the mere description of these dark practices – graffiti, in the case of this article – and towards the effective construction of a counter-public or proletarian sphere. In response to these two academics, I suggest that graffiti and any direct action that embodies the collective imagination are indispensable devices for building this sphere. Just as important as the construction of this sphere will be the conception of the history of this sphere, but since it is counter-public, it cannot stem from the axioms of traditional disciplines, shaped by hundreds of years of conventions. It could perhaps emerge from a critical cinema, which produces a liminal space in which a counter-narrative can be articulated about the invisible creative practices already present in the shadows of the cultural industry and the artistic domain, by allowing the incorporation of methods and tools that build the right to look and the right to the city. As MacDougall (1997:100) rightly points out: “the making of some films is therefore part of a larger social process than the film itself”.

Conflict of Interests and ethics

The author declares no conflict of interests. The author(s) also declare full adherence to all journal research ethics policies, namely involving the participation of human subjects anonymity and/ or consent to publish.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this research paper would not have been possible without the support and guidance of Professor Pedro Florêncio, NOVA University, for his constructive criticism and valuable feedback, which contributed to enhancing the quality of this research. I am also grateful to Ana Memeteau for her assistance with the english translation and proofreading of the article.

References

Augé, M. (2005) *Não Lugares: Introdução a uma Antropologia da Sobremodernidade* (trad. Miguel Serras Pereira), Lisboa: 90°, 2005

Chastanet, F. (2007) *Pixação: São Paulo Signature*. Paris: XG Press.

Fanon, F. (1994) *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, New York, p. 3.

Foucault, M. (1970) *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. pub. London

Harvey, D. (2012) *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London and New York: Verso. p.18

Jameson, F. (1994) *The Seeds of Time*. Nova Iorque: Columbia University Press, XII;

Lefebvre, H. (1967[2009]) *Le droit à la ville*. 3e édition. Paris: Economica/Anthropos

Coelho, S. L. (2020) *O gesto da travessia e o contacto com o ritmo vital: Sobrevivências do êxtase no cinema*. Tese de Doutoramento em Estudos Artísticos, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

Lyng, S. (ed.) (2005) *Edgework: The Sociology of Risk-Taking*. Routledge.

MacDougall, D. (1997) "De quem é esta estória?" *Cadernos de Antropologia e Imagem*, 5(Antropologia e Mídia), 93-105.

Mitchell, T. (1989) "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order". In: *The Visual Culture Reader* (ed. N. Mirzoeff). Londres: Routledge, pp. 293-303;

Rancière, J. (2009) *A partilha do sensível. Estética e Política*. São Paulo: Editora 34.

Semaan, C. et al. (2022) *Applied Utopia Textbook*. London: SlowFactory

Sholette, G. (2017) *Delirium and Resistance, Activist Art and the Crisis of Capitalism* (K. Charnley, Ed.). PlutoPress.

Standing, G. (2011) *The Precariat - The New Dangerous Class*. London: Bloomsbury.

Spariosu, Mihai I. (1997) *The Wreath of Wild Olive: Play, Liminality, and the Study of Literature*. Albany (N.Y.): State University of New York Press.

Filmography

McCormick, M. (2001) *The Subconscious Art of Graffiti Removal* [Filme]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDCGkrnbSSw&t=3s>

Paese, D. (2024) *Spots: A Way of Seeing* [Filme], Place Magazine. <https://vimeo.com/946693818>

Notes

1 - And all other forms of transgressive creative writing. Throughout this article I have chosen the term 1 "graffiti" because it is the general and internationally used term for all transgressive creative writing. However, it's important to stress that words have a history, i.e. graffiti refers to the movement that began in New York and Philadelphia in the 1970s and, with the international proliferation of the Hip-Hop phenomenon, gained global expression. Even so, there are many other forms of vernacular transgressive creative writing that are often absorbed by the all encompassing concept of graffiti. Pixação in Brazil is an example of transgressive creative writing that is not graffiti. Cf. Chastanet, F (2007). *Pixação: São Paulo Signature*. Paris: XG Press.

2 - A critical thinking that builds on the foundational work of Laura Mulvey and extends to that of W. J. T. Mitchell, Anne

Friedberg, Martin Jay, Nicholas Mirzoeff and other scholars who have dedicated themselves to vision and the visual.

3 - C.f. Foucault, Michel (1970). *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. pub. London, p. 132.

4 - As well as to avoid their organizing as political subjects.

5 - C.f. Fanon, Frantz (1994). *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, New York, p. 3.

6 - Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London and New York: Verso. p.18

7 - Cf. Clottes, J. and Lewis-Williams, D. (2010 [1996]), *Los chamanes de la historia*. Barcelona: Ariel.

8 - Cf. Agamben, G. (1992) 'Notes on Gesture' in *Means Without End*, trans. V. Binetti and C. Casarino (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

9 - Cf. Didi-Huberman, G. (2003), *Invention of Hysteria. Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*. Massachusetts/ Londres: The MIT Press Cambridge.

10 - These thesis, referenced above in the footnotes, consider the hypothesis that the appearance of cinema is related to a fixation and rescue of lost gestures (of the bourgeoisie) and the regulation of uncontrolled movements by industrialization and capitalist acceleration.

11 - Despite recognizing the realism inherent in hallucinogenic visuals, they are still psychic.

12 - Rhuthmos is understood as the pre-Platonic conception of rhythm that opposes the exclusive idea of rhythm as repetition and metrics. And it is defined by Coelho as follows: "rhuthmos not only refers to the momentary configuration of any moving thing, it also refers to the particular way in which a moving phenomenon flows,

that is, it names a form as it presents itself to the eyes of the observer, at the particular moment and movement with which this form occurs. (...) Rhythm is, in this sense, a dynamic reality observed at the moment of its flow, as well as referring to the form / manner of this dynamism itself. An analysis of rhythm must therefore be an analysis of rhuthmos." (Coelho, 2020:40)

13 - The experience of the limit, or Edgework, according to sociologist Stephen Lyng and social criminologist Jeff Ferrel, is "the pursuit and/or living of physical and/or psychological borderline experiences" (Lyng, 2005:80). It is a form of direct action, of a DIY (do it yourself) nature, which constructs an emergent reality particular to its situations and its participants. The fact that the action is direct, random, and spontaneous may shed light on the ineffability of edgework, much like graffiti. By ineffability, I mean the most common claim we hear when trying to understand these practices, that those who aren't involved in Edgework activities - graffiti in this case - can't really understand them. From an anarchist political perspective, the ineffability of graffiti exists not as a subcultural barrier of exclusion, but as an invitation to participate in an activity whose potential for liberation and self-realization cannot be expressed linguistically, only experienced. What is referred to here is the adrenaline rush. For many graffiti writers and edgeworkers, adrenaline exists as a moment of experiential anarchy and resistance to legal and economic authority, a moment of self-liberation achieved through the immediate conversion of illegality into an experience of euphoria. In this sense, an adrenaline rush examined through edgework truly demonstrates some satisfaction - not just a bodily explosion of intense pleasure, but a subversion of social control through direct action, in other words, a phenomenology of freedom. Cf. Lyng, S. (ed.) (2005). *Edgework: The Sociology of Risk-Taking*. Routledge.

14 - Liminality, a term coined by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep, in "Rites of Passage" (1902:4) means the quality of ambiguity and disorientation that occurs in the intermediate stage of a rite of passage: "situations and mediating conditions that are characterized by the displacement of established structures, the inversion of hierarchies and uncertainty regarding the continuity of tradition and future results". But the concept of interest to work with here is that postulated by Victor Turner, almost half a century later, when he placed the Gennepian term at the heart of structuralist anthropology (making it a non-structural concept), in his work "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual" (1974). In Turner's view, the temporary distancing of an individual from a consolidated social structure gives the individual not only an ambivalent social status, but also frees them from any laws, norms and rules of behavior; their status becomes essentially ambiguous.

15 - Cf. Spariosu, Mihai I. (1997) *The Wreath of Wild Olive: Play, Liminality, and the Study of Literature*. Albany (N.Y.): State University of New York Press.

16 - Even considering animation and digital cinema, they also represent or present reality – however much imagination may be involved in these processes of fixation and displaying of reality, they always depend on imaginaries stemming from operations assembled through a (post) modern order of discourse that, on various levels, defines the "objective reality".

17 - Throughout the extent of this article a distinction is made between the cinematographic apparatus and the medium of the film. I will attempt to highlight what differentiates them alongside this footnote. Agamben (2009) proposes a general ontological partitioning of beings into two groups: on one hand, living beings, and on the other, apparatuses, into which living beings are captured and which seek to govern and guide individuals. While graffiti captures the movement of the living being that produced it (though not iconically, but indexically), it does not seek to govern and guide. Instead, as Coelho's thesis effectively counters the arguments of Clottes and Lewis-Williams, Agamben and Didi-Huberman with respect to cinema, graffiti aims to "rescue the journey and contact with the vital rhythm", rather than accentuating attempts to

recover the lost gestures of the bourgeoisie or to regulate the uncontrolled movements triggered by industrialization and capitalist acceleration. Thus, the analogy between the cinematic apparatus and graffiti arises from the idea of "apparatus of capture" –as opposed to one of govern and guidance. In this sense, visibility may be linked to the apparatus as one of capture, governance and guidance, while counter-visibility may be more aptly coupled with the cinematographic apparatus as argued by Coelho. On the other hand, the film is way more tangible, political, material and ideological – it is the production, reproduction, projection, montage and collage of that capture enabled by the cinematographic apparatus when through a mechanical recording visual device.

18 - "Applied utopia starts from a radical principle - to reach further and faster, with the aim of an idealized future rather than slow and gradual change. It is not, therefore, a destination; it is a process and an approach. Utopia is an idealized "perfection", a science fiction imagination of the impossible, a visionary or ideally perfect state of society. Although we often understand it as a potential perfect future, the word itself means a "non-place", inherently unattainable. Nevertheless, applied utopia can be re-imagined as a practical guiding principle, a plan of action in the present." Cf. Semaan, C. et al. (2022:45). *Applied Utopia Textbook*. London: SlowFactory.

19 - Cf. Daniel Morgan, 'Rethinking Bazin: Ontology and Realist Aesthetics', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 32 (Spring, 2006), pp. 443–481

20 - Cf. Augé, Marc (2005). *Não Lugares: Introdução a uma Antropologia da Sobremodernidade* (trad. Miguel Serras Pereira), Lisboa: 90º, 2005

21 - Cf. Jameson, Fredric (2003). *Three Seeds of Time*, Nova Iorque: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. xii; e "Future City", *New Left Review*.

22 - Although recently there has been an emergence of participatory urbanism, which is both a relief and a promise.

23 - Cf. Mitchell, Timothy (1989). *Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order*. In: *The Visual Culture Reader 23* (ed. N. Mirzoeff). Londres: Routledge, pp. 293-303;

24 - Remes, J. (2015) "Boundless Ontologies: Michael Snow, Wittgenstein, and the Textual Film" *Cinema Journal* Vol. 54 Iss. 3 p. 69 - 87. Available at: <http://works.bepress.com/justin-remes/7/>

25 - This short film focuses on the practice of skateboarding in order to explore its practitioners' relationship with the structures and surfaces of the city, but it is also extremely explanatory of the phenomenon of graffiti.