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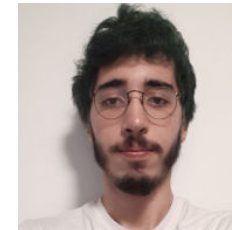
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Street Art: Institutions, art and urban management in Brazil and Canada

Urban management requires the economic return on public investments and reduced maintenance costs. Street art is important for urban regeneration improving upon local sustainability or renewal of spaces. Programs that combine urban management with street art exist with similar characteristics in Brazil and Canada. The paper seeks to determine the conditions under which public institutions stimulate or favor artistic intervention in two communities with distinct characteristics - Belo Horizonte - Brazil and Toronto - Canada – looking for common grounds. In Belo Horizonte, it analyzes the actions of the Gentileza movement; in Toronto, the StreetARToronto (StART) program. Methodology uses interviews with program managers to understand and evaluate the investments, their distribution and the gains obtained from the interventions. Results are that both programs seek to reduce graffiti vandalism. At the same time, they create opportunities and spaces for the expansion and integration of the artistic community and residents, mediating conflicts, and creating local value by improving public areas. The Canadian program has structural advantages decisive for its current existence, while the Brazilian one is living a germinal moment; The use of its transforming potential and the necessary steps for its expansion can be observed in the Canadian experience. We conclude that the programs have similarities, but success is not automatic, and their existence and continuity depend on the work of all the partners engaged in the urban transformation through art.

Keywords:
Urban management; Street art; Urban renewal

GENERAL TOPICS

The public administration of large cities usually faces similar problems in their everyday operations. Many of these problems begin with the lack of resources and specialized personnel to carry out diverse tasks inherent to public administration. Nowadays, most of large cities face economic crisis, related to the loss of revenue and consequent reductions in public financing; they also face social crisis, derived from changes in the forms of production and relations between capital and labor. Despite this, urban management needs to assure a good image of the city, since this image, combined with cultural manifestations, represent alternatives for the increase of revenue through tourism and entertainment (Ivo, 2007). To this end, the city has, among different characteristics, that of becoming a holder and a stage, demanding the execution of tasks such as the management of public spaces and the maintenance of urban infrastructure.

These two activities represent substantial parts of the municipal budgets. At the same time, with different weights in each location, they compose indexes that measure, subjectively or objectively, the quality of urban life (Santos e Martins, 2007; Seik, 2000; MacCrea, Shyy & Stimson, 2006).

Among the diversity and variety of the contemporary city, one of the challenges is re-examining, intervening, and requalifying parts of its physical space or the social functions of these places.

When these analyses are neglected in parts of the city, these locations are quickly submitted to a process of degradation with unwanted consequences, such as the rise of criminality; vandalism; substitution of activities; decline in real estate and tax revenue. In response, the rational intervention of public administration seeks to repossess spaces, adding value to degraded regions. With urban growth, the management is required to have a constant economic return of public investments combined with increased efficiency and reduced maintenance costs of areas and equipment.

While some authors (Schachter,2008; Hou, 2010) designate Street Art as an element of repossession of public or private spaces by the community, it continues to spread ideas and new perspectives. As Burnham (2010) stated,

Contemporary urbanism itself pays attention to the energy and innovation that can be found in the streets today. Just as online and media culture is being transformed by remix culture and open-source approaches, the same thing is happening between the individual and the physical city, and is being led by the latest wave of directly sited urban art.

The administration and its active institutional bodies started to acknowledge their own capacity to exploit this energy, since one of the attributes of street art is its importance in the urban requalification, aiming to improve the local quality of life or regenerate degraded places.

Describing street art as an interdisciplinary phenomenon, although often ephemeral, Caffio (2018) draws attention to the responsibility of "public institutions, bodies that can decide whether or not to preserve what has been made" and states:

È proprio in questa assunzione di responsabilità che possiamo individuare la strada di un processo di conoscenza, valorizzazione e salvaguardia [1].

In several cities, this recovery has been taking place in the form of institutional programs of requalification or regeneration of degraded urban areas, with the use of elements of street art. Public institutions can, in a structured way, apply mediation tools between artists and their communities, designating, allocating, and managing spaces for support and artistic intervention. In several cities, there are success stories of using art to improve the landscape. The experiences with different actions and programs have been described and subject to discussion, whether they are cases of using gardens and green areas (Helmy, 2010) or public roads and types of equipment (Young, 2014). In addition to serving as an alternative for the inclusion of professionals and artists, street art also has technical aspects that are capable of preventing or reducing several forms of degradation in the urban environment, whether they are natural (the pH of rainwater, insolation, humidity) or social ones (plundering, vandalism, misuse). Its application in degraded urban landscapes leads to

improvement in the local quality of life, resulting from the feeling of comfort and the possibilities of interacting with the object. By recurring to less erudite forms of art, street art comes to possess approachability, defined by Dix as

(...)a critical aspect of interaction design where designers seek to invite people to interact with designed services. It is particularly critical in designing systems that people use incidentally like doors, vending machines, or kiosks (Dix, 2002).

This leads to the use of space and its conveniences in a more welcoming way, without inducing the feeling of social dysphoria common to the classical arts.

Besides, street art is present in different positive possibilities of approaching gentrification (Matthews, 2010; Cameron & Coaffee, 2005), helping to substitute activities that are deficient from a social and economic perspective. For all these reasons, there is interest among local administrations and institutions to provide, sponsor, and favor street art programs.

AIMS OF THE ARTICLE

This article shows an account of participatory experience with street art programs in each community. In Belo Horizonte, one has analyzed the actions of "Movimento Gentileza" (Kindness Movement). Created in 2018, it encompasses actions defined as "art" and "kindness" towards the city. The program of Belo Horizonte City Hall selects proposals of artistic murals that intervene in the urban space with the use of several techniques and languages. In Toronto, the analysis is of the StreetARToronto (StART), in action since 2013, and one of its components, the Outside the Box Program, which is a set of actions and programs designed specifically for interventions on streets and common goods. In both cities, the artistic proposals are implemented on streets, public pieces of equipment, viaducts, subways, schools, squares, buildings, and others.

The objective of this paper is to determine the conditions in which public institutions encourage or favor artistic intervention in two communities with

different social characteristics, Belo Horizonte (Brazil) and Toronto (Canada). Both metropolises, despite their geographical and social distance, present similar characteristics, starting from their size. Recent data indicate 2,731,000 inhabitants in Toronto and 2,500,000 in Belo Horizonte, whereas their metropolitan areas respectively sum 5,928,000 and 5,960,000 inhabitants. Also, in both cities, there are programs that combine urban management and street art with similar characteristics. Both programs have the support of their municipalities, imply popular participation and referendum, and employ local workforce with expertise or interest in the theme.

Thus, we seek to comprehend how this mediation favors intervention as a way of promoting socio-cultural heritage and its relationship with the urban space, architecture, and infrastructure in both locations. We analyze the objectives, techniques, and materials that have been applied, as well as the results gathered from objectives evaluations of the programs' success in the two cities. Therefore, we conducted structured interviews with program managers and participants in both cities to compare:

- the selection processes of areas or equipment where the interventions will take place;
- the criteria adopted for selection of artists and other professionals for the production of interventions;
- the investments, its distribution, and the economic, social and urbanistic gains acquired from the interventions.

Fig. 1 - Gentileza IAPI Lagoinha, Belo Horizonte. Arts (from left to right) by Carimbo, Da Lata and Hyper; image by Rodrigo Clemente - Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte, 2018.

BELO HORIZONTE: THE GENTILEZA MOVEMENT

In approximately two years of activity in Belo Horizonte, the Gentileza Movement works with the coordination and realization of different social inclusion actions. It seeks, according to its organizers, a more gentle attitude towards the urban scene and its citizens.

Idealized and coordinated directly from the mayor's office, the movement is responsible for supporting and conducting initiatives related to urban art (Laender, 2018).

The program is in its early stages, with four major urban interventions to date. These interventions demand the mobilization of multidisciplinary teams in order to requalify degraded urban areas and pieces of equipment. To select these areas, the program received suggestions from secretariats, regional administrations, and other municipal bodies. At Liberdade Square, the interventions were ephemeral, since they used temporary sidings (which surrounded the square during local renovations and landscape interventions), as

mediums. Two interventions were made due to characteristics of local degradation: Gentileza Lagoinha, on the external walls of the housing state known as IAPI (fig.1) and on the nearby sidewalk (fig.2); and Gentileza Saudade. on the external walls and internal points of Esportes Square and on the nearby cemetery (fig.3). One of the interventions occurred due to the social attributes of the chosen public facility, the Gentileza CRPI— on the external walls and internal points of the Elderly Person Reference Centre [Centro de Referência da Pessoa Idosa].

Fig. 3 - Gentileza Saudade, Belo Horizonte. Art by Sérgio Ilídio, image by Adão de Souza, Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte, 2018.

Fig. 2 - Gentileza Passarela Lagoinha, Belo Horizonte. Art by Alice Pasquini, Clara Valente, Gabriel Dias and João Gabriel; Image by Adão de Souza, Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte, 2018.

INTERVENTION PROCESSES IN BELO HORIZONTE

Based on a demand pointed by the community or the public administration, the program's management team carries out a prior mapping of the intervention space. The need for structural improvements is diagnosed, including reforms to adapt the locations. In some cases, the reforms were necessary so the artists would have proper conditions to perform their works.

To enable the interventions, a network (the Gentileza network) is activated. This network is composed of partners in the own municipal administration and the private sector. These partners offer supplies for the interventions or resources that are used for the purchase materials and equipment, transportation, and payment for the guest artists.

The municipal administration supports the movement through its secretaries and bodies in order to enable the actions since they always occur in public spaces. For example, in order to create a new mural at a public square, SUDECAP — Superintendency of Capital Development [Superintendência de Desenvolvimento da Capital] — maps the location and aids in maintenance and repairing when they are necessary. Similarly, BHTRANS — Belo Horizonte's Transport and Traffic Enterprise [Empresa de Transportes e Trânsito de Belo Horizonte] — assists in questions of vehicle and pedestrian traffic structure. Other municipal management bodies support the actions whenever necessary. It should be noted, in this respect, that the Gentileza Movement is not provided with legal formalization nor a permanent budget.

For the artists and professionals selection, the movement's management team initially engages in dialogue with the neighboring communities. The artists who create the interventions are preferably from the impacted regions. The goal is to strengthen the feeling of belonging and thus contribute to the maintenance of the improvements and the artistic works by the communities themselves. There have also been cases of artists who met the movement and offered to perform their works based on a theme previously chosen by the community. Overall, the artists who participate in the actions are invited or present themselves voluntarily according to the neighborhood criteria. All creators get an allowance for the development of the work, as well as painting material, lunch, snack, and a project's t-shirt.

The Gentileza Movement also seeks to include art in other aspects of Belo Horizonte's urban life in order to promote culture and memory at city theme parties. Seizing the partnerships in the street art actions, a subprogram for the elderly was developed. The action Art at Homes [Arte nos

Lares] has produced large panels for interiors and the surroundings of nursing homes. It has contributed with the social inclusion of more than a thousand residents at the ILPI, Philanthropic Institutions of Long Permanence [Instituições Filantrópicas de Longa Permanência] in the city.

RESULTS OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION IN BELO HORIZONTE

In the opinion of the movement managers, the actions lead to positive results, whether from the economic perspective, from the valuation of social aspects, or the urban renewal. According to them, the Gentileza Movement operates in constant dialogue with all the spheres of the municipal public power. Urban renewal is perceived as a goal since the projects are always aimed at degraded areas. In Brazil, they are often synonyms for local social vulnerability. When the landscape is altered (and consequently the site's "energy" too) one can expect social appreciation and gains in the dwellers' and the frequenters' self-esteem. Old landfill sites have now become artistic murals, which gave new life to urban equipments that, without the actions, could have been exposed to criminals and drug dealers. Through the renewal of walls, sidewalks, and common goods in sites associated with drug consumption and marginalization, the movement brings the local residents back. Since the actions are integrated with other municipal administration bodies, it is possible to simultaneously introduce a set of physical improvements, such as cleaning and public lighting. Concerning the economic gains, the managers mentioned the finances of leisure in the renewed areas, as well as several benefits of the improvements in the region and the encouragement of the circulation of people.

TORONTO: STREETARTORONTO (START) AND THE OUTSIDE THE BOX PROGRAM

The StreetARToronto (StART) program was launched in 2012 by the Public Realm Office in the City of Toronto's Transportation Services Division. The program was designed to proactively replace graffiti vandalism with vibrant and community-engaged street art. According to its management, street art installations enhance the safety and beauty of Toronto streets, encouraging active forms of mobility, like cycling and walking, while showcasing and mentoring local artists.

The traffic signal boxes, which contain the hardware used to control the operation of traffic signals and their timing, are often covered with posters and are a prime target for graffiti vandalism. As part of the Graffiti Management Plan (City of Toronto, 2013) the Outside the Box Program was initiated in 2013 with the goal to beautify traffic signal boxes while exploring techniques to reduce the impact of graffiti vandalism. The program includes both hand-painted art projects and wrapping controller cabinets with a graphic image printed on a film and applying an anti-graffiti coating.

The program's popularity has grown and now receives more than 200 applications annually. The designs are often connected to themes of diversity and inclusion, generating widespread community support and more "eyes on the street." Given this widespread support, the StART program has expanded to include walls of all sizes, from utility boxes to 20+ story buildings.

INTERVENTION PROCESSES IN TORONTO

As criteria for selecting areas or places of intervention, managers point out that traffic signal boxes are painted throughout each of the 25 wards in the City of Toronto. In the last few years, there has been a focus to select boxes in areas with less street art such as Scarborough (fig. 4), North York (fig. 5), and Etobicoke (fig. 6). As of 2019, almost 400 utility boxes have been hand-painted or vinyl-wrapped across the city.

The boxes that are identified as potential mural locations are those that provide a safe distance from the road (to ensure the safety of the artist painting), are close to local business and restaurants

Fig. 4 - Outside the Box, Scarborough, Toronto. Art by WAP Collective, image by StreetARToronto.ca, 2018.

Fig. 5 - Outside the Box, North York, Toronto Art by João Freire, image by Bill Suddick, 2019.

Fig. 6 - Outside the Box, Etobicoke, Toronto. Art by Sarah Cannon, image by StreetARToronto.ca, 2019.

(which can help provide accessible washroom facilities and water supply), and are accessible by public transit.

Once the list of potential box locations is created, it is sent to Transportation Services' Traffic Management Department who provides the final approval as to which locations can be painted.

Artists apply by filling out an online application on StreetARToronto's website. The application requires each artist to submit a design on the template which outlines the dimensions of a traffic signal box. Also, StART has partnered with academic intuitions such as the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD), Ryerson University and Seneca@ York (fig.7), to provide opportunities for students to participate and create designs to be installed on traffic signal boxes around the city (fig.8).

Successful designs will have these principles in mind:

• StART's core values (indigeneity, Diversity, Mobility and Accessibility, Ecology and the Environment)
• Animate streetscape to make walking, cycling, and driving appealing and enjoyable
• The character of the city of Toronto
• The diversity of Toronto
• Public resonation
• Stopping vandalism
• Design proposals must include all visible sides of the cabinet

Designs must not contain:

• Any representations of traffic lights, signs, or signals.
• Advertisement or promotion for any business, product or viewpoint.
• Vulgar, profane, offensive or insensitive images or writing.
• Any breach of intellectual property, trademarks, brands, or images of illegal activity.

Each application is then reviewed, and the successful applications are chosen by an external Selection Committee, which is comprised of professionals from the local arts community.

StART has partnered with a number of businesses, external agencies, nonprofit organizations, and academic institutions with the Outside the Box

program. One of the City´s approved contractors has helped to prepare each location by cleaning and priming each box prior to the artist coming in to paint. Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and Neighborhood groups and organizations play an active role in collaborating with StART and help to identify mural locations for the Outside the Box program. In 2018, StART partnered with the Financial District BIA to beautify and animate the streetscape. Designs were created and digitally reproduced on two-dimensional vinyl wraps and installed on traffic signal control cabinets located at intersections within the City of Toronto Financial District.

RESULTS OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION IN TORONTO

In the opinion of movement managers the major gains obtained from StreetArt interventions are in three dimensions: economic, social, and urbanistic. From a graffiti management perspective, The Outside the Box program has reduced the city's infrastructure maintenance costs by counteracting graffiti vandalism. In 2016, the city removed 200,000 square feet of graffiti. That number dropped to 135,000 in 2017 and to just 75,000 in 2018.
Traffic Signal boxes also act as an initial canvas and introduction to street art for emerging artists. The size and scale of a box is the primary step in the career ladder which helps artists begin at this smaller canvas size, in order to gain the experience required to paint larger canvases such as multi-story buildings.
Painted traffic signal boxes help to create community connections and provide a sense of belonging in neighborhoods across Toronto. Residents feel a sense of closeness to the murals and stories are shared about their experience to the box.
The boxes help to promote active transportation as walking and cycling tours have been created to feature painted box locations. Self-tours throughout all neighborhoods can also be created using an app for mobile phones, the StreetARToronto Map (streetartoronto.ca, 2020).

Fig. 7 - Outside the Box – Winner´s works exposition at Seneca@York, North York, Toronto. Image by Kimberly Fung, 2019..

DISCUSSION

From what has been exposed one can gather that the institutional actions for the management and recovery of sites through street art have similarities in their processes and results. Both programs seek to reduce graffiti vandalism and replace it with street art that has some involvement with the community. At the same time, they create opportunities and spaces for the expansion and integration of the artistic community and residents, mediating conflicts, and creating local value by improving public areas. Through calls for the creation of works on everyday urban mediums, the programs employ the community's diversity in order to manage public sites and equipment. Thus, art becomes a customary form of expression.
The Canadian program has certain structural advantages that have been decisive for its current existence. In Toronto, urban intervention through street art is the result of social and political processes in which the propelling forces of art, cre-

ativity, and citizenship discussed their roles and established methodologies for acting in the transformation of urban spaces. StreetArToronto and its component Outside the Box are constitutive parts of a bigger project, the Graffiti Management Plan, established from a clear legal definition of graffiti vandalism. This definition guides actions and stipulates responsibilities for the several actors involved in the process of urban intervention through art. One emphasizes the importance of this definition, since it allows the municipal administration to establish procedures and lines of action for similar problems occurring in different territories and providing budgets that enable the

success of these actions.

StART Toronto has experience and visibility that resulted in hundreds of interventions so far. Even the inattentive tourist is drawn to them, due to the shapes and intensity of their distribution throughout the territory. The distribution over areas with less street art outside of the Downtown Core helps to ensure that StreetArt is accessible for all members of the public in each corner of the city. This accessibility has touristic potential. The interventions are systematically mapped and can become attractive spots in sightseeing tours which, in the long term, can be converted into revenues and other positive flows for the community, such as

access to services and commerce.

Belo Horizonte is living a germinal moment in its program of urban intervention with the use of street art. With a minimal team and no budget to implement interventions in degraded areas, its main advantages in the present are its closeness to the top municipal management and the experience of the management team in social mobilization actions. The very existence of the movement is the result of an administrative environment in which there are: political will (essential to the selection of tools when facing issues related to urban renewal); the structuring of a multidisciplinary support team, which suggests, based on its know-how, the best improvements through art in the indicated areas; and partnership with the private sector, that provides and enables the initiatives.

The use of its transforming potential and the necessary steps for its expansion can be observed in the history of the Canadian experience. In this respect, we emphasize the need to debate graffiti vandalism with society, to accord a definition to be included in city regulations. Such a definition could allow the continuity of the movement because of its inclusion in long-term municipal planning, which could also permit the possibility of economic incentives to partners. Specific contract clauses can also reserve public cleaning and maintenance budgets, whether they are conditioned or not to economic indicators in maintenance. As a result, they could be converted into permanent resource funds for the program.

Furthermore, the movement's management must mobilize academic institutions to collaborate with: research on adequate support mediums for reducing the possibility of vandalism and unwanted graffiti; the inventory and mapping of existing interventions; the production of interventions themselves; and interfaces not only with architecture, urbanism, and graphic design but also economics and sociology.

Through the integration of the administrative bodies to identify needs and establish priorities, the movement can identify other urban pieces of equipment and street furniture susceptible to interventions and those responsible for their

Fig. 8 - Outside the Box – Winner´s works inauguration at Seneca@York, North York, Toronto. Image by Kimberly Fung, 2019.

maintenance. In addition to traffic signal boxes, we mention city cleaning services' kiosks; public transport enterprises' kiosks; dumpsters; bus shelters; etc. It is expected that the costs of operation and maintenance of public property and equipment will lower. Hence, one expects that the program's impact will lead to gains in urban management and economy.

CONCLUSION

The Canadian example clearly shows the need for interventions in large scales so that the positive results and the savings deriving from the intervention become more evident to the municipal administration itself. The geographical extension of Toronto's program encourages active transport (for example walking and cycling); makes the streets safer and nicer; exhibits local artists; guides emerging talents; lowers infrastructure maintenance costs; promotes tourism. Still, the intervention results can be refined through objective surveys of the population's satisfaction and their intentions concerning the use of space, their feeling of safety, real estate appraisal, etc.
We highlight that urban degradation occurs with more severe effects in Brazil than in Canada since its consequences mostly affect a large number of low-income populations. This characteristic simultaneously increases the number of places suitable for the interventions and limits the visibility of programs and actions in local communities. On the other hand, certain current urban and environmental legal frameworks in Belo Horizonte allow the establishment of mitigation measures or compensation for urban or environmental impacts caused by large ventures. This legal framework enables the execution of compensations for the renewal of degraded landscapes through street art and Gentileza's management, which allows the expansion of the project.
The interventions should get positive feedback from the local neighborhood, but this feedback alone cannot guarantee the recovery or an economic boost. One possible solution is to discover local vocations that favor tourism and outside in-

vestments. We stress that the programs' success is not automatic and their existence and continuity depend on the work of all the partners engaged in the urban transformation through art.

CONTINUITY OF THE RESEARCH AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The management of street art programs must accompany city changes and try to comprehend the local population's yearning for changes – which may not occur. The monitoring of the population's acceptance must be conducted in order to assure its continuity and replication in other sites. We expect that the continuous analysis of the experience may allow its dissemination and the possibility of better equipping future initiatives of re-appropriation and reintegration of urban areas.
The research continues in both cities seeking validation of the intervention through criteria and recognized metrics both in literature and urban management – particularly the influx in the locations before and after the interventions, the variations in the perception of safety, and the real estate appraisal in the surroundings.
Also, we seek integration and dialogue between the research and the interaction design and its competences, since the interventions and the modifications in the uses of urban space can be evaluated under aspects of the user experiences (UX Design).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NOTE

[1] It is precisely in this assumption of responsibility that we can identify the path of a process of knowledge, recovery, and safeguard. (T. of aa.)

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