

Between the One and the Other

Aruane Garzedin

Architect-urbanist and plastic artist; PhD in Fine Arts;
Associate Professor, School of Architecture and Urbanism,
Federal University of Bahia, Salvador, Brazil.

The contemporary city is a polarized environment with increasingly strong divides between the public and the private realms. Public space has lost quality and does not stimulate new social practices; there is little surprise and diversity in the landscape. Aruane Garzedin has been using art interventions to provoke new urban perceptions and public engagement, encouraging a different city poetic.

"Once the barbarians who attacked civilization came from outside the walls. Today they spring from our own laps, raised in our own homes. The barbarian is that part of us to whom the city does not speak, that soul in us who has not found a home in its environs."
James Hillman (1993, p. 42)

The city, image and representation of the humankind's intervention on the environment, seems to be in a constant state of crisis. Its reason to exist comes from a history of desires and conflicts, a constant relationship between the individual and the collective, between the one and the other, and between culture and nature. The history of the city is a constant relationship between the individual and the collective, between the one and the other, and between culture and nature. As a territory of public and private practices, and a place of complexities, for me the city has ever been a source of inspiration. The public space and the urban landscape are essential themes in my work, before, at the university, and actualy, at the pictures on the walls of my home town, Salvador, Brazil.

In the contemporary city, beauty has found shelter in private spaces. Comfortable, decorated, and technologically prepared, these spaces now exert functions that used to belong, almost exclusively, to public spaces and have become refuges for busy citizens searching for their own individual happiness (Bauman, 2006). Tapestry, silk cushions, pets, scents of spices, curtains, light and temperature control, insulated double-gazed windows, fluffy furniture, down quilts, and so many more elements composing sceneries that revere good taste. Exquisite and delicate webs, their spiders at the center. Proximity to the other occurs in the midst of clouds of infinite space --a simulacrum of common life. But a life that is fragile, light, and delicate as a soap bubble in its free but insecure flight, threatened by any rough and less homogeneous surface in its way. These are the expanded and turbinated webs of on-line connections.



Graffiti and stencil; Fernando de Noronha Street, Pituba, Salvador, Brazil; 2016.

Graffiti and stencil; Ave. Cardeal da Silva, Federação, Salvador, Brazil; 2016.



Differently from the bubble, the real city is heavy: highly functional and boring structures, inhospitable and uninspiring public spaces, discouraging pedestrians from interactions. Even today, city making ignores the effects of these grey cityscapes in the psychological quality of the world we live in. As if a more profound relationship with our environs could be possible without the richness of diversity, the complexity of details, and the active presence of those who are living those spaces, constantly providing them with new meanings.

The frontier between public and private spaces are mediated by glass surfaces, fences, walls, private guards, CCTV, and alarm systems. Walls that grow in height, solidity and, in most cities, are extended to include urban voids and exclusive territories --from private lots to blocks to whole neighborhoods. Around them, the desert of expressways and rivers of concrete, weeds growing wild in their margins. Large pastures invading the city. Urbanity retracting to dormancy.

Silence, solidity, red lights --it is the mathematics of subtraction, of the less, the little, the void. The opacity of images that are not seen, the silence of unspoken words, and certitudes that are not confirmed by dialogue numb our senses that rest untrained for surprises and enchantment. But the equation never resolves itself, and history teaches us that all walls have

breaches. Leakages between spaces occur and, through them, affections and negotiations can augment even the small apertures. Equally, opacity may be an invitation for a non-verbal and open communication between strangers: a poetics which meanings are elaborated during the duration of the art work in its context and conditions of visibility and social interaction.

Art pieces or mere images? It doesn't really matter as in the city environment they will always be only flashes, like adjectives and exclamations breaking the hegemony and banality of most urban texts. Their perception by the city user may produce a plurality of meanings and new combinations of senses. In this article, text may accompany the pictorial reproduction of this art --ephemeral in its own nature-- trying to explain them, but they will be only one of so many possible discourses.

References

- Bauman, Z. (2006). *Liquid Life - Living in an Age of Uncertainty*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Hillman, J. (1993). *Cidade e Alma*. Brazilian edition. Edited and translated by G. Barcellos & L. Rosenberg. São Paulo: Studio Nobel.



Graffiti; Dique do Tororó, Salvador, Brazil; 2017.



Graffiti; Pará Street, Pituba, Salvador, Brazil; 2016.

These three images show the "Bovines" series painted in left-over spaces. With multiple meanings, they reflect on the urban-rural dichotomy.

Graffiti; Ladeira do Garcia, Garcia, Salvador, Brazil; 2016.



Graffiti; Lagoa dos Patos, Pituba, Salvador, Brazil; 2016.



Graffiti, Messe do Amor Street, Pituba, Salvador, Brazil; 2016.



Graffiti; Ave. Otavio Mangabeira, Patamares, Salvador, Brazil; 2017.

