

7.4. Space and place in urban culture

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Abstract

When we think of art as an integral part of the construction and transformation of urban culture, we find the public space as the main stage of this event. The public space, as José Pedro Regatão defends, is "a territory of political character that reflects the structure of the society in which it operates." (Regatão, 2007). This way, we may think the crisis of social structure as being the responsible for the identity crisis of public spaces, which may lead them to what is called "non-places". These correspond to a functional logic that creates a contractual level of social relations, in contrast to the concept of place, which brings together space, culture and memory. Places are reservoirs of memory. They cover a dual visible and invisible landscape. Anne Whiston Spirn is a landscape architect that defends the place as private, "a tapestry of woven contexts: global, disclosed and lasting and ephemeral, local and reveal, now and then, past and future..." (Spirn, 1998). Addressing concepts such as space, public space, place, home and urban art, we intend to understand how art is responsible for social transformation in communities and what's their place within them. Placing art in city public spaces will enable a dialogue between the collective and the individual, often prompting personal memories to enable the appropriation of space/place city.

Keywords: Public space; Public art; Place, Home

We start this article based on a few current events, that are, in essence, an attack on urban art in the city of Porto. Between 2009 and 2013, Rui Rio, the Mayor of the city council implemented a forced sterilization policy the city that white painted most of the city walls and the outlawed of political murals by Decree.

Some initiatives have been taken afterwards legalization towards the Graffiti.

Recently the new mayor inaugurated the exhibition Street Art that happened in an area donated by the municipality Axa Building and managed by company Porto Lazer, they invited the great names of graffiti and Street Art national and international to paint the various floors of this building.

Evidently there is a big social and political pressure for free and uncommitted forms of art run to the market, domesticating those activities. We know that recently in Berlin was founded a Festival of Street Art indoors-Stroke Art Fair.

Effectively this is nothing new since the presentation at 57th Avenue, 20 years ago where the works of Jean-Michel Basquiat were shown for the first time, this is the legitimation of the quality of the artist who was born painting on the street and who won a recognition in the artistic mainstream.

However, what is at issue here is, that aspects that characterize these art forms, the true size of its artistic intervention and civilization values of social and human relations that this

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represents, implying directly with principles of freedom and participation, ownership, intimacy and exposure.

This article will treat conceptual aspects that relate to this theme, bringing to this context the concepts of space and place, which mark two distinct approaches on the life and feel of city in the setting of social and human relations. We approach this theme with a clear point of view, that art means social transformation.

Space and place

Due to the interplay of concepts, there is a need to clarify the definitions of space and place, which have been extensively discussed by geographers, phenomenologist's and philosophers. Of course, space and place are two terms that cannot be separated and to define its limits in a rigid form is not what we intend. As wrote Cresswell (2004), "the concept of space is more abstract than the place. When we think of space we tend to think of the outer space, or the geometric spaces, areas and volumes. "

The development of space concept within the Western culture is descended primarily from Greek philosophers (Yohn, 2000, p.53). As defends Van De Vem (Vem, 1977, p.31) the Platonic world is ordained of three-dimensional mode where the notion of space is subject to the concept of geometric space. His conception of space is configured as an empty receptacle, with no matter where the geometry and objectivity are the links between the world of ideas and the sensitive world (ibidem).

Aristotle, on the contrary, establishes connections between the notion of space and place, linked directly with matter.

Leibniz, on the other hand defends the notion of space as a system of relations between coexisting elements, which can seen and measured. This approach back to the field of temporal coordinates is a discussion that would be developed by Einstein. (Yohn, 2000, p. 55) Putting ourselves before the connection of the irreducible binomial space/time. But it was with Heidegger that the concept of space gained character, recalling spatial analysis, not purely circumstantial but related to the man and his body, featuring the space as a place, resuming the general precepts of Aristotle's theories.

However, we cannot think the space as an existential fact. It is a social product that is constantly under construction (Lefebvre, 1991; Harvey, 1999; Massey, 2005).

We can think of space in a broader definition and places as portions of space with meaning within. When a space acquires meaning for an individual, it becomes place (Tuan, 2005) and the places "are important sources of common identity and individual, centers of human existence, with which people have strong emotional and psychological ties." (Relph, 1976, p.141 our translation).

The authors Yi-Fu Tuan, Tim Cresswell, Edward Relph and Anne Buttimer understand the place as being the space experienced by us humans.(p.8).

The spaces are guided by a series of rules of signs and codes drawn up by the society in which we live and "involve the ability of the social order to regulate the behavior by imposing us a framework for representations that explains and makes our daily practices." (Prieto, 2013, p. 13)

The social space is revealed in its specificity to the extent that it ceases to be distinguishable and the mental space (space of philosophers/artists) and the real space (physical and social space in which we live) (Lefebvre, 1991, p.27).

Marc Augé (2005) developed the concept of "non-places". If the place is a space that is socially inhabited and in which we deposit our memories so that it becomes ours, non-place refers to the opposite of that.

We attend these spaces but never inhabit them. According to Augé (2005), "the places they want if relational and with historical identity," (p. 47). The act of inhabiting a space until it becomes relational and historical identity, requires time, however, Yi-Fu Tuan (2005) describes the space as a movement and the place as the pauses in this movement. According to the author, our eyes are constantly looking for points of interest where land and each break from our eye on these points is enough time for the creation of an image.

City as home

Inhabit, according to Edward Casey, is both a performance and a culmination of the body in space. Inhabit the house with our bodies and create the usual body memories from that habitation and from the familiarity of this place. Alberto Saldarriaga Roa (2002), disagrees. For him "inhabit is not only in relation to the body " because "the mental and cultural change the meaning of experience" (p. 98), in fact, "the sense of inhabiting manifests itself in two distinct dimensions of the body and/or attendance, and the mental and imaginative." (p. 97).

Inhabit transforms a space into a place and creates deposits around this act in our memory. A new space can be experienced through the memory and imagination, without requiring the physical bodies inhabit it to assign a familiar character. The body inhabits the space through the memory of this act, "the place is there to be re-entered by the memory if not by bodily movement". (Casey, 2000, p. 186).

It is essential to speak of the Home when it comes to place, because the house is our first place in the world, from which we will develop our identity. This place will have an influence on how we will apprehend spaces and turn them into places, during our lives. Based on Poetics of Space Gaston Bachelard (1998) who stress the importance of concepts such as habitability, familiarity and understanding memory and construction of a place.

In our view cities cannot exist without this human dimension and relation, the same as assuming roles going against the concept of social actor of Goffman, every individual as a particular form of relationship but, there is always a relationship.

Exposed intimacy

The intimate is a value that is associated with the idea of native home (Aitken & Zonn, 1994, p. 7). The intimate is one of the values associated with the native home, for obvious reasons. When we deal with concepts such as dwelling and familiarity the intimate dimension is implied. In fact it is the values of intimacy that work in order to absorb and give space to the memory and imagination to work in harmony. As Tuan (2005), the intimate experiences are hard to make public, but they are not impossible. Home, hearth or shelter are places close to any human being anywhere, even if every culture has their symbols of intimacy. Our Home is the place from which our entire understanding of place in the universe is made. It is our corner of the world, our first universe, is one of the greatest strengths of integration for thoughts, memories and dreams.

The native home, the first house we inhabit, is where our memories are stored, secured in the unconscious. Home is a dream Center, the shelter of daydreams, the house of

remembrance-dreams. Is it that where we learn the function of inhabiting that we carry for all subsequent spaces. This house will reject any description because it belongs to a intimate dimension that can be ruined in an attempt to describe in details. To evoke "values of intimacy" associated with the home it is necessary to induce the reader/viewer to read in a suspended state, so that it be sure to read/see the room and start reviewing your listening, your memories.

In this dynamic communion between the man and the house, in this dynamic rivalry between the house and the universe, we are far from any reference to simple geometric shapes. The house is not an inert box lived. The living space transcends the geometric space. (Bachelard, 1998, p. 62)

In his work *Poetics of space* (1998), Bachelard starts by referring to what you call poetic imagination. For him the poetic images that are created in the mind of the reader are "an emergence of language" (p. 11), they provide "one of the simplest of language experiences lived" (p. 12) and should be regarded as beings own, with meaning in themselves.

Place experience

But as Yi-Fu Tuan state "world, and space is articulated in accordance with his corporeal schema". Edward Casey in *Remembering, the phenomenological study* (2000), says that the places have an important function in the fixation of memory. The explanation is simple: there is no memory without a body base, "whether it is the body that puts us in the place, he will be instrumental in re-putting (re-placing) in places recalled." (p. 190). This experience of the place by the body is what is called "inhabit" and that is what makes possible the construction/existence of familiarity, which is an essential requirement for the implementation of a memory-place (place memory). To clarify the concept of familiarity, the author explains first that the body consists of two layers: the usual body and the momentary body, based on the work of Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945). The function of the usual body is tame; "he forges a sense of space tuned that allows us to feel *chez soi* somewhere not initially familiar." (p. 193). This becomes possible because the usual body contains its own memories of place.

All of these concepts are cited, city, place, intimacy are same aspects that we have to explored in this article. Jacques Rancière in his book "The Emancipated spectator" (2010), reflects on a value of humanity, talking about theatre he develops an idea of emancipation that is near to individual sense of liberty. To him emancipation starts when we understand "the opposition between looking and Acting, when you understand the evidence that structures of relations of saying, viewing and making belonging themselves to a domination structure of subjection" (Rancière, 2010, p.22 our translation). The events that we have reported underline and stress the rethinking of the role of art, freedom and participation, we don't risk a statement, on the other hand we will seek to contribute to the discussion that we consider urgent about the position of urban art in the city, its relationship with freedom expression of which in our view is indexed to this emancipation of what Rancière speaks. To put the discussion centred on the essential we have to leave the realm of legality and seek to articulate social interests, the refuge of the "non-places" does not seem to serve an understanding of an evolved society, and inaugurates non-life space, for annulment. The power of each and every one to translate in their own way what they see, connecting to the

unique intellectual adventure that makes them similar to all the other insofar as such singular adventure is not like any other. (Rancière, 2010, p. 27 our translation)

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