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The post-industrial ruin graffiti spaces and writer

Annick Essoh
University of Toronto
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4428-2228

Abstract

The aim of this article is to explain the use of abandoned industrial building for the graffiti writer with the example of the urban incinerator of Carrières in Montreal (l'incinérateur des Carrières), by using three methods of data collection: archaeoanthropology as a method of ethnographic observation, collection of online documents and archives, and the semi-directed interview. Some scholars described the use of abandoned industrial buildings for graffiti, but they didn't describe deeply those functions related to their graffiti vocation, especially the surfaces used by graffiti writers of post-industrial ruin. The results show the functions of an abandoned industrial building within is graffiti vocation regarding the surfaces invested by graffiti writer, thanks to a deep detailed analyze of the used surfaces, the distinction between upper and lower surfaces, in terms of visibility and invisibility. It reveals the importance of the use of high surfaces in the graffiti tradition, as part of the hierarchy of graffiti spaces and the artistic spatiality of graffiti.

Key words: post-industrial ruin, graffiti, graffiti surface, graffiti vocation, urban spatiality of art,

Introduction

Graffiti are archaeological and sociological objects, the first graffiti date from the archaeological time (Stahl, 2009). The term graffiti was coined by Garruci (1854; Mensch, 2013). This type of graffiti is also called "wall inscriptions", which has started between the Final Mousterian and Chatelperronian periods, from 50,000 to 30,000 BC (Leroi-Gourhan, 1964; Mensch, 2013). Marcel Griaule was one of the first ethnologists to focus on graffiti, when the first dwellings and the first engraved signs – simple alignments of parallel lines – appeared at the same time in Abyssinia (Leroi-Gourhan, 1964; Mensch, 2013). Graffiti writers themselves use anthropological and sociological justifications for graffiti, since they use an anthropological justification, namely an idealized vision of prehistory and the cave paintings to argue that graffiti would be an anthropological invariant ("In fact, we never invented anything. Who invented tagging? It was a prehistoric man!" (Mensch, 2013, 119). Hameau (2017) in his analysis of the relationship between iconographic corpora distant to very distant in time from mural inscriptions, writes that since shepherds in the Alps have been aware of the figures staked on the slopes of Mont Bégo (Alpes-Maritimes) for archaeologists, they have placed their own graphic production between the horns of bovid motifs, because the prehistoric motif enhances their message. According to Hameau (2017), their message is considered by scientists in the same way as prehistoric figures, and from this emerges the idea of a graphic vocation for places. The contemporary type of graffiti which is worldwide spread in urban space is signed graffiti also called graffiti hip hop, which was created as a tag by the African-American graffiti writer Cornbread from Philadelphia in the mid-1960s (Ley & Cybriwsky, 1974; Chalfant & Prigoff, 1987; Halsey & Young, 2002; Stewart, 2009; Proulx,

2010; Mensch, 2013; Mittman, 2018). Then from African-American prison gang graffiti hip hop graffiti culture developed first in black ghettos and was popularized in New York in the early 1970s by the graffiti writer Taki 183 (Baudrillard, 1976; Castleman; 1982; Silver & Chalfant, 1983; Cresswell, 1992; Proulx, 2010; Mensch, 2013; Ferrell, 1995). Since the early 1980s, it spread all around the world in other local scenes (Proulx, 2010; Mensch, 2013). However hip hop graffiti developed late in Quebec because in the 1980s it was in competition with Quebec collective identity politics graffiti, dealing with issues of identity and the French language (Waclawek, 2017; Zahar, 2018).

The incinerator as many abandoned industrial buildings sites in Montreal as a post-industrial city is visited illegally for either cultural or recreational purposes, especially through two types of practice: urbex and similar practices, and graffiti in abandoned industrial sites. Besides, I consider graffiti in abandoned industrial sites as part of urbex and its similar practices. Indeed, scholars observe graffiti there, but they don't associate it with urbex. Industrial ruins as a place for graffiti practice has been mentioned by some scholars (Chalfant & Prigoff, 1987; Rahn, 2002; Edensor, 2005; Murray, 2010; Proulx, 2010; Fersing, 2011; Couvrette, 2012; Quintane, 2012; Mensch, 2013; Zahar, 2018; Devirieux, 2016; Bloch, 2019b).

The different types of space used in abandoned industrial site have been mentioned in the literature, but their functioning has not been analyzed, and it is limited to the observation of inside and outside uses (Fersing, 2011). I propose a spatial analysis of the use of this site, which is very detailed, in which there is a difference in terms of visibility and invisibility between upper and lower surfaces, inside and outside surfaces. I show the importance of the use of high surfaces in the graffiti tradition, and how they are related to the hierarchy of "graffit-able" (1) spaces and graffiti's artistic spatiality relating to their affordance, which explains why an individual uses an object differently from its initial affectation (Gibson, 1979; Gaver, 1991; Bavinton, 2007; Kindynis, 2017).

Graffiti is created on a surface. It has also evolved through the supports invested by the writers. Graffiti in old factories relates to the process of graffiti displacement and this evolution, through the surfaces it invests. In the case of displacement in old factories, this is due to repression, sometimes excessive, for the purposes of deterrence. To this end, it is a space invested to escape it (Chalfant & Prigoff, 1987; Murray, 2010; Proulx, 2010; Fersing, 2011; Mensch, 2013; Freitag, 2014; Zahar, 2018; Tourigny, 2021). Graffiti is a work paint on a surface. Through the evolution of this practice the supports used have evolved as well because of the displacement from one surface to another. Furthermore, displacement is part of the practice of graffiti writers. These displacement phenomena have been partly described by Lachmann (1988) without using the term displacement, but also by Ferrell (1995). Cresswell (1992) discussed it in his analysis of the transition from the wall to the canvas, i.e., from the street to the art gallery as it turned to commodity form. From the beginning of this movement with Cornbread considered as the initiator of contemporary urban and mainstream graffiti (hip hop graffiti), who appropriated gang graffiti, graffiti has displaced from prison walls to city walls (in Philadelphia); from prison walls to walls of the city (Philadelphia); from Philadelphia to New York (thanks to Top Cat); from city walls to the subway in New York; from the subway to the art gallery (Lachmann, 1988; Cresswell, 1992); from the subway train to the city walls (Lachmann, 1988; Cresswell, 1992); moving from the lower parts of the walls to the heights of the walls (Lachmann, 1988); to the walls of the abandoned factory and terrains vagues (Chalfant & Prigoff, 1987; Fersing, 2011; Mensch, 2013). A graffiti writer career is based on surface displacement. The type of surface they use depends on what they can afford, on their choice, and can also be linked to the evolution of their career. There is also a link between displacement and affordance. Displacement implies that the new surface is graffit-able, it means there is a graffiti affordance of the surface. A surface in a space is "graffit-able", because it has the characteristics of a graffiti support, then it can be used for graffiti practice, regarding the definition of affordance of Gibson (1979) and Gaver (1991; Bavinton, 2007; Kindynis, 2017). Gibson (1979) uses

affordance as the characteristic of an object or environment that suggests to its user its mode of use or other practices. Gaver's affordance is the fact that an object suggests potential uses to users, different from the tasks or use affected to this object. Some scholars have observed the affordance of the practice of graffiti writing (Edensor, 2005; Bavinton, 2007; Kindynis, 2017).

The places of art like these old factories whose surfaces are invested by graffiti writers, refer to the spatial dimension of arts, called "spatialities of art", and spatial effects – material or immaterial – that they induce (Guinard 2019). According to Guinard (2019) the study of the spatialities of art in geography is based on the idea that art, particularly contemporary art, is no longer deployed only in space but that it can also be produced with space. For instance, graffiti is in essence a spatial, urban practice and of urban space. According to Guinard (2019) spatialities of art originated from the "spatial turning point", initiated at the end of the 20th century in the human and social sciences and has prompted more attention to the spatial dimension of this phenomenon, including in the contemporary art where artists have tended from the second half of the 20th century to leave institutions dedicated to art, such as the museum, to offer art intended to resonate with an economic, social, political context, and particular spatial. From this perspective, art is often conceived as an art: outdoor (produced outside cultural and artistic institutions); contextual (feeding off the context in which it is produced in order to interact with it); in situ (considering the place of the work not as a simple receptacle but as a constituent element of it); relational (made with and by the audiences of the work and taking on meaning based on the interpersonal links it can generate); and engaged (questioning or even contesting the situation (social, political, economic, etc., in which it is created) (2019). The different types of graffiti that I observed at the incinerator and described above fall into these five categories. Guinard (2019) explains that this conception of art modifies the relationship between art and space, because the work is designed from this perspective and in response to a given space, which "the artist aims to reveal, to modify". According to the author, land artists producing works by intervening directly in spaces, which are often "natural" and modifying them, or urban artists who design their works according to the history of places, are particularly characteristic of this trend (Couvrette, 2012).

The incinerator of Carrières is a 3,600 m² solid waste and residential waste building in Montreal, which was before a dumping ground after being used as a site for stone quarrying. In 1931 the incinerator was built there, rebuilt in 1970, ceased its activities in 1992 and closed definitively in 1993 because of its harmful gas emissions, their impact on the health of neighborhood residents, and it was highly contested (Joncas, 2011). There is no incinerator in activity in Montreal: the Carrières incinerator, the Dickson incinerator, and the Glen incinerator (in Westmount) – although they are still present – are no longer in use. The closure of the Carrières incinerator, as well as the Dickson incinerator marked the beginning of the end-of-life phase of the initial use, with new users, especially illegal ones. Illegal users are for instance graffiti writers, urban explorers and other types of users affiliated with this practice, while any project has been achieved yet, due to pollution, regulatory, administrative, complex issues, and constraints, although the city has considered several options for reusing.

I used three methods of data collection: archaeoanthropology as a method of ethnographic observation, collection of online documents and archives, and the semi-directed interview (n=10). More precisely, archaeoanthropology has a descriptive purpose was used to collect information on visual perceptive elements, such as physical traces, by observing, taking descriptive notes and photos, while the semi-directed interview was used to collect the words of the actors for discursive analysis.

Indoor and outdoor graffiti

Indoor and outdoor graffiti can be found at the incinerator. The first graffiti that I noticed were on the chimneys visible from afar (as soon as you perceive the chimneys, you see them), the graffiti on the rooftop as you approach the incinerator (whose presence marks the urban landscape). In the close area surrounding the site, graffiti

is everywhere, on everything that has a facade: trucks, construction equipment, walls of the building, in various places on the incinerator facades (the lower space and higher). Graffiti is physically and visually presents in this urban environment. The incinerator is seemed to be a landmark for the local graffiti writers, who nickname it "Maison Pigeons" (house of pigeons), because they have seen many pigeons there. In her analysis of the surfaces used by graffiti writers, in particular that of field practices (in French "terrain", a term derived from "terrain vague") or "terrain" or "practice of terrain" (an emic term referring to former factories used for graffiti practice), Fersing (2011) also observes that they can be found in outdoor or indoor locations, and she considers that factories used for the practice of graffiti, particularly indoor graffiti, are places of terrain practice. Some graffiti practices are opposed and coexisted like indoor and outdoor graffiti, heights, and lower spaces, which regarding their different forms of visibility are opposed but coexist. Some, a graffiti writer interviewed by Tourigny (Tourigny, 2021) explains that:

> Of course, we always want the spots with the best visibility: I used to make visible pieces right from the entrance. Klew and I used to take rollers to go paint on the roofs. We paint on the left because it's a good spot. I like bombing I want my shit to shine. I want it to be in the best spot possible. It's better than doing several discrete ones inside. I've done all the spots in this factory, from the bathroom to the roof and in small office rooms. (56)

Outdoor graffiti (Figure 1) are painted on chimneys, the roof and in the lower space at human height. They are visible, even from public spaces, and from afar (chimneys), which influences the extent of their visibility (i.e., wider visibility). Graffiti on the two-75-meter-high chimneys can be seen in the visual landscape simultaneously with the gaze of the chimneys. They are almost inseparable. Graffiti on the height are mainly large, simple, often achieved with a roller (2), to paint very fast, because the graffiti writer is in a space where he is visible, which is dangerous. He cannot therefore paint an elaborate, or even more aesthetic graffiti which would require more time. Some graffiti I saw during my field observation are still on the rooftop and the chimney whereas others were replaced. Some writers from the incinerator paint in other abandoned sites, such as in Lachine or Saint-Henri, which are historic graffiti hotspot districts in Montreal.

High surfaces have played a special role in the practice of graffiti and its history. They are among the most graffit-able spaces, therefore the most interesting, and located in inaccessible places such as heights, including roofs, and painting there is part of the tradition of old school graffiti, since the early year of this movement. Some scholars (Ley & Cybriwsky, 1974; Proulx, 2010; Couvrette, 2012) and graffiti writers themselves have acknowledged that graffiti is mainly painted in inaccessible places, graffiti is therefore linked to inaccessibility. Indeed, graffiti often appears to city dwellers in isolated places or places that are difficult to access, such as abandoned buildings (Couvrette, 2012). Inaccessibility has been part of graffiti since it has emerged in Philadelphia. According to Ley & Cybriwsky (1974), in the conquest of territory, the more brazen the spatial conquest is, the higher is the status, so that the kings of graffiti seek to imitate each other in the inaccessibility of the places that they invade. Therefore, the conquest of territory, even in fantasy, is always an act performed for an audience, and places have meaning, because claiming access to an inaccessible place is claiming primacy for oneself (Ley & Cybriwsky, 1974). This reminds the idea of the hierarchy of graffiti locations stated by Mensch (2013). It is inaccessibility therefore and not socio-economic status, which determines the difficult space, the

Figure 1 (next page). Photos showing outside graffiti on the incinerator. Photo : by the author.


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space worth penetrating, in which graffiti writers are involved in conquering mastery of space because some specific characteristics make areas worthy of invasion (Ley & Cybriwsky, 1974). Inaccessibility also means "not being afraid", as illustrated by a quote from Cornbread, considered as the first to start signed graffiti: "I started writing to prove to people where I was. You go somewhere and you put your name down, and people know you were there, that you weren't afraid" (Ley & Cybriwsky, 1974, 494) The inaccessibility was due to a competition among graffiti writers, a caricature by Tony Auth published in the Philadelphia Inquirer of August 6, 1971, shows this perfectly. The names of graffiti writers from Philadelphia are written on the moon including Cornbread, Cool No. 1, Cool Earl, Kid, Duck, and a graffiti writer on the ground is upset because he reached there too late, after the others (Ley & Cybriwsky, 1974). In Silver and Chalfant's *Style Wars* (1983) a documentary movie, a young Manhattan Upper East preppy explains how he got started graffiti:

> I was raised on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. I went to a super strict prep school in the Bronx. Riverdale County School. To get there, I would drive by 242nd Street every day. From where I was, I watched the trains come and go. I thought to myself how a human being has his name on every car. You see these guys, they either live in, they're allowed to live in, or they're allowed to do this. They break in; they beat the system. They're getting their name out there, right? We've been kicking ass in the city with our names. We're trying hard anyway.

Stare, one of the pioneers of graffiti in Montreal, says that his interest in graffiti has started when he saw one of Flow's graffiti on a rooftop on the island of Montreal:

> Flow was the only one doing filled letters, with color and style. I was like, wow, how does he do that on rooftop corners, on rooftops, on a higher space. I didn't get it. How he gets it so perfect, it's not possible. Does he use tape or stuff like that?" (Proulx, 2010, 92).

A member of the CBS Crew in the document *CBS* (Smith, 2016) explains that: "And when I was doing pieces, they were usually illegal on a roof somewhere, or in an alley, where if you got caught you went to jail" (Smith, 2016). In the same document a representative of the authorities of Los Angeles declares that "the taggers take more risks in their graffiti":

> Taggers are taking greater risks in their graffiti, climbing freeway overpass signs, and increasingly tagging railroad cars. There've been tags found in a lot of places where it's real dangerous to go, up on the back of freeway signs, the tops of buildings. The taggers have a tendency to call that going to the heavens. The more tags that they can get in dangerous places obviously, the more fame they're going to get. (Smith, 2016)

Therefore, graffiti at the height gives value to the graffiti and its author (Ley & Cybriwsky, 1974; Mensch, 2013). That is why rooftop graffiti was a means of high-level selection of new CBS crew members "a rigorous test".

Besides, graffiti at the height is a way for escaping control, enabling the graffiti to last longer, as it is ephemeral, since graffiti are unauthorized and compromise the established spatial order, they are subject to erasure (Proulx, 2010). In addition, this enables a wider visibility. The practice of graffiti at the height as a strategy of escaping control goes back to the period graffiti moved from the subway surface towards the city walls of New York in the 1970s due to police repression, harassment, and violence with the aim to dissuade graffiti writers to practice graffiti, considering that violence against them was more effective than arrests (Lachmann, 1988; Kramer, 2010). This resulted, in the late 1970s, in shrinking the culture of graffiti in New York which was thus close to disappear. At the time of Lachmann's observations (1988) in the 80s most murals were placed above the ground of public spaces in the graffiti writers'neighborhoods: the walls of handball courts, playgrounds and the outside of social housing complexes and schools. Graffiti had invested those spaces because they were large enough

for more elaborate graffiti, located in a ghetto neighborhood, and therefore there was less police control, they had less risk to be erased by a municipality in a white and middle-class dwellers neighborhood that is not affected by graffiti. The interruption by the police of the graffiti writers' career induces a surface displacement, from a low position to a high position, from the metro to the walls of the public buildings in the neighborhood. In a video on the rushes of the documentary *Style wars* (Silver & Chalfant, 1983) a graffiti writer declares these words which confirm Lachmann's observations (1988): "We forgot about the trains because we know after about three months, they take them right off. That will be a waste of our pain and time we spent. What we do is put them on clean walls and rooftops. That is about it".

According to what I observed in the data and in the literature review it is not eased to define a graffiti writer or a crew profile in relation to the place where they paint, since they use several types of surfaces, places, and types of graffiti. One of the crews that paints at the incinerator is prolific in the practice of rooftop graffiti as well as indoor spaces. However, a graffiti writer can individually, or a crew can paint different types of graffiti, on the same site, but not especially in the same space. Bloch (2020), also mentions that it is difficult to depict a graffiti writer profile:

> As far as graffiti holding it together, I have never been so interested in the headlines or the neat, stereotypical categorization of what a graffiti writer is, the images of the typical graffiti writer or the narrative about graffiti being hip hop art, or who does graffiti, because unless you're a graffiti writer, you are as subject to those stereotypes and narratives as everyone else. And that is wrong. Like every culture, especially subculture, but every culture, there's so many nuances, inconsistencies. It's impossible to paint what a graffiti writer is or easily tell what a graffiti writer is. A graffiti writer is someone who writes graffiti, and the diversity is all through our community.

Graffiti is therefore a practice that is plural. The same observation was made about the use of trains or metro. Indeed, trains or subways painting is not an exclusive practice (Fersing, 2011). Fersing (2011) compares graffiti writers to chameleons since they often develop different approaches simultaneously.

Visibility and invisibility

Visibility has a plural character both in relation to the public of each type of visibility, to the space and the distance where it is regarding the visibility of the graffiti. Hip hop graffiti was first invented in its form of tag, by Cornbread, a young black man from Philadelphia in juvenile prison, who preferred to appropriate this gang practice in prison to build his reputation rather than joining a gang. He carried on this successful practice outside the jail, which was then re-appropriated by other young people from Philadelphia, then from New York when the graffiti writer Top Cat in 1969 moved from Philadelphia to New York, later Taki 183 in New York was the first to achieve "fame" (Chalfant & Prigoff, 1987; Halsey & Young, 2002). Cornbread explains it this way:

> Everybody was talking about my name all the jail. So, I figure: they talk about my name in jail they will talk about my name all over the street. And that exactly what happened. The more they talked, the more I wrote, the more they talked, the more I wrote, the more I wrote. (Cornbread)

Indeed, at the beginning Cornbread repeated his name to get people talk about it, the more he repeated his name in public space (what we would later call getting up) the more he observed that people were talking about his name. This is also what the graffiti writer Kase mentions in the documentary *Style Wars* (Silver & Chalfant, 1983): "What! You tag trains, oh you're vandalizing. Yeah, I vandalize. But still in general I know what I'm doing. I did something that makes your eyes open up, right? So why are you talking about it for". The case of the graffiti writer IN was described by graffiti pioneer Lee during *The Jason and Lee discussion* at Mocad (2023). IN was the first graffiti writer to reach the record num-

ber of 5,000 repetitions of his moniker "IN". For some scholars graffiti writers display their signature to gain notoriety and respect (Feiner & Klein, 1982 (3); Gomez, 1993; Halsey & Young, 2002; Mensch, 2013):

> The primary motivation of taggers is fame and recognition. A tagger's objective is to paint his tag or that of his crew in as many places as possible because a tagger's recognition depends on how much he is 'up' [...] Most writers are motivated by the desire for recognition rather than by any overt urge to rebel or become "powerful" (Gomez, 1993, 646).

The visibility of graffiti evolved towards recognition because graffiti writers seek, through visibility, recognition of their peers, namely those who are able to understand, graffiti, its language, its communication (initiated by those who, inspired by the repetition of the name in public space – called getting up – get involved in this practice), its symbolism, its culture, that is to say the graffiti writers. Even if among the graffiti audience, some are able to understand this culture without practicing, for example former graffiti writers, former novices, people interested, even enthusiasts of graffiti culture and its practitioners, graffiti writers have always said, whether in their own communication, in the books they publish, or in their interviews in ethnographic studies, that they talk first to the graffiti writers and thus communicate with each other. It is the practitioners of graffiti who give recognition to a peer, legitimize the latter as a graffiti writer with great status, recognize this fame. This can be illustrated with an example quoted by Proulx (2010) of the graffiti career debut of the famous international graffiti writer from Montreal, Monk.e. The latter began graffiti in Drummondville in the 1990s, while this culture was developing in Montreal and was therefore very present, there it was emerging, so he had no audience. Although he was very prolific in the public space, and was technically and artistically good, he had no one to give him recognition, which generated a frustration, so that he left Drummondville to settle in Montreal. He seems more bothered by the fact that he did not have the recognition that he sought than by the consequences of these arrests by police which he considered as "minime". In addition, the absence of recognition is also an obstacle to the improvement of his graffiti skills, because he has no one to estimate them, because of the lack of competition among graffiti writers: "It was as if people just didn't notice it, they didn't see it at all" (Proulx, 2010, 98). This recalls the words of the graffiti writer Tracy 168 cited by Castleman (1982): "However, as Tracy 168 has said "Style don't mean nothing if you don't get up." If people don't see your pieces, how are they gonna know if you've got style?"". Proulx (2010) adds that "much more than the hours of community work" as a sentence, what prevented Monk.e's graffiti skills improvement in Drummondville is that he did not have the recognition he sought as a graffiti writer.

Besides, graffiti writers paint also for themselves, as Cisco from the Los Angeles graffiti scene states it: "The audience I cared most about were the people who knew me or knew of me, but I also wrote for myself" (Bloch, 2019a). In the documentary *Style Wars*, a graffiti writer, Skeme, shares the same point of view during an exchange with his mother (see also Chalfant & Jenkins, 2014):

- It's going all city, to what end? And when ask him he says people see it they know who I am (the mother)
- It is not the matter who I am, it is a matter of bombing, knowing I can do it. Every time I get in the train, almost I see my name, I say yeah I was there I bombed it. The matter is for me is not for nobody else to see I don't care nobody else seeing it, or the fact they can read it or not it's for me and other graffiti writers, we can read it, other people who don't write they are excluded. I don't care about, they don't matter to me, it's for us. (Skeme)

The graffiti writer quoted above explains to his mother that he paints for those who are able to read him. Indeed, visibility does not mean readability, just because

graffiti is visible since it is often in public spaces. Graffiti is visible, first of all, to those who are able of reading it, understanding it, its language, its communication, its symbolism, its culture, namely the initiated, including the graffiti writers themselves and those who learned to understand it, for example amateurs or other enthusiasts. It is precisely because graffiti is a form of communication that it can be illegible for the uninitiated. There is therefore a visibility which implies readability, and which is relative to the very evolution of graffiti from its initial form of tag, i.e., a "simple monochromatic signature" towards more complex and colorful forms, such as piece. During the period of expansion of graffiti, some writers developed the aesthetic of graffiti, moving from a simple monochromatic signature to very complex multi-colored pieces whose reading is often impossible for the uninitiated (Le Coroller, 2005). Mensch (2013) adds that graffiti is in many cases difficult to read, that they are known for the incomprehension they generate, because they use particular codes that only make sense to those who know (4).

In the case of the incinerator, I observe regarding the relationship to the public and visibility, that there is the immediate public of the graffiti to whom the graffiti is exposed and therefore who sees it, the public of the graffiti writer, either in relation to the distance of far or near, indoor, or outdoor. Furthermore, outdoor graffiti refers to the sphere of visibility in public space, i.e., the visual field of public space, while indoor graffiti implies restricted visibility, and hence a restricted audience (Fersing, 2011). Fersing (2011) in her ethnography of vandal and semi-legal graffiti practices analyzed places and supports on which they are seen, and she remarks that they are private and public, indoor, or outdoor surfaces visible to other graffiti writers, graphically usable, in the urban space or related to it, and which are visually shared by all users. While some people do not see any major inconveniences in the presence of this graffiti, for others it is a visual attack, or even an uncivil or degrading act. Milon (1999) refers to it as a visual pollution for some dwellers. These vandal and semi-legal graffiti practices oscillate between visible and invisible, they have different logics of graphic inscription, that is to say the marking strategies used by graffiti writers with which they mark the multiple components of urban space. According to Fersing (2011), the coveted supports are very heterogeneous and favor the emergence of an unprecedented topographical network on the scale of the city, the region, the country, or even beyond. These supports are part of nocturnal/diurnal and visible/invisible dialectics secondly. As for the Carrières incinerator, external visibility includes visibility from near and far, and concerns, more particularly, visibility in public spaces to mark the graffiti writer presence to peers and the public. Thus, the uninitiated public can perceive this presence, without necessarily understanding it. Which consequently induces a double quest for visibility, that of connoisseurs, the own public of the graffiti writer and non-connoisseurs, namely that of the general public to whom the author of graffiti manifests only an existence in the urban public space, a presence. Visibility from far, especially for graffiti that are very high up, such as the rooftop, the chimneys, enables great recognition among peers. While close visibility of outdoor graffiti concerns graffiti closer to the ground, to the public, and at lower surfaces. As a result, the extent of visibility depends on the distance from the space where the graffiti is located. There is also voluntary invisibility when the graffiti writers paint their graffiti inside the building, rather than outside, which is opposed to the quest for visibility graffiti writers who paint at the height with the aim of having as much visibility as possible. However, invisibility is inseparable from the practice, since the real identity of the graffiti writer is invisible, it is hidden. So, when the graffiti writer seeks visibility, the person does it while being invisible. The graffiti identity of the writer masks the real identity. While making the graffiti writer identity visible, the person makes the real identity invisible. What is visible is the graffiti signature (Couvrette, 2012). Furthermore, graffiti even when it is visible, its legibility remains invisible.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to analyze the functions of the different types of space used in abandoned industrial site. The graffiti writers invest indoor, outdoor, upper, lower, inside, and outside surfaces of the incinerator. Outdoor graffiti are painted on chimneys, the roof and in the lower space at human height. There is a difference in terms of visibility and invisibility between upper and lower surfaces, inside and outside surfaces. Some graffiti practices are opposed and coexisted like indoor and outdoor graffiti, heights, and lower spaces. High surfaces have a special role in the practice of graffiti and in its history. They are among the most graffit-able spaces, therefore the most valuable in the hierarchy of graffiti locations. Each surface invested implies a relation to visibility and therefore an audience. There is the immediate public of the graffiti to whom the graffiti is exposed and sees it, the public of the graffiti writer, either in relation to the distance of far or near, indoor, or outdoor. Outdoor graffiti refers to the sphere of visibility in public space, i.e., the visual field of public space, while indoor graffiti implies restricted visibility, thus a restricted audience. External visibility includes visibility from near and far, and implies, particularly, visibility in public spaces to mark the graffiti writer's presence to peers and the public. The extent of visibility depends on the distance from the space where the graffiti is located. Indoor graffiti can be related to voluntary invisibility when the graffiti writers paint their graffiti inside the building, rather than outside, which is opposed to the quest for visibility graffiti writers who painted at the height with the aim of having as much visibility as possible.

Notes

1 Gibson (1979) explains that if a surface is horizontal, flat, extended, rigid and at knee height relative to the observer, then one can sit on it. If it can be identified by having these properties, it should appear as a "sit-on-able" object.

2 In Montreal, rolled letters (or "rollers") are painted on roofs and sections of high wall whereas larger graffiti, such as throw-ups and pieces, are done on bigger surfaces (Proulx, 2010).

3 Feiner and Klein (1982) found three main reasons why graffiti artists practice graffiti which are: to gain notoriety, to gain respect and because there is nothing else to do.

4 De Martini Ugolotti and Genova (2023) give the example of graffiti writer Yeti in Turin: "Graffiti on the walls that face the train tracks are messages left to those who can get them. . . to those who can decipher a certain type of lettering. . . it's like a gift you leave for someone who can get it, it might the 1% of people who notice and appreciate, but you do it for that person".

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