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Editorial

Pedro Soares Neves

Territory in Flux: Mediation, and Hybrid Practices

The notion of territory has long exceeded its strictly geographic definition. In contemporary urban and cultural research, territory is increasingly understood as a layered construct—simultaneously material and symbolic, regulated and contested, lived and represented. The 2025 edition of *Urban Creativity*, whose overarching theme was Territory, foregrounded this expanded understanding by bringing together researchers and practitioners concerned with how boundaries are produced, negotiated, and dissolved across urban, cultural, and artistic practices.

This issue of GSA – Graffiti and Street Art Journal, titled *Territory in Flux: Mediation, and Hybrid Practices*, emerges directly from that context. It reflects the dialogical spirit that has characterized *Urban Creativity* since its inception twelve years ago: a shared platform where disciplinary territories are deliberately crossed, and where academic research remains in close conversation with practice-based knowledge, informal cultural production, and critical urban experience.

Across the contributions gathered here, territory appears not as a fixed container but as a process—shaped through acts of inscription, occupation, mediation, and translation. Graffiti and street art, in particular, are approached as spatial practices that operate in tension with legal, institutional, and symbolic frameworks. These practices reveal how urban space is continuously rewritten through unofficial scripts, visual interventions, and embodied negotiations of presence and absence.

Several contributions engage directly with the idea of mediation: between legality and illegality, visibility and erasure, heritage and ephemerality, digital and physical space. This reflects a broader shift identified within recent *Urban Creativity* and GSA publications, where graffiti is no longer framed solely as resistance or subculture, but as a hybrid field intersecting with urban branding, cultural policy, tourism, digital platforms, and academic knowledge production. Such mediation does not neutralize conflict; rather, it exposes the power relations embedded in the management of urban space and cultural expression.

The issue also highlights hybrid practices—methodological, spatial, and aesthetic. Ethnographic observation sits alongside visual analysis; urban theory intersects with linguistic, anthropological, and design-based approaches. These hybrids echo Henri Lefebvre's conception of space as socially produced, while also resonating with more recent debates on spatial justice, cultural mediation, and the right to the city. In this sense, graffiti operates as both object and method: a form of urban writing that documents lived experience while actively reshaping territorial meaning.

Importantly, *Territory in Flux* does not seek to impose a singular narrative. In line with the ethos of *Urban Creativity* 2025, it embraces plurality, contradiction, and ongoing debate. The articles gathered here demonstrate that contemporary graffiti and street art research is increasingly concerned with how territory is negotiated—by whom, under what conditions, and with what consequences—rather than with fixed definitions of urban art or space.

By situating graffiti within broader discussions of mediation and hybridity, this issue contributes to a growing body of scholarship—much of it developed within the pages of GSA Journal—that understands urban writing as a critical tool for reading the city. Territory, in this context, is not merely claimed or represented; it is continuously made and unmade through practice.