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Fresco Removal (workshop Rotterdam_Poortgebouw 2011)

CRAVING memories on time

1_ The sense of our time, XXI century, is by us usually not discussed, not perceived or even neglected. We are constantly rushing us to achieve something further away from what we are living in the present moment. The “new breed” of human beings are absorbed within a scenario of speed and agitation where the perception of Time shrinks till a state of ephemerality and volatility. Many say that this is due to the eager consumerism and individuality of society, but I think that mainly Man lost his natural capacity of recognizing himself in space and time, and He wanders around like a little ant try to find his place on the larger group chain. Do we ever push the *stop button* in order to sense what surround us? Do we take the time to just float at the mercy of our living environment vibrations? Did you ever cross a portion of your own city with no specific purpose besides the only objective of feeling it? I did it and I recommend it.

We are too busy working day after day to buy that incredible car or that enormous mansion. We are too alienated with the fierce desire to become an amazing architect that we don't allow ourselves to slow down the unstoppable train of routine. Pushing oneself to crystallize small moments/perceptions on time and store them on their proper shelves, it is an essential part of existence. This is for me the only way to recognize, understand, and accept oneself in his “natural” environment. Maybe, in the end, MEMORY is even of greater importance than the act of living itself.

2_ Intangible Heritage:

“(...) practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills (...) that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. (...) transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.”

2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Apart from established definitions, one should know that is a essential characteristic of the intangible heritage the impossibility to be preserved throughout the heaviness and durability of stone. It is not a physical element neither a building, and it is suspended within the knowledge of people of a specific time. Result of a communal recognition, this heritage is a fragile chain as it is easily broken due to its subordination to sociological change, economical fluctuation or even political pressure.

Graffiti's are, without any doubt, a central part of our contemporary Intangible heritage. They represent thoughts, frustrations, feelings on the wall. Ephemeral and cyclical, they truly express a part of the social spectrum of our time, as they come and go accordingly to the perception of reality of its author. Therefore, as they are located on time and space, they are able to construct the shelves for memories through the crystallization of thoughts in its ephemeral spam of existence. This assures future readers an opportunity to divagate, remember, discuss about a specific subject in the past, and, moreover, the chance to take part in future interventions. Graffiti is, in my opinion, a potential **palimpsest for public intervention**.

This “thoughts on the walls” (a big part of the overall spectrum of graffiti) exist with the fundamental objective of interacting with the reader, of striking the audience. Therefore, these *thoughts* are not meant to be kept in the aseptic environment of a museum as an elevated artwork. They are from the city. They *walk along with people in the pavement* trying to diverged them from the incessant power of their tubular lives.

One can say that graffiti's are one of the big responsible for the insanity in nowadays public space, and that they do not do more than transmitting a sense o insecurity and violence to the city. On the other hand, imagine yourself living like lab rat inside a test tube. Everything would

be daily sterilized and according to the exactness of science laws, you would be fed in scarce amounts of happiness pills. This is for me the climax of this kind of policies of hygiene. Did you ever imagine how terrible would a city be without transgression?

Cities were never meant to be sterile and have all their corners wrapped in protecting plastic layers. Since medieval age that big urban agglomerations are identified with the concept of density, confusion, contradiction, insanity, and impurity. So why is Man always trying to achieve something else? I think that this dissatisfaction is due with the ignorance of himself. We tend to forget that impurity and imperfection ensures us the possibility of creating an innate living place and accommodate ourselves in between the traces of ambiguity, in other words, Man proved to live better surrounded by "empty canvas" that He can appropriate. Can a wall fulfil this purpose? I think it can.

This statement does not tend to say that Graffiti's are the future of public space beautification but, yet, that they are a clear tool for the interrogation of this upcoming aseptic world where everything is meant to be regulated and measurable. We should now walk from rationality to feeling expression.

3_ My personal experience in Graffiti painting is completely inexistent. I have never painted a wall neither I was involved in a social environment where such practice would be common. Although I recognize it as "powerful weapon" of public expression and one of the many ways of spreading your thoughts to a broad number of people. I could speculate about what would I write in a wall if I would have that chance. I don't like speculation. I prefer real feeling. So an analogy with my own life experience is much more accurate.

I have been connected to music since an early and we (my band) were always moved by the power of words in songs. Lyrics are essential in music. In fact, I can hardly see melody and rhythm without words, sentences, verses, poems that make the overall message ultimately complete. But what does this as to due with Graffiti? Everything I guess.

Music and graffiti are both expressions of an inner irrational sphere. Both of them are not kept to his author, but yet, they are meant to be spread among the audience, appreciated, loved, hated. They work by means of repetition, either through lyrics or by painting the same message in different walls. And, It is for sure, a similar fear the one that one feels when he is going on a stage and the adrenaline of painting a wall.

In the end, what remains is the feeling of self-realization of the author. Just thinking that maybe someone in the world received and processed your message and that it contributes for his perception of reality, it is already enough. Nobody thinks that they can change the world by painting a wall or playing a song, but for sure we contribute for the preservation and enhancing of this incessant chain of unperceivable culture. That intangible cultural heritage, PEOPLE themselves, reveals much more about the world than architecture or technology.