

Graffiti in Milan

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The choice of the subject of this work was born from a reflection on the evolution and birth of several forms of art and from our common interest in the expression of emotion and feelings that can be shown through "writing".

Immediately the old question materialized: should we speak of "graffiti" or "writing"?



Teatro (S13), Milan, Brunelleschi street, 1995

We tried, therefore, to explain in the first chapter the meaning of "writing" and the differences that lie between "writing" and "graffiti"; then we studied and analyzed the origins of this occurrence, its birth and quick evolution and we referred, particularly, to the New York scene at the end of the seventies and in the first eighties, to go through a large general vision which deals with the export of "spray art" to the most important European capitals to finally obtain a kind of large view on the international panorama.

The second chapter is entirely devoted to Milan reality, of which first an historical profile has been traced, then an analysis of the present situation has been made and finally a number of interviews with the artists of "writing" has been effected thus obtaining an history of the basic stages of this form of art.



Yazo (THP), Yazo, Milan, Brunelleschi street, 1996

The third chapter opens with a classification of styles so to better understand the meaning which is often hidden behind apparently not understandable inscriptions. Afterwards we analyzed the techniques and the materials employed as well as the costs and the time needed to make a "graffito".

Chapter four deals with the making of a "map" of the town of Milan, result to which we arrived after a long series of surveys which allowed us to locate and put into evidence the areas in which several concentrations of "graffiti" had been found.



VDS crew, Milan, Cadorna station, 1999

We created suitable forms with the plan of the zone under examination (scale 1:15000) with a description of the same zone followed by a specific dealing of every piece of work with a study of colors employed through reference tables.

The graffiti under analysis is then represented in a detail in which specific particulars can be appreciated and a "part" of the plan, allowing to have a true perception of where the work is situated, is inserted.

The glossary of the more frequently used terms in the artists' language can be a valid help for those who, willing to come up to the phenomenon of "writing", are looking not only for a visual approach but also for a well-informed one.

The way we have rebuilt by our research has put in evidence some aspects of "writing" which gave birth to some reflections.

A long series of "voyages" throughout Milan put into evidence that the highest concentration of "graffiti" (and not simple and vulgar scrawls on the walls but true galleries of "writing" –*hall of fame*–) can be found in outskirts and semi-outskirts parts of the town in cast-off and little frequented areas and along the gray walls which limit railway plants.

The central part of the whole work is a detailed analysis of every piece of "art" to make evident its chief features: every graffiti, in fact, has been read like a true work of art rebuilding its "history", technique and style and learning to interpret the hardly readable "lettering".

Through the "map" of Milan we learnt of the existence of areas with a large number of "pieces", the partial linearity of wall typology that can be found in the offered examples and, through the study of color, it has been possible to note that color tonality are often repeated even when they are offered in alternative ways.

Looking at the birth and development of "graffiti" in the last years and having in mind the present importance of this phenomenon we wonder if it will pass like any other *fashion* or if it will constantly grow.

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