

# Conflict and Fusion Between Graffiti Mural and Public Space

Hai Yibin<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Fine Arts and Design, Lingnan Normal University, China

Correspondence: Hai Yibin, School of Fine Arts and Design, Lingnan Normal University, Zhanjiang, Guangdong, China. E-mail: 406659132/at@qq.com

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## Abstract

Public space plays a crucial role in the development of graffiti mural arts, and the integration of graffiti murals into public spaces is inevitable. The publicity of murals often conflicts with the expressive nature of graffiti artists. Graffiti artists struggle to find a sense of belonging in public space unless their artistic ideas are elevated to the mainstream or public will. However, once these artistic ideas align with the mainstream, graffiti murals may lose some of their original rebellious spirit. This paper primarily discusses this issue and attempts to find feasible solutions.

**Keywords:** graffiti mural, public space, publicity, conflict

## 1. Introduction

Graffiti murals, as a unique form of urban art, have become an important topic in contemporary cultural studies due to their emergence and development in public spaces. This paper aims to explore the interaction between graffiti murals and urban public spaces, as well as how this interaction influences the essence and social function of graffiti art. The rise of graffiti murals, closely linked with youth culture, and their visual and cultural impact on urban public spaces, form the core of this analysis. By examining the public nature of graffiti murals, this paper seeks to reveal their position and role in modern urban culture. The rebellious spirit and visual impact of graffiti murals make them an undeniable presence in urban public spaces. The "publicity" aspect of this art form not only defines its interaction with the urban environment but also determines its significance in social and cultural contexts. Once graffiti murals are removed from public spaces, their artistic and cultural value may be weakened, and they may even lose their original core spirit. This paper will explore how graffiti murals can coexist harmoniously with public spaces while maintaining their artistic integrity. Since the 1970s, the influence of graffiti murals has gradually expanded worldwide and has been increasingly accepted by the mainstream art world. However, as some graffiti artists' works have become commercialized and entered the art market, the original street art form faces the challenges of commercialization and mainstream integration. This paper will analyze the impact of this transition on the artistic spirit of graffiti murals and explore how to preserve and promote their originality and public nature under the pressures of commercialization and mainstream acceptance. This study will adopt an interdisciplinary research approach, combining the theoretical frameworks of art sociology, urban aesthetics, and cultural studies to explore the relationship between graffiti murals and public space. Through a systematic analysis of the historical development, social impact, and interaction with public space, this paper aims to provide a new perspective on the role of graffiti murals in contemporary urban culture and offer theoretical support for related policy development [1].

## 2. The "Publicity" of Public Space and the Conflict with Graffiti Murals

### 2.1 *The Power Structure and Discourse in Public Space*

In contemporary cities, the management of public space involves complex issues of power structure and discourse. Public spaces are not only places for residents' daily lives but also carry political, cultural, and economic significance, often representing the power and normative control of the state or city. The design and use of public spaces are typically controlled by the government and urban planners, reflecting the interests and values of the mainstream groups in society. However, graffiti murals, as a form of non-traditional art, break through this power structure and challenge the existing management order. Graffiti artists, who generally do not have official authorization, create graffiti murals on public walls to express individual or collective emotions, demands, and ideas. This act itself is a form of protest against traditional public space management [2]. Particularly in the early days of graffiti art, it often carried a critical stance toward the current social conditions and became a tool for

marginalized groups to voice their opposition to the power structure. Graffiti works in public spaces are often visually striking, and their presence directly challenges urban planners and managers' control over space, transforming these spaces from merely functional areas to art zones filled with expression and rebellion. Moreover, the "publicity" of graffiti murals is particularly prominent. Unlike fine art displayed in galleries, graffiti works occupy urban public space, becoming a form of grassroots artistic expression. Graffiti murals are typically marked by immediacy and a sense of the present moment. Rather than being disseminated through commercial channels like markets and auctions, these works engage directly with every passerby in public space. Such an art form is often a symbol of social rebellion, with its content frequently addressing issues like social injustice, political corruption, and class division. Graffiti murals use visual language to critique society, especially when these works appear in socially marginalized or neglected spaces, their critique becomes even more pronounced. This artistic charm and social significance of graffiti murals are what enable them to exert their influence most effectively in public spaces. Graffiti is not merely a simple image or mark; it is a dynamic social symbol that carries an individual's reflection and questioning of collective norms, power, and societal standards. In this context, the "publicity" of graffiti murals becomes especially important as it offers the public an open space for expressing ideas and emotions, becoming part of the struggle for discourse in public space [3].

### *2.2 The Contradiction and Conflict between Graffiti and Public Space Management*

The emergence and development of graffiti murals have long been in clear opposition and conflict with public space management. Traditional urban managers often regard graffiti as an illegal activity, believing that its presence not only occupies public space but also disrupts the original urban landscape and the standardization of public facilities. As part of the city, public spaces carry multiple functions in urban management and citizens' daily lives, so their management must adhere to certain rules and order. However, graffiti murals are often unapproved and appear on walls, buildings, and other public areas. This act of unauthorized creation clearly violates the norms of urban management, causing visual chaos and even being seen as a challenge to public order [4]. However, as graffiti art gradually gains acceptance and recognition in mainstream culture, especially during its transition from street culture to the art market, its artistic value and social influence have begun to be reassessed. In many cities, managers have begun to realize that graffiti murals are not merely acts of destruction but contain rich artistic forms and social value. Graffiti works are often highly creative, reflecting the artist's unique perspective and reflections on social phenomena. Furthermore, the presence of graffiti murals can enhance the diversity of urban spaces and cultural atmosphere, enriching the city's artistic landscape. As a result, graffiti murals have gradually been liberated from the label of illegal acts, becoming a form of creation recognized by both the art world and certain segments of the population. To reconcile the contradiction between graffiti murals and public space management, many cities have started to adopt a series of flexible management measures. For example, establishing legal graffiti zones has become a method used by some urban managers to resolve conflicts. These legal graffiti zones are often located in less prominent areas, such as abandoned buildings or the outskirts of the city, ensuring they do not affect the core urban landscape while providing graffiti artists with a space for free creative expression. In these designated areas, graffiti artists can create art without worrying about legal consequences, thus avoiding the tense situation typical of traditional public space management. Moreover, the establishment of legal graffiti zones has introduced new artistic elements into the urban landscape. Many graffiti works are visually striking, with vibrant colors and unique shapes, adding vitality and personality to the city's otherwise monotonous scenery. These graffiti pieces not only possess artistic value but also social relevance, becoming an integral part of urban culture. Through this approach, urban managers have not only resolved the conflict between graffiti and public space management but also provided citizens with more cultural and artistic experiences. Overall, the contradiction and conflict between graffiti and public space management are not insurmountable. Over time, an increasing number of cities have chosen to foster harmonious coexistence between graffiti art and public space through the establishment of legal graffiti zones. This innovative management method not only allows graffiti art to thrive legally but also injects more artistic energy and cultural vitality into the city. Graffiti murals are no longer merely a management dilemma but have become part of the urban public space, adding a unique artistic charm to the city's landscape [5].

### *2.3 The Social Rebelliousness and Cultural Significance of Graffiti Murals*

Graffiti murals, as an art form, are characterized by their strong visual impact and rebellious spirit. The emergence of this art form often originates from the lower or marginalized segments of society, who lack other convenient means of expression. By utilizing the "illegal" medium of graffiti murals, these individuals are able to make their voices heard. Graffiti murals are not only an art form but also symbolize social rebelliousness. In many cases, graffiti works express dissatisfaction with the current social situation through images, colors, and language, even challenging the established cultural order. As shown in Figure 1, the bold and often provocative nature of graffiti murals embodies a defiance against mainstream social norms. Over time, graffiti artists have gradually moved from

street culture to the mainstream art scene, but their works still retain a deep critique of the social system. The artistic rebellious spirit of graffiti murals continues to hold significant meaning in modern society. Their very presence in public spaces represents a counter-narrative, offering an alternative form of communication and protest, particularly against power structures and societal inequalities [6].



Figure 1. Graffiti mural Keith Haring



Figure 2. Graffiti Artwork by Keith Haring

Figure 2 presents a graffiti work by Keith Haring. Although these works no longer appear on the streets, they still retain a strong graffiti style. The patterns are rich in color and vibrancy, embodying the original rebellious spirit of graffiti art. Despite their departure from the streets, these works continue to provoke reflection on social injustices[7].



Figure 3. Graffiti T-Shirt by Jean-Michel Basquiat

Figure 3 shows a graffiti pattern by Jean-Michel Basquiat, whose works are widely applied in the fashion industry, becoming a representation of commercialized art. While this shift has brought graffiti art into the mainstream market, it has also altered its original rebellious spirit. Basquiat's works often carry a strong social critique, and although they no longer appear on the streets, their cultural significance remains undeniable[8].



Figure 4. Graffiti Artwork by Jean-Michel Basquiat

Figure 4 displays a graffiti painting by Jean-Michel Basquiat. His works are extremely popular in galleries and auction markets worldwide. This piece illustrates the evolution of graffiti style, reflecting the shift from rebellious art to commercialized art. Although Basquiat's works are no longer found on the streets, they still address pressing social issues with significant cultural meaning.



Figure 5. Graffiti Mural by Banksy (UK)

Figure 5 presents a graffiti mural by Banksy. His works not only have a powerful visual impact but also carry profound social and political implications. Through the medium of graffiti murals, Banksy critiques social injustices, political corruption, and other societal issues. These works often appear in public spaces, such as street walls or building exteriors, and possess considerable social discourse power[9].

### 3. Analysis of the Integration of Graffiti Murals and Public Space

#### 3.1 Commercial Invitations and Mainstream Cultural Acceptance

As graffiti mural art gradually transitions from street culture to mainstream culture, an increasing number of graffiti artists have started receiving attention and invitations from the commercial sector. The commercialization of graffiti art has led it to evolve beyond its rebellious street culture roots, becoming an integral part of the art market. Many businesses, brands, and urban management entities began inviting graffiti artists to create murals in specific

spaces, incorporating graffiti murals into design and promotional activities. This commercial invitation has facilitated broader social recognition of graffiti art and promoted its integration with mainstream culture. Through collaboration with commercial entities, artists gain creative platforms, and graffiti art becomes more widely accepted by the public. However, the commercialization of graffiti murals often suppresses its original rebellious spirit, causing graffiti art to lose some of its independence and critical nature when aligning with commercial and mainstream culture. In the early 1980s, the commercial value of graffiti murals began to attract attention[10]. Under the strategic planning of art agents, many graffiti artists were packaged as new art stars. They collaborated with mainstream art institutions, achieving commercial success and reaping substantial rewards. The success stories of these artists attracted more young people to engage in graffiti mural creation. With the momentum of commercial enterprises, graffiti art also flourished in the fashion design industry. The commercial development of graffiti art spans multiple areas, including murals, clothing design, graphic advertising, web development, and electronic magazines (this article focuses on graffiti murals). Commercial graffiti mural projects are typically funded, and participants often share in the profits. Due to investor involvement, the creation of graffiti murals is no longer entirely free. Investors can choose their preferred artists and impose certain requirements on the final product and mural style. Compared to traditional graffiti murals, commercial graffiti murals are given sufficient time for completion, making them more polished and aligned with public aesthetic demands, resulting in longer preservation periods. Some commercial venues, such as bars, clothing stores, bookstores, and KTVs, fund graffiti artists to create murals to enhance their commercial appeal [11].



Figure 6. Graffiti Mural at the 3.3 Fashion Building Parking Lot, Sanlitun

Figure 6 displays the graffiti mural at the 3.3 Fashion Building parking lot in Beijing, a typical example of a commercial invitation. The 3.3 Fashion Building is located in the intersection of eastern and western sides of Sanlitun Bar Street, a place where commercial and artistic cultures meet, also the intersection of Chinese and Western cultures. At the end of 2006, the mall invited graffiti artists to create dozens of murals in its underground parking lot. The mural designs ranged from Western-style graffiti letter variants, cartoons, superheroes, and abstract patterns to more Chinese-themed designs like Maitreya Buddha and Sun Wukong. The murals, with their vivid colors and diverse styles, broke the monotony of the previously dull atmosphere. This graffiti event is a prime example of a commercial mural, where investors invited artists to create in designated spaces, enhancing the artistic ambiance of the commercial space while promoting the application and popularization of graffiti art in the commercial sector [12].

### 3.2 The Commercial Transformation of Graffiti Murals and Cultural Conflict

While the commercialization of graffiti murals has facilitated the widespread dissemination of the art form, it has also sparked cultural conflicts. Graffiti, initially part of street culture, represented a challenge to power structures, social systems, and cultural norms. It was not only an emotional outlet for marginalized urban groups but also a form of rebellion against social injustice. At this stage, graffiti artists were unconcerned with market demands; their focus was on self-expression and challenging authority, reflecting their discontent with social, political, and economic issues. However, as graffiti art gradually entered the mainstream, the intensifying commercial forces inevitably conflicted with graffiti's rebellious spirit. As the commercialization process deepened, graffiti art shifted from street expression to creation confined within commercial spaces. Many graffiti artists faced a tough choice: should they maintain their independence and rebellious spirit or accept commercial sponsorship and brand collaborations? As graffiti art collaborated with brands, enterprises, and urban managers, the themes and methods of graffiti creation often had to align with market demands. This collaborative relationship not only changed the creative process but also altered the social function of graffiti art. Graffiti murals, once symbols of social rebellion,

were created without external constraints, based solely on the artist's self-expression and critique of society. In the commercial transformation process, however, graffiti artists had to consider brand image, market positioning, and audience acceptance, limiting the freedom of their creative expression. For example, in some commercial collaborations, graffiti works must align with specific brand images, color schemes, and marketing strategies. This requires artists to consider the brand's values and commercial needs, rather than merely expressing individual emotions or societal critiques. This compromise in creative freedom weakens the rebellious spirit of graffiti art, turning murals into more decorative and promotional tools in commercial spaces, lacking the intense social dialogue characteristic of street culture. The commercialization of graffiti murals has led to their widespread acceptance and exposure but has also eroded their original social significance and cultural value. While commercialization has provided more platforms and audiences for graffiti art, its rebellious and independent nature has gradually diminished in relation to commercial and market demands. Thus, graffiti art faces the cultural conflict of how to maintain its original artistic spirit and social criticism while not compromising to commercial needs. This conflict is an inevitable part of graffiti's integration into mainstream culture and an unavoidable contradiction in its artistic transformation.

### *3.3 The Rationality of Setting up Legal Graffiti Zones and Creative Spaces*

To resolve the conflict between graffiti murals and public space, many cities have begun to establish legal graffiti zones, allowing graffiti artists to create murals in designated areas. This measure helps provide graffiti art with a legitimate and recognized platform for expression while preventing public spaces from being damaged by illegal graffiti. By establishing legal graffiti zones, urban managers can effectively regulate graffiti behavior and foster a harmonious integration of graffiti art into public spaces. The establishment of legal graffiti zones first provides artists with a free space for creation. In these designated areas, artists can create without worrying about interference from law enforcement or administrative penalties, allowing them to fully express their creativity. The openness and tolerance of these spaces not only promote the diversification of graffiti art but also allow graffiti to transcend its purely street culture roots, gradually entering the realm of mainstream art. At the same time, the existence of legal graffiti zones gains social recognition for artists' work, transforming graffiti art from merely a rebellious act to a thoughtful and artistic form of expression. However, the establishment of legal graffiti zones is not entirely unconditional. These zones typically involve some regulation and guidance on the content and form of the work. For instance, many cities require that the content of graffiti murals in legal zones comply with public morality and social norms, avoiding overly radical or provocative messages to prevent public dissatisfaction or social controversy. The artistic nature and style of the murals may also be subject to review, ensuring that the works harmonize with the surrounding urban landscape rather than disrupt the aesthetic of the city. Legal graffiti zones are usually located in relatively remote or non-intrusive areas of the city, ensuring the independence of the creative space while not causing significant disruption to urban traffic, commercial activities, or residents' lives. These zones ensure that graffiti art is not only legally protected but also allows artists to create freely without threatening the orderliness and cleanliness of public spaces. Overall, the establishment of legal graffiti zones serves as an effective mediation strategy, respecting the creative freedom of artists while maintaining the orderliness and standards of public spaces. This approach provides a solution to the conflict between graffiti art and urban public spaces and creates conditions for the further development and mainstreaming of graffiti art.



Figure 7. Adventurous Graffiti Youngsters

Figure 7 shows young individuals exhibiting an adventurous spirit as they engage in graffiti creation. Without formal approval, they use graffiti murals to express themselves and rebel. Although this behavior is often seen as an intrusion into public space, it reflects a typical expression of graffiti culture, symbolizing the younger generation's challenge to traditional order and the awakening of self-awareness.

### *3.4 The Balance Between Artistic Freedom and Social Norms in Graffiti Mural Creation*

As an independent art form, graffiti murals inherently demand that artists be able to fully express themselves in their creative process. However, as graffiti art becomes integrated into public spaces, balancing artistic freedom with social norms has become crucial. Public spaces serve not only as platforms for personal expression but also cater to a wide citizenry. Therefore, graffiti murals must consider the collective interests of society and the public's acceptance during the creation process. The freedom and rebellious nature of graffiti art make it a highly personal and expressive form of creation, but this freedom must avoid provoking excessive social confrontation or controversy when interacting with public spaces. For example, certain graffiti works may touch on sensitive political topics, religious beliefs, or social class issues. While these themes may meet the artist's personal creative needs, they can easily provoke public dissatisfaction or conflict when displayed in public spaces. To prevent such situations, graffiti art creation must find an appropriate balance between freedom and social norms. By creating in legal graffiti zones, artists can maintain creative freedom while adhering to social norms. Legal graffiti zones provide a clear space for creation, allowing artists to express personal ideas and artistic concepts without violating the order of public spaces. While artists have creative autonomy, the content of their work is often guided and reviewed to ensure that the murals do not stray from the social function and aesthetic standards of public spaces. For example, many legal graffiti zones emphasize social harmony and public interest during content review, avoiding excessively radical or extreme themes. Proper management and regulation can effectively resolve the contradiction between artistic freedom and social norms in graffiti mural creation. This balance ensures that artists' creativity is not suppressed while preventing graffiti art from excessively affecting the overall image of public spaces and social order. Through guidance and regulation, graffiti art can showcase its uniqueness while respecting societal values, fostering the healthy development of the art form, and ultimately achieving a harmonious unity between

### *3.5 Case Study on the Success of Graffiti Museums and Workshops*

Graffiti museums and art workshops provide successful examples of the integration of graffiti art with public spaces. These venues not only offer graffiti artists a legal and organized space for creation, but also serve as a window for the public to appreciate and understand graffiti art. Through these successful cases, graffiti art is showcased within a regulated framework, while avoiding the negative effects of illegal graffiti. This promotes greater social recognition and cultural value of graffiti art. One typical success story is the “5Pointz” graffiti museum located in New York. This museum was once a global gathering place for graffiti artists, offering them a legal platform for creation while also becoming an important showcase for graffiti art. Figure 7 presents the vibrant graffiti murals inside the “5Pointz” museum, which demonstrate the creativity and diversity of graffiti art while reflecting the positive interaction between the artists and urban space. In this way, graffiti art has not only gained wide recognition but also become an integral part of the city's culture.



Figure 8. Exterior of the “5Pointz” Graffiti Museum

Figure 8 shows the graffiti works on the exterior of the “5Pointz” graffiti museum in New York. These murals extract graffiti art from street culture and display it to the public through legitimate channels. Inside “5Pointz,” artists are able to create in an uninterrupted environment, enjoying artistic freedom while avoiding the negative effects that illegal graffiti could have on public spaces. This innovative display format has attracted large numbers of visitors and provided a new space for graffiti art to thrive. In addition, many cities have established graffiti workshops as hubs for graffiti art education and creation. Through these workshops, graffiti artists not only receive technical support and guidance for their art, but also gain inspiration from cultural exchanges and social interactions. These workshops encourage artists to engage with the public, enhancing social understanding and acceptance of graffiti art. Through these successful cases, city managers can learn from and expand the ways graffiti murals can be integrated into public spaces. By ensuring public spaces remain clean and orderly while providing platforms for artists, cities can promote wider social acceptance and development of graffiti art. The successful experiences of graffiti museums and workshops demonstrate that graffiti art is not just a symbol of rebellion; it can also become an important part of urban culture, injecting new vitality and creativity into public spaces. Ultimately, the legalization and social recognition of graffiti art require joint efforts from governments, artists, and citizens to establish effective collaboration mechanisms and platforms. This will ensure the rational presence of graffiti murals in public spaces and promote the ongoing enhancement of their artistic value.

#### **4. The Impact and Value of Graffiti Murals on Urban Landscapes**

##### *4.1 The Role of Graffiti Murals in Urban Aesthetics*

As a unique form of art, graffiti murals have gradually become an important element of urban landscapes. Traditionally, urban aesthetics were dominated by meticulously designed buildings, public sculptures, and landscaping, while graffiti murals break from this norm by injecting more vibrant and diverse visual elements into urban spaces. Through graffiti art, city walls, streets, and even abandoned buildings have become important carriers for displaying artistic creativity and social culture. These murals not only alter the appearance of cities but also infuse them with a unique cultural atmosphere and artistic flair. Graffiti murals have a strong visual impact; with their bold colors, exaggerated patterns, and personalized expressions, they can instantly capture attention and even become iconic city landmarks. For example, in many modern cities, graffiti murals have become a part of street culture, not only decorating otherwise monotonous walls but also making the urban landscape more diverse and lively. In these murals, artists often use images and symbols to tell stories related to the city, society, or culture, reflecting on social phenomena, revisiting history, or envisioning the future. Therefore, graffiti murals are not just aesthetic decorations; they are microcosms of urban culture, embodying social backgrounds, the spirit of the times, and artistic innovation. The urban aesthetic role of graffiti murals also reflects the expression of city identity and residents’ emotions. In some areas, especially where youth culture and street culture are prominent, graffiti often serves as a means for young people to vent emotions and express themselves. In these areas, graffiti murals are often highly individualized and localized, showcasing strong community cultural characteristics, with each mural bearing its own unique style and emotional tone. Graffiti murals not only imbue urban landscapes with artistic value but also become part of how both residents and visitors perceive the city. They symbolize creativity, freedom, and social change, reflecting the city's inclusivity and diversity. However, the aesthetic value of graffiti murals in urban landscapes also comes with controversy. While they inject vitality into the city, unauthorized graffiti may be seen as a “destructive” form of art that conflicts with the norms of urban management. Therefore, balancing the protection of urban aesthetics with encouraging creative expression has become an important task in modern urban management.

##### *4.2 The Value-Adding Role of Graffiti Art in Public Space Landscapes*

Graffiti art not only adds visual impact to urban landscapes but also brings unique cultural value and social significance to public spaces. As urban culture becomes increasingly diverse, graffiti murals have gradually evolved beyond being mere expressions of rebellion or self-emotion, becoming key elements in enhancing the landscape value of public spaces. Particularly in historical sites, abandoned factories, and old buildings, the addition of graffiti murals not only fills the voids of these spaces but also revitalizes and attracts attention to these areas. Graffiti murals can transform previously dull and monotonous public spaces into vibrant visual landscapes rich in artistic atmosphere and color, attracting a large number of tourists and residents to appreciate them. For example, in many cities, areas that were once desolate or outdated have become lively cultural landmarks due to the presence of graffiti murals. This has not only enhanced the aesthetic value of these spaces but also contributed to the local economy. For instance, some abandoned warehouses or parking lots, adorned with graffiti art, have been transformed into cultural districts or tourist attractions, attracting tourists and art enthusiasts while boosting surrounding businesses, generating direct economic benefits. Furthermore, graffiti murals also add cultural depth and historical significance to public spaces. Many graffiti works are not only artistic creations but also reflections



on social phenomena, historical events, or local culture. Through visual language, they convey emotions and tell stories, allowing viewers to appreciate not only the beauty of color and form but also the cultural information and social context behind the murals. Graffiti art has become a deeply interactive cultural carrier for public spaces, breathing new life into these spaces and enhancing their historical and cultural depth. The value-adding role of graffiti art is not only reflected in aesthetics and culture but also in promoting social engagement and community interaction. The creation of graffiti art is often a collaborative process, with interactions between artists, community residents, organizations, and businesses. This collaboration makes the artistic atmosphere of public spaces more open and inclusive, strengthening people's sense of identity with the space and fostering cultural exchange and community building. However, the value-adding impact of graffiti art in public spaces also faces challenges. Unauthorized graffiti works may be considered as "vandalism," raising concerns. Therefore, balancing creative freedom with urban management standards and guiding the integration of graffiti art with public spaces is an issue that city managers must address. By establishing legal graffiti zones, guiding artistic planning, and other strategies, graffiti art can be harmoniously integrated into public spaces, maximizing its value-adding effect on urban landscapes and social culture.

#### *4.3 Graffiti Murals in Promoting City Image and Cultural Diversity*

Graffiti murals not only have a profound impact on urban landscapes visually but also play an increasingly significant role in shaping city images and promoting cultural diversity. With the advancement of globalization and urbanization, the cultural competitiveness of cities increasingly depends on their uniqueness and diversity. In this process, graffiti murals have become an important form of cultural expression, helping cities create unique cultural identities and attractions. Firstly, graffiti murals provide cities with a distinctive visual symbol, reflecting the city's spirit of innovation and vitality while showcasing the local cultural diversity. In many major cities, graffiti has become a part of street culture and represents the city's openness and inclusivity. For example, graffiti murals in cities like New York, Berlin, and Los Angeles have become symbols of global street culture, attracting thousands of visitors. These murals not only beautify public spaces but also make cities more individualized, forming a unique image that distinguishes them from other cities. The cultural diversity represented by graffiti murals is also a driving force in promoting urban cultural innovation and social integration. Artists from different backgrounds, cultures, and social classes use graffiti as a common platform to showcase diverse cultural perspectives and creative styles. This cultural diversity and integration not only reflect the trend of social diversification but also infuse cities with more vitality and creativity. Through graffiti art interactions, city residents can better understand and embrace different cultural groups, promoting social harmony and development. Moreover, graffiti murals play an active role in enhancing a city's international image. In today's increasingly globalized world, cities are engaged in intense cultural competition. Graffiti murals, as a popular and expressive art form, have become a key tool for many cities in building their international, modern image. For example, with the rise of graffiti art, many cities have incorporated it into their branding and cultural identity to attract investment, enhance visibility, and draw tourists. These cities not only use graffiti murals to visually shape their unique urban characteristics but also use artistic expression and cultural exchange to promote international communication and understanding. However, the impact of graffiti murals on urban image building is not without controversy. On one hand, graffiti art brings a fresh aesthetic experience and cultural atmosphere to cities. On the other hand, unauthorized graffiti works can negatively impact the cleanliness and public order of cities. Therefore, effective planning and guidance for the creation of graffiti murals must be incorporated into urban management to ensure their artistic value is maximized while avoiding potential negative effects on public spaces and the urban image. In summary, graffiti murals are not only a vital part of urban street culture but also, through their unique artistic expression, promote the creation of distinctive city images and the spread of cultural diversity. By ensuring that graffiti art is legally integrated into urban planning, cities can harness its creative power to improve their cultural competitiveness and public image, contributing to the sustainable development of urban culture and community engagement.

#### *4.4 Graffiti Murals as a Potential in the Tourism and Cultural Industries*

As graffiti art gradually gains acceptance in society and mainstream culture, its potential in the tourism and cultural industries has become increasingly apparent. Graffiti murals are not only an important component of urban landscapes but have also become a major highlight in cultural tourism, bringing significant economic benefits and cultural influence to cities. More and more cities are recognizing that graffiti murals are not merely a form of street art; they have huge potential in attracting tourists, promoting the cultural industry, and stimulating urban economic development.

Firstly, graffiti murals, as an expressive art form, have become the cultural calling cards of many cities, attracting tourists from around the world. For example, the East Side Gallery in Berlin and the Arts District in Los Angeles

are famous graffiti tourism destinations, drawing large numbers of visitors. Tourists can not only appreciate the artistic value of the graffiti murals but also experience the cultural and social context behind these works, gaining a deeper understanding of the city's history and cultural characteristics. As a resource for cultural tourism, graffiti murals offer unique appeal to cities, becoming a significant highlight in the development of the tourism industry. Secondly, the development of graffiti murals provides abundant creative and business opportunities for the cultural industry. Many cities have integrated graffiti art with the cultural industry, promoting graffiti-related exhibitions, art festivals, product sales, and other cultural creative activities. For instance, some graffiti artists collaborate with brands to release graffiti-inspired products such as clothing, home goods, and art books. These products have not only been enthusiastically embraced by young people but also provided commercialization pathways for graffiti artists. Moreover, graffiti art has become an essential part of cultural activities and the creative industry. Many cities hold graffiti art festivals, competitions, and workshops, which stimulate local economic development and cultural exchange. The commercialization potential of graffiti murals lies also in their unique market positioning. Compared to traditional art forms, graffiti murals have a more grounded and direct appeal, easily attracting the attention of younger audiences. In many cultural and creative industries, graffiti's "street culture" makes it a popular element in fashion, advertising, and brand marketing. More and more brands are using graffiti murals as a form of promotion in their campaigns, not only bringing commercial value to graffiti art but also driving the development of related industries. However, graffiti murals, as part of the cultural industry, also face challenges. With the commercialization of graffiti, the independence and originality of art may be threatened, and the conflict between commercial interests and artistic spirit needs to be properly addressed. Additionally, some unauthorized graffiti murals may lead to legal and social controversies. Balancing the promotion of graffiti art with the need to maintain order in urban public spaces is a key issue for urban managers. In summary, graffiti murals, as an innovative and expressive art form, have already become an important resource in urban culture and the tourism industry. Through proper planning and guidance, graffiti art can unleash its immense potential in urban economies, cultural industries, and tourism, becoming one of the driving forces for urban development.

## **5. Management Policy Adjustments and Future Outlook**

### *5.1 The Shift in Urban Management Departments' Attitudes Towards Graffiti Murals*

As graffiti art gradually transitions from street culture to the mainstream, urban management departments have undergone a significant shift in their attitudes toward graffiti murals. Initially, graffiti art was seen as an illegal activity, with urban managers believing that graffiti not only marred the beauty of public spaces but could also lead to public security issues. In order to maintain the city's cleanliness and order, many local governments took strict measures to curb graffiti, even punishing or expelling graffiti artists. However, with the development of graffiti art and its gradual acceptance by society, especially with the influence of well-known graffiti artists, urban management departments have changed their stance. Some cities have begun to recognize that graffiti is not just an act of vandalism but also a creative form of artistic expression that reflects the diversity of society and cultural innovation. As a result, urban managers have started exploring ways to integrate graffiti art into urban public art planning, gradually loosening restrictions on graffiti murals. Today, many cities no longer merely prohibit graffiti but instead legalize, guide, and regulate graffiti art within public spaces. Some cities have established designated graffiti zones, providing a platform for graffiti artists to create, while managing the content and form of the murals to ensure that the artistic creations do not disrupt the overall aesthetic and order of public spaces. Additionally, some cities collaborate with artists and cultural institutions to promote graffiti art as part of the city's culture, giving it deeper social and cultural value. The change in urban management departments' attitudes toward graffiti murals has not only fostered the development of graffiti art but also injected more creativity and vitality into cities. Through proper management, graffiti art can maintain its freedom of expression and rebellious spirit while aligning with the city's overall planning and social norms, forming a more harmonious symbiotic relationship. Managers are no longer just concerned with the "legality" of graffiti but are focused on how to enhance the city's cultural level and visual appeal through graffiti art. This shift reflects the gradual updating of urban cultural management concepts. Especially in the context of globalization and the increasing prominence of cultural diversity, more cities are realizing the importance of inclusivity in multiculturalism and the significance of the cultural and creative industries. Graffiti murals, as a unique art form, are no longer seen purely as acts of destruction but as part of the urban culture, possessing unique artistic and social value. As this shift continues, urban management departments are likely to adopt even more flexible and open attitudes toward graffiti murals. More cities will integrate graffiti art into their public art planning, promoting murals with social, cultural, and artistic value to public spaces, not only enhancing the city's image but also bringing greater economic benefits and cultural influence.

### *5.2 Improving Graffiti Mural Policies and Legal Systems*

As graffiti art becomes more widespread and commercially developed, how to respect the freedom of artistic creation while maintaining public space order and aesthetic appeal has become an important issue for many cities. To effectively manage and guide the creation of graffiti art, improving the relevant policy and legal systems has become an essential task. A reasonable and scientific policy and legal framework can not only regulate the creation of graffiti murals, safeguarding artists' creative freedom, but also protect the cleanliness of public spaces and public interests.

First, the management of graffiti murals should be based on a reasonable legal framework. Many countries and regions' existing laws do not specifically address graffiti art, leading to frequent conflicts between graffiti creation and the current legal system. In the past, graffiti was often considered an illegal activity, and unauthorized graffiti works could be viewed as vandalism, with artists facing legal consequences. To avoid this, cities should legislate to clarify the position of graffiti art in public spaces and define the boundaries for its creation. By distinguishing between "artistic graffiti" and "destructive graffiti" in law, cities can provide a legal basis for artistic creation while effectively combating illegal graffiti. Second, policy development should take into account the diversity and complexity of graffiti art. On the one hand, graffiti art has unique cultural value, representing street culture, rebellious spirit, and social critique. On the other hand, the content and form of graffiti often involve social and political issues, which may provoke public emotional conflicts. Therefore, policymakers need to strike a balance between artistic freedom and social public interests. Establishing legal graffiti zones in urban public spaces, setting creation areas, and establishing management regulations and review mechanisms are important components of policy formulation. Through legitimate creation platforms, artists can express their ideas without violating public order, while management authorities can ensure that the works adhere to certain social norms and aesthetic standards. In terms of improving the legal system, cities can reference successful cases. For example, some cities with advanced graffiti art cultures (such as Berlin, Los Angeles, and London) have already established relatively mature legal systems and management frameworks for graffiti murals. These cities support graffiti art through relevant cultural and creative industry policies and have established strict management regulations. The protection of graffiti art by law goes beyond creation and also covers issues like intellectual property rights. As part of cultural creativity, the copyright of graffiti art needs legal protection to prevent illegal reproduction or alteration. Moreover, to better regulate graffiti creation, city management departments should strengthen cooperation and communication with artists, promoting the planning and implementation of public art projects. In some cities, graffiti artists collaborate with government departments, commercial institutions, and others to jointly formulate and implement creation norms and exhibition plans for graffiti art. By respecting and supporting graffiti art, artists can create within a legal framework while bringing meaningful works to society and the public. In conclusion, as graffiti art gradually becomes part of urban culture, improving policies and legal systems for graffiti murals is crucial. A scientific and reasonable legal framework not only protects artistic freedom but also ensures the order of public spaces and social harmony. Through institutional innovation and policy support, graffiti murals will better integrate into urban life and become an important force in promoting urban cultural development.

### *5.3 Future Trends of Graffiti Mural Art in Public Spaces*

With the constant changes in social and cultural environments, graffiti murals, as a unique art form, are also evolving in their position and role within public spaces. In the future, graffiti mural art will develop in a more diversified, professional, and standardized direction. The following are several potential trends:

#### **1) Further Mainstreaming and Social Recognition of Graffiti Art**

In recent years, graffiti art has gradually moved from the fringes of street culture to the mainstream art scene, gaining increasing recognition from the public and the art community. In the future, as the art market grows and the commercialization of graffiti art progresses, graffiti murals will occupy a place in more cities and cultural environments. Not only will they become important components of urban landscapes, but they may also be incorporated into urban planning and design agendas as art projects. In this process, interaction between graffiti artists and public space managers will become closer, and social recognition of graffiti art will gradually increase, making it a unique expression of urban identity and cultural diversity.

#### **2) Deep Integration of Graffiti Murals with Urban Planning**

With the development of urban planning and design, more and more cities will recognize the value of graffiti murals in promoting urban characteristics. Graffiti murals can not only beautify public spaces but also reflect the city's history, culture, and people's creativity. As a result, urban planners will increasingly incorporate graffiti art into urban planning and design, treating it as a key element in the creation of urban culture and image. In the future,

public spaces such as parks, squares, and commercial districts will become more closely tied to graffiti murals, with artists and urban planners working together to integrate graffiti art into the city's overall design.

### 3) Commercial and Cultural Dual Development

As the commercialization of graffiti art continues to deepen, the future of graffiti murals will not only be driven by the cultural and artistic value but also by commercial interests. The potential of graffiti murals in branding, advertising, and the fashion industry will further increase. In addition to traditional art exhibitions and mural creation, graffiti murals will also become important marketing tools for brands, triggering more innovative forms of marketing and cooperation. Graffiti murals will blend with the commercial field in more creative and interactive ways, becoming a medium for both cultural and economic development.

### 4) New Techniques and Materials for Graffiti Art

In the future, with the development of technology, new techniques and materials will continue to emerge, providing graffiti artists with more tools for creative expression. For example, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies can bring new interactivity and visual experiences to graffiti murals, making them more attractive and immersive. New paint materials and environmental-friendly spray paints will also reduce the negative impact of graffiti on the environment while improving the durability of murals. The future of graffiti art will embrace more technological advances, making graffiti murals even more dynamic and interactive.

### 5) Public Participation and Co-Creation of Graffiti Art

The future of graffiti murals will be marked by more public participation. Through the development of community-based graffiti projects and co-creation events, ordinary citizens can become part of the creative process, participating in the creation of public murals. This kind of participatory creation will not only enrich the content of graffiti murals but also enhance the relationship between the community and the city. Graffiti murals will no longer be confined to the realm of artists alone but will become an important part of the public cultural and social activities. In conclusion, the future of graffiti mural art in public spaces will be defined by deeper integration with urban culture, increased recognition, technological advancements, and more inclusive creative processes. Graffiti murals will evolve into a more diversified, professional, and integrated art form, contributing to the development of urban culture and creative industries.

## 6. Conclusion

After decades of development, graffiti murals are no longer merely a form of rebellious emotional expression. Their artistic form has matured, and they have gradually been embraced by mainstream culture. Museums have started to regularly exhibit graffiti art, and some galleries specialize in selling graffiti artworks. The techniques and methods used in graffiti art have even been incorporated into the creation of other types of art. However, graffiti that is removed from the streets no longer retains its original artistic wildness and intensity. It loses its public nature and can no longer be considered graffiti murals. The illegality of graffiti murals has never stemmed from their creation methods or artistic form, but rather from their unauthorized invasion of public space. In response to urban management's efforts to remove graffiti, graffiti murals have spread rapidly worldwide. Authorities have begun to acknowledge the public's right to express themselves, and the positive impact of graffiti murals on urban landscapes is receiving more attention. For example, graffiti murals in New York attract large numbers of tourists each year, and Germany is in the process of restoring the famous Berlin Wall graffiti murals. As a result, governments are gradually becoming more tolerant, with legal graffiti zones being established. Urban management departments are also organizing graffiti artists to create murals in old districts, helping to revitalize their visual landscapes. Meanwhile, commercial graffiti murals are becoming more prevalent, and graffiti artists today face a dilemma in the current commercialized world—whether to "stay true" to their art or to "compromise." The boundary between graffiti murals and mainstream public murals is becoming increasingly blurred, as graffiti art moves toward diversification and is accepted by society. However, the original, wild, and raw form of graffiti murals will continue to exist in the public spaces of cities for the long term. This is what the author, along with many graffiti mural enthusiasts, hopes to see.

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