

Street Art in Timișoara - a city planners view

Before 1989 (the year of political / ideological change called "revolution" in our country, starting from Timișoara) I was strongly active in the underground student theater movement, in what we officially called then "street art" and secretly "guerrilla art" (in student campuses, in workers' clubs, even in official actions). We resumed this kind of manifestation of the desire for independence of our generation after 1990, as a teacher, with the students of the Faculty of Architecture from TM through street actions especially. Testimony is still (there is even a film of over 5 minutes) an apparent red brick wall over 100m long in front of the Faculty RE-PAINTED in red, as a reaction to what was taught in the academic school.

Arriving in 1997 among the officials of our city (chief architect) I was put in an ungrateful situation: I was asked / ordered to take action against those who "vandalized" with graffiti (so thought the public / media / officials) the facades of abandoned buildings in an almost abandoned city. In vain I tried to explain: it is the desire of the young generation to mark the identity, the territory, in the face of too slow geopolitical changes, from my point of view. Faced with the pressures of the media, an idea came to me (which seemed saving then): to offer some walls of a road underpass to those who probably mimicked this kind of protest. Today I don't think that was enough. Today, everything is done through officially funded NGOs, which receive orders if they respect the official options.

After 2008, as a representative of the Register of Urban Planners on the Western Development Region, I assiduously promoted the independent actions of the "true local heroes" in informal entities. I considered that this is the only way to avoid the RADICALIZATION of our society and so traumatized. Since 2012, almost 30 "DIPLOMAS OF EXCELLENCE for good practices in URBAN REGENERATION" have been awarded. The STREET ART TIMIȘOARA Festival (Corina Nani from the Faculty of Arts and Design and Sergio Moraru - EnduroRoMania Foundation) received this distinction in May 2014, for good practices in urban regeneration through independent initiatives in the public space (today we are talking about over 550 murals).

To be clearer to understand in our opinion some concepts used:

"Urban regeneration is the conscious ability of a community to face new challenges, technological, ideological, which is done by changing the urban space, human behavior, or both. Urban regeneration is not an end in itself, it is just a way to harmonize two entities, the spatial and the social".

"Culture is an adaptive strategy to ensure the survival of the individual and communities. Architectural heritage is not an end in itself, but must be available and or especially for underground movements, which are born and then disappear - for less "official" things.

Where the territory of manifestation of an independent group can be defined: it is best in a "Neighbourhood". How can we define these social-spatial entities. We believe that around a major element, which today is the educational space and which gathers people from 3 to 90 years. It is a space where everyone meets, from each socio-spatial unit ("neighborhood") of about 5,000-10,000 inhabitants.

So I consider this kind of manifestation an expression of the history, of the successes, of the dramas of the heroes of each "Neighbourhood". In Timisoara there are about 40 such socio-economic-ecological entities.

The place and the subjects must be chosen following the active participatory consultation of the population of those entities, in order to develop the solidarity, belonging and pride of the respective community. In TM in Freidorf, mural art should have had Weismuller as its hero, in the Elisabetin area on the heels of the School, characters who brought fame to the neighborhood, on the student campus something that represents students today etc, etc.

Finally, two rhetorical questions:

Is this genre right to be part of official culture or underground culture?

Like any underground culture, how long does such a manifestation live?

Success to your event.

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Timișoara, 6/27/2021