

## PRACTICES

# Area-based Urban Creativity Systems in Italy: What They Are and How to Recognize Them

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## ABSTRACT

In the last decade, urban creativity has manifested itself in many proximity spaces, in particular, among its visual expressions, with the 'new muralism' (unlike 'graffiti writing' and 'street art'). This has corresponded with an often-desired resignification of public spaces that has affected the geographically, politically and linguistically more marginal territories. In such uncertain areas, networks of meaning have developed, i.e., homogeneous spaces which, simultaneously or diachronically, have begun to concentrate a plurality of works in relation to the territory to which they belong and the community. This phenomenon has been investigated in the following work, which proposes the definition of urban creativity systems. The work also deepens, among the many case studies, the urban creativity program for the social called "Parco dei Murales" conceived and promoted by INWARD - National Observatory on Urban Creativity, launched in collaboration with the resident community in a social housing complex in the Ponticelli district in Naples.

## KEYWORDS

*urban creativity, graffiti writing, street art, muralism.*

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## Wall Paintings Within Public Spaces

Art history, in all times and places, presents us with the birth and evolution of the language of murals on different levels and intends to produce expressions, communicate ideas, foment opposition, as well as to decorate pristine spaces and as a fundamental tool for the reconstruction of consciousness. In the 1920s, in Europe and beyond, the creation of extensive mural paintings was substantiated by historical, political and social events, especially with reference to the construction of an identity, either through the recovery of a historical memory or through the construction of a new recognisability. This has been, and to some extent still is, an inherent practice of mural painting, of muralism.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, after the two decades of Fascism<sup>2</sup> and since mural paintings has taken new roots in Italy,<sup>3</sup> it was able to express itself completely independently of Mexican or Chilean models and rather generating its own aesthetic and artistic independence.<sup>4</sup> The appropriation of images as a democratic and popular procedure was thus even the basis of a new concept of artistic militancy. Indeed, between the 1970s and 1980s, «there are those who see in muralism the value of a didactic experiment, to be introduced also into teaching practice first of all; those who see it essentially as an immediate instrument of struggle; those who see it as a new form of “being together,” of creatively experiencing a collective moment with others; and finally, those who conceive of it as the construction of a vision and a product outside the market, that is, as an operation that finally frees art from the sphere of purely private enjoyment.<sup>5</sup>

Exactly concerning the perception of muralism by the communities that live, animate and inhabit the urban space where it manifests itself, the critical interpretation put forward by the scholar Rosalyn Deutsche is particularly interesting, according to which, in the political praxis of public art as a form of democracy, public space becomes social space: therefore, the function of art, born as public is to build (or to break) public spaces.<sup>6</sup> Here,

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1 Muralism is an artistic phenomenon that originated in Mexico in the early 1920s. It reached its expressive peak between the 1930s and 1950s, especially in Rivera, Orozco e Siqueiros.

2 In Italy, the centuries-long historical and artistic history of muralism, in its broadest sense, has never stopped on either public or private walls. The events of the Risorgimento and then of National Unity led to the flourishing of public commissions and, in particular, in the 1920s and 1930s, muralism became the medium through which to work on collective identity. The historian George Mosse described this phenomenon of mass communication with the expression ‘nationalisation of the masses’: in his work *The Nationalisation of the Masses. Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany (1815-1933)*, Mosse researches the remote origins of modern right-wing totalitarianisms and assesses their impact on politics and mass organisation.

3 The first evidence dates back to the 1950s on walls signed by Liliana Canu and Aligi Sassu on the walls of a primary school in Thiesi, Sardinia. However, ‘officially’, the history of local muralism may coincide with the date of the beginning of Sardinian muralism, that is, when in the 1960s, in the province of Cagliari, specifically in the village of San Sperate, Pinuccio Sciola (1942-2016) initiated what would later be confirmed as a regional tradition.

4 Mario De Micheli, “Preface” in *Abbasso il Grigio. Comunicazione e linguaggio murale di base nella pittura murale a Milano* (Milan: Edizioni il Formichiere, 1977).

5 Ibid., 9.

6 Rosalyn Detsche, *Evictions. Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge: MIT Press 1998).

art also aims to establish direct communication with the viewer, as well as the inhabitant of a community, and, specifically, artistic practices that have made militancy the main focus of such a process have triggered, and still do trigger, social transformations in which public art becomes an engine of entertainment and economic attraction.<sup>7</sup> This is particularly true for public spaces that can be defined as “common”, where the term alludes to the use and consumption of the same space by various groups of individuals who interact by crossing their daily trajectories; in Italy, and not only, such proximity allows interaction with the other, but it frequently occurs in those same spaces of critical socio-urbanity where the absence of congruent forms of management confirms empty, abandoned and vandalised spaces.<sup>8</sup>

## Urban creativity between artistic recovery and social regeneration

With this in mind, during the last decade, terms such as “urban creativity”<sup>9</sup> – including graffiti writing,<sup>10</sup> street art<sup>11</sup> and new muralism<sup>12</sup> – intensively presented themselves in the proximity spaces thus defined. This has occurred in correspondence with a trend of large painted facades, a much larger and more involved active audience, a maturation of the phenomena and a development of its protagonists, and a desired re-meaning of spaces that has affected the geographically, politically and linguistically more marginal territories, in most cases. These creative and artistic practices in the public space of the urban type expose, in any case, that author and, in the case, curator and cultural operator reflect on roles,

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7 Lorenza Perelli, *Public Art. Arte, interazione e progetto urbano* (Franco Angeli: Milan 2006) 64.

8 Antonella Bruzzese, *Spazi, usi, popolazioni. Tre dimensioni necessarie per attivare spazi comuni* (Milan; Franco Angeli 2015).

9 As an expression ‘urban creativity’ was designed and inserted into the Italian public debate by e INWARD – The National Observatory on Urban Creativity in 2006. local public authorities, for-profit companies, social organisations, research institutions, cultural associations and operators, artists and journalists. Please see <http://www.creativitaurbana.it>

‘Graffiti writing’ is an expressive and creative form that originated in the late 1960s in the suburbs of US metropolises such as Philadelphia or New York City. A characteristic element is the spontaneous and unauthorised graphic or pictorial diffusion of one’s identity on various urban surfaces with elaborate writings called ‘tags’. Please see <http://www.creativitaurbana.it>

10 ‘Graffiti writing’ is an expressive and creative form that originated in the late 1960s in the suburbs of US metropolises such as Philadelphia or New York City. A characteristic element is the spontaneous and unauthorised graphic or pictorial dissemination of one’s identity on various urban surfaces with elaborate writings called ‘tags’.

11 Street art is an expression that is commonly used, yet by art critics, to refer to all that is creative urban non-writing. The phenomenon, influenced by the Neo-Avant-garde and punk subculture, matured between the 1970s and 1980s; it is characterised by figurative elements and technically includes: stickers, posters, stencils, as well as appliqués and medium-sized wall paintings. It most often conveys iconic comments, satire, social and political messages, but also graphics and more.

12 The “new muralism” (also called “neo-muralism”) differs from muralism as we understand it historically because the current authors cannot personally, by experience and training, and/or historically, by succession of events, disregard the advent of graffiti writing and street art, which imprints a certain attitude in the stylistics of the most recent large-scale works on façades. In this regard, it is recommended to use the terms mural/murals instead of murals/murales, as the latter are more specifically related to historical muralism.

responsibilities and knowledge useful to sensibly hold together intervention and work, space and place, as well as community and public.

In the words of Gabi Scardi, a scholar, the less defined and uncertain an area is, the more it will lend itself to processes of redefinition and development; in many of these cases, reference is made not only to geographical spaces, but also to virtual places, value systems or collective instances that are determined, even temporarily, around specific social, economic and political coordinates.<sup>13</sup> Truth be told, already since the 1990s, the areas where social problems and less than optimal living conditions have experienced a greater number of transformative activities and paths.<sup>14</sup> It would be inaccurate, to say the least, to consider interest in these liminalities circumscribed only to suburban contexts: in fact, there have been numerous contexts in which the multiplication of public bodies and local communities that have worked in favour of a resuscitation or preservation or implementation or even ex novo production of everything referable to urban creativity, as a tool – perceived as such – capable of artistic redevelopment and social regeneration, has been evident.

Therefore, when we talk about “urban creativity”, that is to say of the three enclosed phenomena mentioned above, we speak of visual expressions pertaining to cultures that report themselves to be made up of writers, not necessarily artists, or social activists, not necessarily artists, or the most capable mural painters, who may not be typically artists. There are, however, of course, in the hive of urban creative productions, also artists who are aware that they are, capable of demonstrating this, systematising markets and synergies, and much more. Returning now to the above-mentioned string, intervention/work, space/place and community/audience, we can report that indeed urban creative outcomes, in their kaleidoscopic variety, can be, without thereby blurring oppositional categories, interventions that traverse spaces and make local communities a test-bed of their own determined time, or works of art fixed in the most places, for a planned or desired audience. It is the most classic of conversations between inside and outside, this side and that side, interior and exterior, which the numerous urban creative practices throughout the second half of the 20th Century have helped alienate and that, however, does not seem to be so important here.

## Area-based urban creativity systems: current and historical cases

By perusing the evolution of urban creativity throughout the Italian territory, albeit with due international comparisons, one finds particular sets of

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<sup>13</sup> Gabi Scardi, “Itinerari sensibili: l’arte incontra la società” in *Paesaggio con figura. Arte, sfera pubblica e trasformazione sociale* (Turin: Umberto Allemandi & C., 2011) 5.

<sup>14</sup> Milena De Matteis and Alessandra Marin, *Nuove qualità del vivere in periferia. Percorsi di rigenerazione nei quartieri residenziali pubblici* (Milan: Edicom Edizioni, 2013).

interventions and works of the kind mentioned above, more cohesive and connected groupings of signs and expressions, real networks of meaning, in many cases, that make us increasingly speak of territorial systems of urban creativity', to be sought not only in the suburbs, where the concept of "beautiful" and of necessary interventions wherever something is "ugly" remains alone, pandering to dubious policies of decorum, but also in small historic centres or villages, already rich in art and culture.

Therefore, within the work herein, indicate by the expression "territorial systems of urban creativity" not entirely homogeneous spaces which, in a simultaneous or diachronic way, have seen a plurality of interventions and works concentrated on their portions or fractions, creating over time a homogeneous creative place, which has a remarkable attractive potential, which is a local signalling device, which supports the candidature as a new centrality, which is not an open-air museum since its creative and fruitive experiences are part of it, and many other characteristics. In Italy, there are dozens of similar realities and they are little known. An attempt has therefore been made to identify some salient points that can help define the components that generally characterise such urban creative systems. For example, not all systems are fuelled by events: There are festivals of urban creativity that do not initiate, implement or forcibly determine systems, while there are systems of spontaneous interventions (e.g., those arising in abandoned places). In both cases, a possible recognition is the peculiar need of communities, creative and utilitarian, to define some kind of identity. In particular, a fundamental role is played by the possible material recovery and reconnection of places aimed at improving the life of the community that has, up to that moment, renounced frequenting spaces of coexistence, such as squares, streets, gardens and other unused areas; this is part of the intentions of a territorial system that associates urban creativity with the physical improvement and service of the territory as a vital platform. Re-establishing an urban fabric, where logistics and social relations appear frayed, is a mission of integration and service qualification only possible together with other strongly localised political synergies. Urban creativity can therefore be a relevant ingredient in those programmes that envisage integrated objectives of overall revitalisation of territory, community and heritage. Structured "street art tour" proposals, offered in the form of a guided tour of the urban creativity of such a locality, are certainly also of good relevance; it is of interest to involve not only tourists, but also the citizens themselves and then scholars and researchers, since not all of urban creativity systems undergo touristification (i.e., socioeconomic change).<sup>15</sup>

Considering all of this, participation or at least community consciousness seems to be a peculiar element of a system that can consider itself as such; the need to respond to the needs and desires of a community and

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15 Gino Satta, *Turisti a Orgosolo* (Naples: Liguori 2001)

the organisation of workshops and meetings appear to be more relevant than the implementation of pictorial works, particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although these are recent constructs, the emergence, development and failure of urban creativity systems has already resulted in cycles in Italy and, despite the widespread validity of the projects, their positive implications in terms of artistic redevelopment or social regeneration, they do not always take hold in the territories concerned.

A rather historical example of a “territorial system of urban creativity” that has undergone several transformations over time is the well-known village of Orgosolo, in Sardinia, which today has well over a thousand murals. Here, between the 1980s and 1990s, muralism experienced a moment of decline: the lack of a reformed community feeling risked turning it into an urban decoration phenomenon for the recovery of degraded private or public spaces. The opening to a pseudo-cultural tourism had already transformed the perception of the village from “town of the bandits” (like the film directed by Vittorio De Seta, starring the shepherds of Orgosolo) to “town of the murals”: the defence of historical memory, in the absence of a good valorisation programme, therefore risked really transforming the community’s identity into something different and far removed from the function for which the murals were born.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, during the mid-1990s, the group made up by muralists Pina Monne, Tony Amos, Luigi Pu and Fernando Mussone, realising the need for interventions designed in harmony with the environment, planned the work with an approach that was more respectful of both the landscape and, above all, the pre-existing murals.<sup>17</sup> In 2010, the Documentation Centres called Radichinas (‘roots’) was born. It may very well be an attempt to put a legacy -sentimental in nature, first of all- in a museum. Within Francesca Cozzolino’s research, it is evident that this form of musealisation emerges as a vivid conflict between acceptance and rejection of a cataloguing centre, a restoration intervention or a reference to contemporary art; it is the conflict between public memory (embodied by the museum) and private memory (the history of the murals transmitted orally, in the street, by the inhabitants themselves, often in front of the wall). The hypothesis is that since the inhabitants still experience memory in the urban space, they do not feel the need for a physically built place, such as the museum<sup>18</sup>.

The case of Sardinian murals still dispenses much food for thought; naturally, what interests our analysis concerns not only the classification of an asset as a work of art, but that complex process of artification which,

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16 On this, for further information, please see also Francesca Cozzolino, “Il processo di artificazione nel caso dei murali della Sardegna” in *Per una sociologia delle arti* (Padua: Cleup 2012); Francesca Cozzolino, “L’histoire complexe du muralisme en Sardaigne. L’invention d’une tradition de peinture murale et ses multiples influences” in *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevo* (Parigi: EHESS 2014).

17 Giulio Concu, *Murales. L’arte del muralismo in Sardegna* (Nuoro: Imago 2012) 15.

18 Francesca Cozzolino, “Murales/Orgosolo” in *Etnografie del contemporaneo IV: artification at large*, issues 40-42 (Palermo: Edizioni Museo Pasqualino 2017-2018) 101-102.

in the case of Orgosolo, is proudly connected to the defence of the village's historical memory. With regard to the so-called new muralism, the approach seems, on the contrary, to be the opposite: it is already accepted with broad consensus, both institutional and popular, as a work of art and is generally associated, due to its rather misrepresented purpose of beautification, to the practices of gentrification, a strategy or event not always peacefully welcomed.

In order to give substance to these suggestions, we now present the programmes of artistic redevelopment and social regeneration that bring together the characteristics of the territorial systems of urban creativity that, in Italy, are currently growing or changing, with a peak during the 2015 - 2019 period: Assafà, Naples; Bari Real Estate, Bari; Bonito – Paese dei Murales, Avellino; Borgo Universo, Aielli; Borgo Vecchio Factory, Palermo; Continente Creativo, Cagliari; CREAV, Naples; CVTA', Civitacampomariano; Distrart – Distretto di Arte Urbana, Messina; I DoLove, Dolo; Dozza Città d'Arte, Dozza; Farm Cultural Park, Favara; Fate Lab – San Potito Lab, San Potito Sannitico; Galleria del Sale, Cagliari; Habitat, Torino; Badia Lost & Found, Lentini; Bag – Biennale Angelo Garofalo, Lioni; Lunetta a Colori, Mantua; MAU Museo di Arte Urbana, Torino; Memoria Urbane, Gaeta and environs; Murales in Acquapendente; Murales in Diamante; Murales in Orgosolo; Murales di San Bartolomeo in Galdo; Murales di San Gavino Monreale – Paese di Artisti; Murali, Forlì; Muri d'Autore, Salerno; M.U.Ro Museo di Urban Art in Rome; Museo Condominiale di Tormarancia, Rome; Museo Malatesta, Campobasso; On The Wall, Genoa; OrMe – Ortica Memoria, Milan; PAG – Premio Antonio Giordano, Santa Croce di Magliano; Parco dei Murales, Naples; Periferica, Marzara del Vallo; Quore Spinato, Naples; Reggiane Urban Gallery, Reggio Emilia; SanBA, Rome; Super Walls, Padua and environs; Taranto Città Vecchia, Taranto; TUCC, Pontedera and environs; Valogno Borgo d'Arte, Sessa Aurunca; Vedo a Colori, Museo d'Arte Urbana, Civitanova Marche.

Among the aforementioned cases, which can be examined concerning the Italian contexts, an in-depth look at the urban creativity programme for social activities known as the Parco dei Murales,<sup>19</sup> designed and promoted by INWARD, the National Observatory on Urban Creativity,<sup>20</sup> and started in cooperation with the local community in a social housing complex in the Ponticelli district on the Eastern area of Naples.

## **The Park of the “dirty hills”**

The conurbation of Naples is discontinuous and fragmented in nature, constantly subject to transformation phenomena: abandonment, marginalisation, segmentation, degradation of collective space, infrastructural

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19 Giulio Concu, *Murales. L'arte del muralismo in Sardegna* (Nuoro: Imago, 2012), 15.

20 [www.inward.it](http://www.inward.it)



crossings and disintegration of the ecosystem.<sup>21</sup> In this sense, on several occasions and at different latitudes, there have been interventions, projects or programmes aimed at overcoming the concept of marginality by subverting, precisely through artistic and social experience, a socio-urban condition considered insurmountable, even by residents within a neighbourhood. A feeling of rejection, which, over the years, has postponed the creation of a class of patrons, visitors and enthusiasts, in numerous cases even in the Neapolitan area, contrary to what has happened and is still happening in the northern district of Scampia, to take a winning example, where a practice of territorial reconnection has been active since the 1980s, thanks to the activities started by Felice Pignataro, a muralist (1940-2004).<sup>22</sup>

Besides the exceptions, taking us back to Ponticelli, having ascertained the lack of aggregation spaces and the difficulty of reaching certain places dedicated to play and recreational activities (for young mothers, in particular), together with the increase in school drop-outs in the area, the need arose to return a place of cultural and artistic interest to the community, starting with the creation of mural art works on the facades of the Parco Merola social housing blocks. The residential park, owned by the municipality, is named, as is the avenue that runs along it, after Aldo Merola, former director of the Real Orto Botanico in Naples, perhaps because of the historical agricultural vocation of that area, a former 'centrality' before it became the remnant of the industrial settlements of the boom and the working-class proletariat proliferated there. However, that park has always been derided as the "Park of the dirty hills", an insulting epithet given by its neighbours to signify poor hygiene and lack of decorum. How it has recently become known throughout Italy as the 'Parco dei Murales' is a story that must be told.

The programme, which started almost by chance in 2015, has been refined over time (the major mural work within the complex was completed in 2018) and theorised into a model articulated in its three areas: Art Field (artworks and artists); Social Field (workshops and activities) and Empowerment Field (media and tours). Having therefore started with an initial mural intervention closely related to the neighbourhood's history, the project later took on its own physiognomy, also with the collaboration of the residents - the expression 'Parco dei Murales' was theirs, and was later taken up and disseminated in the press - and thus took shape in a pictorial cycle strengthened by socio-urban experiences thanks above all to the community's response. The creative and artistic experience accompanied by social action seemed to be the only viable way forward, because

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21 Rejana Lucci and Michelangelo Russo, *Naples verso Oriente*, (Naples: Clean Edizioni, within the *Urbana - Studi per la città contemporanea* Collection, 2012), 144.

22 Felice Pignataro (1940-2004) was one of the most prolific muralists of the early 1980s. More than two hundred mural interventions by the author are documented, most of them created in Campania, especially in Naples. Please see [www.felicepignataro.org](http://www.felicepignataro.org).



the community, which was already disinclined to take part in meetings and activities, would thus more readily receive and appreciate stimuli born in cooperation and not dropped from higher-up.

We may very well say that the social action preceded and then accompanied the artistic one, and that both were gradually juxtaposed and pressed together by the media action. As a matter of fact, the three axes immediately appeared to be the cornerstones of the programme's development. In the specifics of the initial social practice, moreover, the model derived from the progressive work recorded three relational moments with the community: focalisation, thematization, valorisation. In the first moment, the sociological staff supporting the programme focalised all that was distinctive of the residents' singular and group characters, very often familiar, and determined certain elements; in the second moment, the contact between the two parties, with the community, brought those elements into the dialogue and made them leaven, together, as the themes on which to centre the work of relationship and confrontation, between workshops and other activities; only when these themes, in the third and final moment of the social approach, were clarified and identified as values by the resident community, could the criterion be said to have been conquered and the practice of conscious sharing prior to the realisation of the works matured.



FIG. 1

Fabio Petani, *O sciore cchiù felice*, Park of the Murals, 2018 - Photograph by Emanuele Romano.

As a matter of fact, during the first years of its activities, large-scale territorial research was carried out; from 2015 to 2018, six annual workshops were activated and more than twenty initiatives involving, respectively, children and young people aged 5-10 and 13-14 years were completed. In the transition from social approach to curatorial practice, this form of collective involvement has been described by the curators almost as a process of participatory curatorship, an expression chosen to emphasise the contribution to change that the community itself has chosen to join. Moreover, working on such a delicate topic as the re-identification of a



FIG. 2

Zeus40, Cura 'e paure, Park of the Murals, 2018 - Photograph by Emanuele Romano.

place or of a story, one could have experienced a rejection by the community:<sup>23</sup> on the contrary, committing to a common goal gave back a reason for pride and even redemption, particularly felt by teenagers, as the "Parco dei Murales" took strength and gained fame.

All this would not have been possible without a process of reinterpretation of the place, not as the exclusive preserve of the operating team, but rather by the beneficiaries and visitors who contributed to making the space more and more inclusive. The children, young people and other inhabitants of the 'Mural Park' acquired, spontaneously and not through institutional training, the tools they needed to appreciate what they had created together, also participating, and perhaps for the first time, in playful-creative workshops. Here, artistic language was used as a facilitator, initiating a rather delicate process, especially in the face of the need not to censor the mural interventions and the work proposed by the artists in the area.

Having ensured some continuity regardless of the production of the murals, which were completed on eight out of eight available sides, it was therefore a massive rethinking of district relations, a process that was also monitored and verified by means of a survey administered to all the families in the council housing complex. Among the many data that emerged, there is precisely the appreciation for the creation of the play-creative workshops to replace a different and vague territorial offer, perceived as distant from family needs.

The importance of mutual aid, whether material or immaterial, was shared especially among the youngest, urging the implementation of small actions. For example, in 2017, a group of young volunteer workers - the Park of the Murals was able to activate a programme to enhance urban

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23 On this, for further information, please see also Francesca Cozzolino, "Il processo di artificazione nel caso dei murales della Sardegna" in *Per una sociologia delle arti* (Padua: Cleup 2012); Francesca Cozzolino, "L'histoire complexe du muralisme en Sardaigne. L'invention d'une tradition de peinture murale et ses multiples influences" in *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevo* (Parigi: EHESS 2014).

creativity with the Universal Civil Service - started a series of painting workshops on the ground floor with the aim of completing the repainting of all the hallways: the residents, at the time, suggested that these spaces should be made to match the hues of the adjoining painting interventions carried out over the years, a concrete and unhoped-for participatory triumph<sup>24</sup>. Such places have also been an opportunity to share, not only daily life, but also workshops; several activities, such as theatre and juggling, rap and reading, breakdancing and drawing, were conducted and shared, exactly within these regenerated spaces together.

The evidence of having contributed to the elaboration of a new urban artistic heritage is now a community fact: this is perhaps one of the most



FIG 2

Workshop, Park of the Murals, 2017

interesting legacies of a social urban creativity programme. From a technical point of view, it will then be appropriate to reflect on the preservation or -why not- the deletion of mural interventions, to counteract something no longer in line with community needs or socio-urban transformations. It will be the future generations of inhabitants who will confirm or change their fate, recognising no longer and not only the social value, but also the artistic value, of the murals that will survive over time.

It is with remembering that, in each and every case, it is a pictorial cycle, based on the process that from a focusing of elements has led to their thematization and up to their valorisation, namely feeling a universal content as a value: Equality, Play, Reading, Sport, Motherhood, Solidarity,

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24 The following colours have been selected: light green ("Ael. Tutt'egual song'e criature"); antique rose ("A pazziella 'n man' e criature"); a very light orange ("Lo trattenemiento de' peccerille"); light blue ("Chi è voluto bene, nun s'o scorda"); a cream hue ("A Mamm' e Tutt' e Mamm"); il blu ("Je sto vicino a te"); and violet ("O sciore cchiù felice"); white (Cura 'e paure).

Territory and Care. In recent years, the Park of the Murals has attracted more and more visitors and promotional proposals have been relaunched, culminating with the Parco as a recurring location for various Italian films and television productions, from “Sirens” to “Gomorra”. Tours have also increased, free of charge and currently conducted by the volunteer operators of Universal Civil Service. Visitors come from all over Italy and abroad, mostly tourists, researchers, undergraduates and experts. There are numerous collaborations with local authorities and associations, about 40 from 2016 to date. Supported by a consistent and automatic mediation of the results, the process of reconstructing the territorial identity continues to record a solid improvement in the perception of the district, first and foremost from within.

Over the years, many meetings and conferences were held to expose and disseminate this valorisation model with an audience of both experts and enthusiasts, in order to discuss it as a possible scalable tool and thus applicable to new territories or other territorial systems of urban creativity. The Park of the Murals is one of these and teaches us that the artistic valorisation of a territory is not necessarily a guarantee of a cultural market: the heritage of numerous ‘systems’ in Italy, it is reflected, does not yet need sponsors or patrons for the umpteenth work, but the study of experts, the visits of enthusiasts and first and foremost of communities genuinely happy to be part of it, to recognise themselves, to find one’s centre again.

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