



Cities Interrupted: Visual Culture and Urban Space

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The work edited by Shirley Jordan and Christoph Lindner is valuable to be reviewed in this special issue the *European Journal of Creative Practices in Cities and Landscapes* as it directly links discourses on globalization and cities, especially from the point of view of the visual culture of the global city. Most importantly, the book reflects on a set of issues based on the concept of “interruption” that can help us to think the role of *cosmopolitan citizenship* in our society, understood as the recognition of the active participation of temporary city dwellers in the social, cultural and political community. Even if the book is not directly conceptualizing cosmopolitan citizenship, I believe that the book allows us to make a connection between visual culture and cosmopolitan citizenship through the concept of *interruption*.

This book understands interruption as a break in the consolidated historical balance of urban spaces and their life with new cultures, unexpected citizens’ practices, and different ways to experience and transform pub-

lic spaces, such as monuments (Chapter 11), museums (Chapter 3), and streets (Chapter 12). Specifically, the concept of interruption is intended as a wide range of temporal interventions. These include the idea of spatial interruption in the built environment that calls attention to issues of ongoing urban development and restructuring. In other words, interruption entails breaking in upon an action, bringing about a temporal rupture, creating an interval that draws attentions to itself as a deliberate counter. Temporary public spaces can also be conceived as interruptions, as they enable temporary uses and new urban cultural practices, allowing users to constitute themselves as citizens. However, the book does not only analyze interruption as a form of liberation and empowerment, but also as a functional element for the reproduction of neoliberal globalization. Visual culture is the tool through which the book interprets the potential of interruption in current society, and how visual culture can be used as a tool to respond and to act in contemporary cities. From our point of view, the method outlined in the book can help us in creating a link between visual culture and cosmopolitan citizenship.

Visual culture and interruption can be seen as *traits d'union* that allow cosmopolitan citizens to use and produce urban space, beyond the multiple identities and belongings governing various scales ranging from the individual to the family, from neighborhood to the city, from nation to the global level.

Interruption can be conceptualised in two contrasting ways. On the one hand, interruption can be essentially conceived as a ruined space, as a failure of the capitalistic system, located typically in the inner areas of established cities. On the other hand, interruptions are not only failures, as these abandoned spaces can be the fertile ground for the experimentation of new modes of urban speculation which could help the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production (Chapter 2).

If we take into consideration some of the study cases of the book, we can see how these ruins, these abandoned spaces, are now transformed in—often gentrified—public spaces, as situated devices of cosmopolitanism. We can observe this status on the specific case of the High Line, the very famous linear park on Manhattan's West Side involving the creative greening of former elevated railway tracks. Its mobility represents a double interruption, both as a transit path of slow urbanism, and simultaneously as a contribution to the acceleration of the urbanism of globalization (Chapter 4). Here we can see how visual culture, by the management of interruption, can help to the redevelopment of a specific abandoned space. In the case of the Canal de l'Ourcq in Paris, street art is snagged between protest culture and capitalistic spectacle, as demonstrated by the absorption of graffiti into the mainstream global art world. graffiti on derelict buildings allowed this zone to become progressively a key visual cultural center for the city of Paris (Chapter 6).

Can the production of urban spaces through magazines, posters, photographs, films and monumental art works affect and empower the life of cosmopolitan citizens (Chapter 8)? Conversely, how are these tools used in order to create consensus and pacify conflict? How can visual culture reinforce or restructure cosmopolitan citizenship within the centre-periphery relations of the global city? Visual culture, either as a consensual device for conflict management or as a trigger for urban interruption is a powerful tool to address to these questions through the immediate givens of perception, intuition and affection.

