

Abstract

This work examines the intervention of Brazilian street artists into the public space of São Paulo metropolis. Pixadores, as they are called, are young people brought up in the poor suburbs of São Paulo. The society perceives them as “vandals” and “delinquents”. However, spraying for them is an important part of their life and they do not stop spraying even after starting a family. They risk their lives and often find themselves on the brink of life and death. The aim of this work is to understand the behavior of these sprayers by using the ethnographic method and to answer the question, why is this transgressive practice important to them. Through their writings, they are highlighting their presence and are becoming a direct part of the city. On the one hand, their doing is a syndrome of social problems in the context of Brazilian society. On the other hand, these forms of conscious property damage may be associated with the idea of protest, the affirmation of their position in the margins of society or the respect earned from their peers. Although the residents of the poor suburbs are seen as being excluded from all forms of capital, Brazilian sprayers are, however, important political actors and their doing is reshaping the urban landscape. Prestige and respect which sprayers receive from each other play very important role in their life. In such rival environment, these young people must win their territory and ensure their visibility. The biggest fear they have is the police brutality. Nevertheless, they are willing to take risks and push the limits of their capabilities. For many pixadors this practice then, which also provides them with fun and adrenaline, in the struggle for prestige becomes deadly.