BOOK FORUM: URBAN SURFACES

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GRAFFITI AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

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Introduction

On February 29, 2024, an interdisciplinary group of researchers gathered on a Zoom call to celebrate and activate in conversation Sabina Andron's book *Urban Surfaces, Graffiti, and the Right to the City*, released with Routledge just weeks prior. Andron and participants Katelyn Kelly, Heather Shirey, and Julia Tulke were joined by a small audience drawn from a nascent network of global street art and graffiti researchers.[1]

We called this encounter a book forum with the explicit intent to move beyond the limitations of the singular book review and towards a more dynamic and relational form of engagement with the intellectual, methodological, and creative contributions of Andron's work to our shared field and individual research. Taking our cues from *Urban Surfaces*, we sought to emulate qualities central to the urban creative practices we study: polyphony, co-creation, reciprocity, and, perhaps more than anything, playfulness. After opening the floor with a brief reflection on the book as a contagious object in and of the city, our conversation oscillated between individual responses and open exchange, moving across and between matters of theory, politics, methodology, pedagogy, and public scholarship.

This model gave us a space to share ideas about and beyond the book in many directions, not simply from reviewer to author and back. We hope to inspire colleagues to engage in similar discussions, as we share an edited transcript of our conversation.

JULIA TULKE: Sabina, to start our conversation, I would like to invite you to share a few words about the book. *Urban Surfaces* is, of course, a scholarly contribution. But it is also an object in and of the city, and during the past month it has travelled with you through several cities – London, Paris, and Milan – activating spaces and conversations along the way. How have these encounters 'thickened' (to use a term that you use in your own discussions of urban surfaces) the book and its lessons for you?

SABINA ANDRON: Many of us in this field are keen walkers, photographers, and our ways of researching space are rarely remote. They involve being present and repeatedly visiting the same places. So, I started taking the book with me every time I went out, to show it the places that inspired it, until my copy here started to crumble a bit (**Figure 1**). I took the book out and into the city, to emphasise the physicality of the object but also to see how it would fit in its place, how it can become an urban object, how it can become an urban sign. What proportions does it have in relation to the city? How can I prop it somewhere? Does it get dirty? Does it get sticky? This has been a very inspiring process, it's a way of 'thickening', but it's also cross-contamination. And I hope that the idea of cross-contamination as something that happens all the time with public signage and with surface matter, comes across well in the book.

The book is dirty, but it keeps its academic integrity. Making space with the book in the city is a form of making meaning, for myself and for others. It's a good exercise for all of us to get out of this bubble a bit and take a more relaxed approach to what academic knowledge can be – to bring our joy and love for what we've signed up to do, and let things seep into the bubble.

JT: Popping the bubble and letting things contaminate in ways that we can't always anticipate and perhaps should not try to – I think that's a perfect segue into our book forum. We will take turns with short responses, all of which take a particular idea, sentence, or image from the book as their point of departure. I will turn things over to Katelyn to get us started.

Figure 1. *Urban Surfaces, Graffiti, and the Right to the City.* The book is an object in the city. A poster campaign supported by UNCLE in London and Plakkit in Melbourne put the book in its place, 2023–4. Photographs ©Sabina Andron.

KATELYN KELLY: Thank you, Sabina, for this much needed and appreciated spatial political intervention in graffiti scholarship. I am currently working on a genealogy of graffiti in the United States, spanning from Hobo Codes at the turn of the 20th century up to the contemporary socio-political Black Lives Matter Movement. Throughout this work, I've been engaging the concept of *infrapolitics* from James Scott (1985, 1990), which in turn is a growing field in political science and subaltern studies looking at the way folks resist exploitation in everyday life, whether it is intentional resistance or not. This could be something like messing up an order if you're working in a fast food restaurant, it could be dragging your feet, it could be telling tall tales about your supervisor that get everybody prodded and excited, or even the music you listen to, or in our case, graffiti. However, I fear that many romanticise infrapolitical practices, or graffiti and things like it, and possibly flirt with overclaiming the act of agency it provides, and, I think that pulls out some of the radical nature of graffiti. Specifically thinking about the 1970s birth of style writing in urban centres in the United States, it has struck me that the state's response was *to* infrapolitics; which we conceive of as police actively walking around with dogs, being present in subway stations, introducing barbed wire.

And this is where Sabina's work pushed me very fruitfully in the way I think about how graffiti was countered through the conception of order. You sometimes use the terms disciplining and punishment, but it is the concept of order and the way it's being utilised that you focus on throughout the book. You look specifically at the role order plays in making and disciplining various public spaces and surfaces, as well as the individuals who engage with these spaces. This begins with your breakdown of surface semiotics, and how we have been socialised to understand order as white. There is, as you very persuasively show, not only an architectural component to that, but also a racial one, and you point out that these two are interwoven – really highlighting how spaces make us and how we make spaces. On page 29 you state: 'Rather than being relinquished by architectural modernism, surfaces were in fact tailored to actively present ambitions of cleanliness, order, and morality, through a standardised application of design principles and materials.' You continue to outline how cleanliness ends up denoting order throughout society, and is maintained through an 'optical hygiene'. Cleanliness ends up being an excuse for policing, as we see in Martha Cooper's famous photograph of two cops on the train. And we can think about the broken windows theory (Kelling & Wilson, 1982), which isn't encouraging active policing, but more nefariously police informally being in spaces to push for order, which becomes synonymous with a sense of a pure and unmarked surface. It's not just those cops in the subway, but the way the architecture itself – the unfriendly surfaces, as you describe them – end up also being a form of ordering that for me, started to really stand out. It shifted my conception of infrapolitics and my understanding of how unfriendly surfaces or the management of paint supplies were also performing this ordering – not only in the 1970s, but today.

The last thing I want to draw out is how you illustrate that art and aestheticisation end up being components of ordering in their own right. You state: 'A clean and orderly environment was taken to signify a well-controlled space in terms of both ownership of property and ownership of appearance' (77). It's not just about policing and clean environments, but also about the ownership of property and appearance, which you encourage us to think about in relation to claims and/or rights to the city. While related to whitewashing and hygiene, this explains muralism and the highly politicised politics of graffiti that we've seen. You bring all of this together ultimately, to give us a more complete understanding of the way in which order is weaponised by systems of power or individuals, particularly against practices such as graffiti.

Now, we're left with this multi-pronged conception of order and the way it's imbricated in the surfaces around us, and this can be incredibly worrisome. And many of us who find graffiti writing to be a necessary practice, and social spaces for graffiti to be necessary in urban centres, may bemoan this circumstance – we certainly do. However, you clearly show that even when order is weaponised and becomes almost omnipresent, hope is not lost. In this struggle, graffiti is just as omnipresent. This is particularly clear in your study and case breakdown of Leake Street.

I am left with a few questions that I would love to hear your responses to. First, I'm curious about the relationship between aesthetics, politics, and ordering that you lay out throughout your book. In political science at large, you often hear calls for civility in politics – because

Figure 2. Three images from the façade of Hook and Ladder, May 2020, April 2021, and August 2024. Hook and Ladder is directly adjacent to the Third Police Precinct in Minneapolis,Minnesota, the site of intense protests in the summer of 2020. Photographs ©Urban Art Mapping.

as we're engaging in more diverse communities, civility, it is said, is what is needed and helpful to encourage a healthy democratic discourse. But you're putting forth a very different and alternative proposition that I think is potentially much more productive; instead of civility, what is needed to foster a healthy democratic discourse within communities is agonistic politics – or maybe we could also call it a contaminated politics. I agree that politics can be improved by moving towards a more open, agonistic culture. But are aesthetics and politics, particularly around graffiti, necessarily in an antagonistic relationship with one another? And related to that, what are your thoughts around democracy and order? Is there any place for order, or should we not be looking for order in any way?

SA: Thank you, Katelyn for that sharp perspective from political science. This is one of the best things about researching graffiti, that we bring so many disciplines together in the same room!

We obviously can't separate politics and aesthetics. Aesthetics can carry political emancipation, as we know from Rancière (2012) – but I attempted to separate the two because most often, the way that aesthetics is used as an instrument of governance, is to *wash away* politics. The problem is that we use images and a particular aesthetic of public images to depoliticise. And on the flipside of that, in the book I try to pull apart the idea of order, particularly how order becomes soft and atmospheric – the informal presence of police, like you say – so we don't feel it; it's not a hard hammer that comes down on us. But order is also necessary, right? We need it to feel safe. So, we have to engage with it critically, but we can't just dismiss it. It is necessary for democracy.

JT: I love those questions and those responses. I was also moved to think about the question of agency. Katelyn, you spoke of the overdetermination of the political agency of graffiti, which I, as someone thinking about political graffiti and street art, also constantly grapple with. And Sabina, you make such an interesting move in the book by transferring the agency from the individual inscription to the surface, for example in your discussion of the 'inherent anti-whitewashing qualities' (33) of urban surfaces, which gestures at agency as it emanates from the built environment.

HEATHER SHIREY: I have been thinking about the idea of aesthetics as a tool of discipline. I think you summarised that nicely, Katelyn, by addressing murals as a way of imposing order. That resonates with some thoughts I had about the book. In my own response, I'd like to talk about methods and approaches to research, but also about pedagogy, since I'd like to use this book as a tool for teaching. In particular, I was really interested in the idea of interviewing walls as an ethnographic method for understanding the city, which emerged in chapter one, 'Surface Semiotics: A Manual for Knowing Surfaces'. I'm coming at this as an art historian and researcher who studies graffiti and street art. I think about graffiti and street art, as many of us do, as essential forms of communication that are taking place *over time* in the streets – so I'm really interested in how that conversation takes place over time. I have a couple of images to think about, including some images that I've been teaching this week.

We can consider a set of images of the building adjacent to the Third Police Precinct in Minneapolis, which is close to the intersection of East 38th Street and Chicago Avenue where George Floyd was murdered in 2020 (**Figure 2**). The Third Precinct was abandoned during the ensuing uprising in May 2020, and the area around it has been the site of constant change through graffiti and street art. It's a perfect example of the idea of murals as a way of imposing order. Early in the uprising, on May 28, anti-policing graffiti covered plywood on the outside of the building, and somebody painted 'pray for you' on top of that. Soon after, in early June, this phrase was painted over with a mural featuring hearts and rainbows, in this way being an 'imposing of order'. Later, the plywood

went through another change when a group called Rogue Citizen painted a new work on top. I'm interested in how the dialogue changes, and also how this dialogue plays out in specific spaces in the city. These ideas from chapter one resonate here: What does the wall see? Who experiences this space? And what does this particular space mean?

I teach a class on a regular basis called 'A History of Street Art'. I'm an art historian, but the approach is not just categorising, describing, and making aesthetic judgments and establishing chronology, although that's part of it. Rather, the goal is to create a path for my students to think about how they can read the city differently, and how they can unpack the conversations that are taking place around them by way of visual material. So this first chapter in particular, but really the whole book, could work well for me as a textbook for the class. One thing that struck me from chapter one was this idea that 'a neutral surface mode does not exist' (45), getting

at the idea that every surface is shaped by tensions, conversations, and competing visions about who owns and controls shared space, and what happens in it. And the remark that 'graffiti and street art are not that interesting, but multiple inscriptions are' (46) really resonated with me because I am not an object- or aesthetic-based art historian. And then Sabina, you write: 'The more guests you welcome to the surface party, the harder it is for graffiti and street art to steal the spotlight. What becomes interesting instead is the mingling, the dynamics, the affinity and dislike between inscriptions, their layering and co-habitation' (46). Here you get at the complexity of the conversations that are taking place, and the tensions within them that are so important. So, I really love thinking about these complex and meaningful conversations, and the idea that graffiti is worthy of our attention for that reason – it just shouldn't be dismissed.

But, specifically, I am interested in talking about the wall interview (48–51). You write about making the choice to not take an ethnographic approach, centred around the perspectives of the people who produce text and images on walls and the people who consume these images, even though that's a common approach in the scholarship. Instead, you're stepping back and giving agency to space and place in a way that is really important. The quote I picked out is this one:

> The ethnography that interested me instead was to interview walls or develop a method of surface analysis which would not afford primacy to human agency and would focus instead on the agency of place, text, and image alongside other components which I gradually developed [...] The strategy was less to imagine a dialogue with non-human subjects and more to try and create a certain disposition of enquiry and attunement with urban surfaces. (48)

Although I am engaged in ethnographic research in my own work, I appreciated this idea of thinking about the complexities of space by interviewing a wall. It was fun and insightful to read the questions you compiled. I was deeply immersed in teaching while reading this chapter, and my students are currently researching murals on Lake Street in Minneapolis, not far from where George Floyd was killed, an area strongly impacted and transformed by the 2020 uprising that followed. I want students to unpack that and think about how to tell those complex stories. This week in class, I asked them what they would ask if they were talking to artists. They came up with things like: How long did it take? How much paint did it take? How much money did it cost? Where did your inspiration come from? Did you work with collaborators? How did you get started as an artist? What is your relationship to this neighbourhood? What does the public think about the piece? It was really lively, everybody was talking, writing notes, and so forth. And then I asked them what they would ask if they could interview the wall. The room went very silent and everybody just looked at me like, what do you mean? It took a minute for everyone to grapple with it. And then somebody raised his hand. He said, okay, we know walls can't speak, we're just asking metaphorically, right? And I said, yeah, just that; what would you ask of the wall? And then it took off. They came up with some of the questions that came up in the book as well: How have you changed over time? What is behind you? What are you concealing? And then things like: What have you seen? What do people think of you? What do you hear? Are you a political statement? And as this developed, I really saw that the questions that they were asking the wall were getting at different things compared to the questions they'd ask the artist. They were getting at things that were more complex, because it just twisted their minds around. And then after that, we started to think, if the wall is not going to be able to answer, how do we address these questions? Because there are answers to these questions. We were puzzling through how we might actually get there. So that's just what I did in class this week with this book. And thank you so much, Sabina, for writing this chapter, because it was really helpful. And if I can put a question back to you, I would love to hear your thoughts on how to use this book in teaching, and whether you yourself have done any such exercises with your classes.

SA: That's such a great story, Heather, thank you for sharing that. It's inevitable that people raise an eyebrow with this wall interview thing. Because of course the wall doesn't speak back to you. But again, it was important for me to imagine this as a direct address, because it is a form of companionship, of *being with the thing*. It's less about looking at a wall through the magni-

fying glass, like the researcher from a distance, but really being right next to it and then seeing and asking: What are you showing me? How am I supposed to pay attention to you? Your story about how students responded differently is really telling. And the wall interview has proven very rewarding to work with, and it's something I imagine growing into a shared online resource to which people can add.

JT: I regularly teach a course on graffiti and street art as well, and I will definitely add this book and the wall interview to my syllabus! And I am, I think like everybody here, very grateful for the sense of playfulness and creativity that Sabina is asking us to find in our practice. Heather, I like what you said about ethnography as a kind of expectation. Because I think that, even though we're a small interdisciplinary field, we all often default to certain methodological conventions. This book does a lot to push these conventions in a way that inspires me to do it more as well.

HS: If my students interview the artist or observer of the wall, what these people have to say obviously becomes the final answer to them. They tend to believe that the artist knows what it's about, that the artist has the final answer. And so it's a powerful idea that the work of graffiti or the mural has a life of its own – the wall does in fact have a life, and there are changes that take place that are beyond the control of the artist, or the vision of the artist. I think it's really important to shift the students' framework and have them ask questions from that perspective.

KK: I've gotten some pushback from folks about giving voice to graffiti instead of the artists, and what you show throughout your book is that – by working with history and interviews, *and* focusing on surfaces – it is a matter of finding a balance between giving voice to both the writers and the writing. Particularly when you looked at Leake Street, you took the ethnography that we're talking about here, and showed how you do that. When I'm talking to students, it's about how they find their voices in research, while giving respect to other voices – about finding these cool, radical, and open questions that they feel safe asking.

JT: I want to begin my response with two images from chapter two: 'Beyond Art and Crime: A Critical History of Graffiti and Street Art'. These images don't have designated numbers, because they're not exactly images, but they occupy an in-between space that is explained in their captions (**Figure 3**). The first begins descriptively, giving us the sense of a rich semiotic landscape, and then telling us that that landscape is essentially overdetermined by a large, figurative mural depicting a woman, and that this mural is deemed to have exceptional artistic value, thus making the photograph irreproducible without the naming and approval of the artist. 'The individual artistic value of one inscription [here trumps] the collective cultural value of many inscriptions.' (91) The second 'non-image' makes this matter even more plain, noting that the images that we are 'deprived of seeing' throughout the book 'are mostly the figurative, 'beautiful' ones', which have 'valued themselves into invisibility' (92) – what an amazingly poetic phrase!

And let me just say here that *Urban Surfaces* is the first book in which I have underlined and annotated captions – quite extensively, actually. I could talk about these non-images and these captions for a long time, but

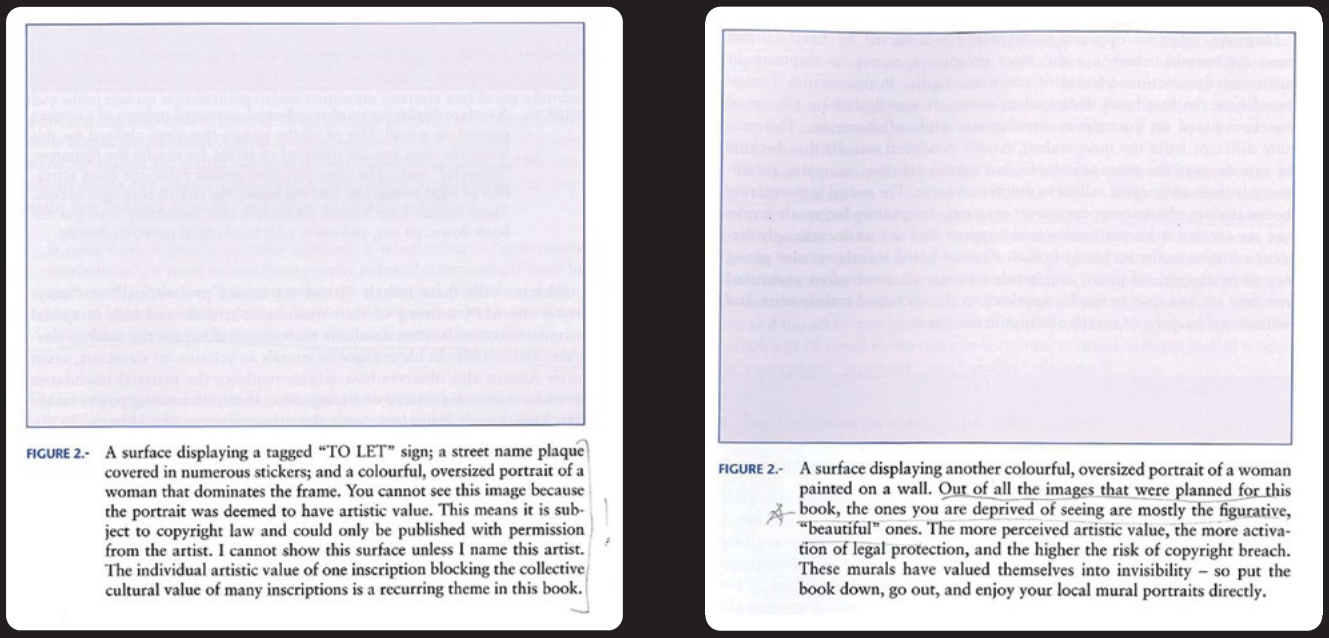

Figure 3. Creating editorial controversy since 2023: empty image frames in Urban Surfaces, Graffiti, and the Right to the City have caused delight and confusion. Photograph ©Sabina Andron.

Figure 4. A wall in central Athens, captured in 2018 and 2022, demonstrates the city's transformation from an epicentre of crisis saturated with unruly graffiti and street art towards aspirational post-crisis revitalisation, galvanised by graffiti removal and muralisation. The second image shows a mural by Guido van Helten, commissioned by the Municipality of Athens and the Australian Embassy in Greece. Photographs ©Julia Tulke/Aesthetics of Crisis.

the reason that I wanted to start with them is that they are central to what to me is the main throughline of the book: the interplay of activation and deactivation. And I think these images really invite us to think deeply about how our own scholarly and photographic practices can activate or deactivate, emulate or flatten what we find in the streets.

As visual scholars and practitioners, we all think a lot about images – the ones we take ourselves and the ones we find elsewhere – and about how to embed them in our writing in ways that push back against the idea of images as mere illustration, and that don't replicate the decontexualisation so common in the circulation of photographs of street art and graffiti. And I feel this book really offers an interesting, radical, and creative solution to that, despite being constrained by the codes of scholarly publishing and copyright protections. What Sabina does in this book is to let the images exist in a way where they offer us a parallel and entangled narrative. In a way, you could read the captions as their own chapter, one that gestures simultaneously to and beyond the main text. Many of them are also richly annotated, which pushes back against the idea of the photograph as self-evident and transparent. And this is all nowhere more evident and evocative than in the blank image frames included in the book.

So these images, and *Urban Surfaces* as a whole, prompt us to think about what urban scholarship that activates looks like. I think for Sabina and myself and most others here in the room, this is a matter of longitudinal engagement (Hansen & Flynn 2015): an attunement over time with urban landscapes in their entire visual intensity, not just individual selected sites, but the whole of it, mediated and captured through incessant walking and photography. This often involves repeat photography, returning to the same site over and over again, and creating archives that are both deeply personal and public. For Sabina, as in this instance, I think it is also about rejecting the logics of individual naming and authorship, in favour of collective names (or non-names) and authorship, as a way of conferring meaning and value. I found this most actualised in the book's contrasting of graffiti or wall writing as a 'thoughtful form of grassroots urban engagement', and muralism, or muralisation, which emerges as the apex of what Sabina calls 'streetartness' – the cultural, symbolic value bestowed upon particular aesthetics in and for the contemporary creative city.

From this it follows that, essentially, graffiti activates and muralism deactivates. And this is definitely something that I have witnessed and documented in Athens, my primary site of research over the past decade. This city has seen an intense proliferation of political, self-sanctioned street art and graffiti in response to several crisis situations over the past decade. After the pandemic,

Figure 5. Yehimi Cambrón, 'Monuments: Our Immigrant Mothers'. Mural created in 2019 for Living Walls, the City Speaks in Decatur, GA. Image courtesy of the artist. Photograph ©Hector Amador. https://www.yehimicambron.com/monuments-our-immigrant-mothers.


MONUMENTS OUR IMMIGRANT MOTHERS LIVING
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LAURA PATRICIA
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the city government turned to whitewashing as well as muralism to signal towards an aspirational post-crisis situation (**Figure 4**). This binary is very explicit in the official discourse: graffiti is crisis, or degeneration, and muralism is post-crisis, or regeneration. We can easily critique this when we look at what plays out in the streets, especially at the level of scale. Graffiti happens at the human scale, it invites engagement and activates in that way, whereas a mural stands at a monumental scale, dominating its site to give us a singular narrative, leaving very little space for engagement. And as Sabina cautions us: 'Any surface sign which does not leave room for annotation, should make us suspicious' (192). If we trace the conversations we've already had, I think we can see that we're all suspicious of murals: murals and order, murals and regeneration, and so forth; and I agree, especially relating to my experience in Athens.

But, since having moved to the US almost a decade ago, I also have a parallel track of experiences related to being involved in a few critical mural projects and festivals. And these experiences have really pushed me to reconsider some truisms about murals, muralism, and muralisation that I want to bring in here as a point for us all to consider together. To reference a recent encounter, I want to share the work of Yehimi Cambrón (**Figure 5, previous page**), an artist and activist based between Chicago and Atlanta, whose work stands in the long tradition of community muralism that's very strong here in the US. She is also somebody who works under the very precarious, liminal legal status of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which makes participation in illegal writing culture prohibitive, if not impossible. In working with critical mural projects here, I've met a lot of artists that are indigenous, migrant, BIPOC, or who are in some other way more vulnerable to policing, or queer people and women who simply cannot fathom authorising themselves to take up space in the way participants in writing cultures do, and who would have probably never come to create work in the streets if it wasn't for the invitation by a curator (Snow, 2017). So, is this work big? Yes! Is it beautiful? Yes! Is it figurative? Yes! Does it dominate its site? Yes! But do I think it necessarily brings about deactivation because of that? I'm not exactly sure – and I would love to hear what you all think. Because there is a lot to consider in terms of context-specific and site-specific frameworks. This is a work that was created with input from the community, collaboratively, even if it may appear, in the end, as the voice of a singular artist asserting themselves. So, pondering these tensions, and what activation and deactivation can mean in different contexts, and how we can account for that in our scholarship is what I came away with from the book.

SA: You're really offering such a useful, thought provoking framework. I'll start with activation/deactivation, a thread we should follow in future research! When I was on the book tour, I was lucky enough in Italy to have a couple of responses on two different occasions from Andrea Brighenti – many of you might know his work. He made a point that stuck with me that I will try to connect with what you just said, which is that it might be useful for us to start thinking about what's happening on surfaces from an ecological, ecosystem point of view. Thinking about ways to manage, research, and conceive of surfaces so as to make sure that they become more friction-full, warmer, mutually irritative environments, where more things can grow. And I think this is exactly what you say about activation – it's about making more heat, facilitating more bodies to be together and be in tension with each other. And that is not a formal decision. So while friction leads to a *hot* mural like the one you show (**Figure 5**), perhaps there is a limitation to the method of just looking at a wall because the wall won't tell you who the artist is, what their status is, and how the work was composed. Yes, it is a big thing that occupies the wall, and it is only one person's voice, but in fact, if you dig deeper, beyond what you can just learn from that immediate encounter, you actually find out that it is a space that activates the voices of its local environment. So, one lesson here is about limitations. And the other one is that I absolutely love this vocabulary and this framework, and I think it's something that we should think about using more.

And just a small comment about the empty frames, those 'non images': I have been receiving so many messages since the book came out saying there's an error, an omission – because people don't read the caption. I suffered so much when the publisher said I couldn't include those images, but this solution may ultimately spark more interesting debates – if people stop thinking that's a mistake!

JT: I can't believe people wouldn't understand that, because that means they didn't read the captions, it's right in there! And they really made me feel like I need to step up my caption game.

HS: I also need to step up my caption game, I want to have captions that people highlight and underline – and those in the book are really rich, beautiful captions. And what you did Sabina, the erasure, is really important. I also appreciate the framework that you provided, Julia, and I appreciate you thinking about murals, how they might fit in, and how much that depends on the context. And I really love thinking about friction-full walls and irritative surfaces, and the idea of producing heat – how heat is produced with these kinds of images, and where that happens and where it doesn't. I have been studying BLM murals. Sometimes it's just the words 'Black Lives Matter' painted on the street in yellow, which doesn't seem that interesting, but can generate so much friction and so much tension and so much heat, that it is incredibly significant. And sometimes the Black Lives Matter murals painted on the pavement are really beautiful, and yet they don't create a lot of friction and a lot of heat, and they're less interesting. This discussion gave me a framework to think about why that is, why some works do what they do and have the power that they have as a result of that.

KK: I think activation and deactivation also helps us flip our assessment of graffiti writing, not just muralism, which I appreciate. When you were talking about the history and the way that things are activated or deactivated, I thought about when you go to a city and you walk in the streets you can feel the history, and not all murals are doing this violent deactivating, and not all graffiti is doing the super cool activating. It's this weird amalgamation of both that actually becomes really hard to process with your brain trying to toggle back and forth. And so, Sabina, your book really brought that out and I think your activation-deactivation, Julia, helps me hold those two things together.

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KATELYN KELLY is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, South Dakota. Kelly's research has explored the intersection of political theory and cultural studies, asking how banal practices can either resist exploitation or reinforce it. Her dissertation is titled *The Story of Graffiti: The Infrapolitics of Cultural Practices Toward Political Imagination*. In this project she looks at three different time periods of US Graffiti and the significance of graffiti as an infrapolitical practice in our understanding of the relationship and liminal space between culture and politics.

HEATHER SHIREY is a Professor of Art History at the University of St. Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Her teaching and research focus on race and identity, migrations and diasporas, and monuments, memorials, and street art in relation to public space and communities. Together with the Urban Art Mapping research team, she created and maintains the George Floyd and Anti-Racist Street Art Archive. This interdisciplinary research is driven by their shared understanding that it is crucial to document and analyse street art not only because of its ephemerality, but also because it captures the complexity of the experiences shaping the world today.

JULIA TULKE is an Assistant Teaching Professor at the Institute for the Liberal Arts at Emory University, Atlanta. Located at the intersections of urban studies, visual culture, and anthropology, Tulke's work centres on the visual and spatial politics of crisis, with Athens as her central site of engagement. Her research in and on the city through the past decade has grappled with various forms of 'crisis creativity', including political street art and graffiti, queer and feminist protest, and artist-run spaces. Her writing has appeared in the journals *City: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action and Forum Kritische Archäologie*, in the edited volumes *The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture and Communication* (Amsterdam University Press, 2019) and Greece in Crisis: The Cultural Politics of Austerity (I.B. Tauris, 2019), as well as elsewhere. Tulke's longitudinal research project *Aesthetics of Crisis* won the 2022 Prosser Award for Visual Methodologies from the International Visual Sociology Association. https://juliatulke.com/

1 If you are interested in being added to the Street Art and Graffiti Network's email list, contact jflennon@usf.edu.