

# Freedom

Freedom of Expression. Martyn Reed. Stavanger, Norway, 2009. Photograph ©Martyn Reed.



Reed Urban Security 2009

**Editorial:**

**Martyn Reed, Editor-In-Chief Nuart Journal**  
**Susan Hansen, Editor Nuart Journal**

2020 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Nuart Festival, home to the world's first annual symposium dedicated to street art practice. *Nuart Journal* is built on the foundations of this critically renowned annual symposium. Nuart has long been a place for catalysing important debates around street art and for challenging entrenched notions of what art is. *Nuart Journal* strives to bring these conversations to a wider audience.

Issue IV of *Nuart Journal* is dedicated to the theme of Freedom. Freedom is a paradoxical theme, given our current state of near global lockdown, and the consequent deprivation of so many daily taken for granted liberties that we are living through. When we announced this theme in our call for papers last year, we could not have imagined that our lives could change so swiftly, nor that 'freedom' would come to have such a bittersweet resonance only a few months later. We hope to foreground new work responding to the current global crisis in the next issue of *Nuart Journal*.

This issue of *Nuart Journal* contains a collection of new academic articles, visual essays, interviews, and reviews which critically address ideas related to freedom, democracy, and our right to public space – freedom of artistic expression, freedom of movement, freedom from harassment, violence, and arrest.

Freedom is a radically inclusive theme which draws together a range of provocative contributions. The work included in this volume responds to the theme of Freedom in ways that emphasise the fundamental role this occupies in the principles, politics and practices of our culture(s). Our authors and artists reflect on the power of, and limits set, on freedom of artistic expression in public space; the role of street art as a vehicle for free speech and protest in the recent civil uprisings in Beirut and Hong Kong; and on the consequences of the radical deprivation of freedom experienced by artists and writers who are arrested, charged, and imprisoned for making work on city streets.

*Nuart Journal* is divided into three main sections:

Original articles

Experimental and visual essays

Interviews, book reviews, and talks

In Section I, the peer-reviewed academic articles deal with a number of key legal, political, and conceptual issues currently facing critical street art practice. The lead academic article for this issue, Enrico Bonadio and Olivia Jean-Baptiste's '5Pointz for Freedom', analyses the recent decision of the US Court of Appeal in the 5Pointz case, and the implications of this for artists and writers. This landmark opinion recognises the value of street art and graffiti as part of the wider culture of a nation. The court stated 'that temporary artwork may achieve recognized stature so as to be protected from destruction by the Visual Artists Rights Act and that [the artists'] work had achieved that stature'.

This section also includes 'Spotting trains' by Malin Fransberg, who investigates spatial subcultural play in the city, via a close examination of the subcultural media practices adopted by graffiti writers in Helsinki. Amy Melia explores the role of the art of urban working-class communi-

ties in creatively resisting gentrification, while Katja Glaser examines street art practices characterised by iconoclastic (or self-destructive) traits, with a focus on Essen-based artist Gigo Propaganda.

The visual essays in Section II expand on the academic papers of Section I and are designedly less measured, and more confrontational and experimental – indeed, this section of the journal is intended to push the conventional boundaries of scholarly and artistic thought. The lead visual article for this issue is an evocative photo essay based on a project from sister and brother photographers Roxana and Pablo Allison. It explores the period leading up to, over the course of, and after Pablo's imprisonment, which was a consequence of Operation Jurassic, one of the largest anti-graffiti police investigations in the United Kingdom. In their visual essay, the authors incorporate photographs, diary entries, letters, and drawings from this eight year period. Their work offers a uniquely powerful insight into the emotional impact of the legal process on individuals and their families, and a quietly critical response to the criminal justice system's approach to graffiti and freedom of artistic expression.

Section II also features Осколки/Oskolki's latest project from Russia, "HE'/'NO"; a guerrilla exhibition on the London Underground by Alex Stone, Vanessa Onwumezi, and Martin Wakefield; internationally renowned artist and filmmaker Julien de Casabianca's provocative new paste up series in Paris, 'Sex against the wall'; Jonna Tolonen's 'Paint like a girl!', a photo series which captures street interventions challenging sexual harassment; Anneke Coppoolse, Chan Ka Man, and Yu Wing Ching's 'Contested Canvas', a photo essay on the street art of the recent uprising in Hong Kong; and Cybèle Andrei's vivid photo essay, 'I Am the Revolution', which portrays both protestors and revolutionary street art in the Lebanese cities of Beirut and Tripoli.

Finally, Section III contains interviews with and talks from leading artists and academics. Building on Andrei's photo essay, Danielle Karam provides an insider's account of the street art produced in Beirut during the recent revolution. Lachlan MacDowall discusses the impact that Instagram has had on graffiti and street art; and we interview the Political Stencil Crew about their new book, which documents five years of collective political art on the streets of Athens; and the legendary photographer Martha Cooper discusses Selina Miles' new documentary, *Martha: A Picture Story*, with *Juxtapoz* Editor-in-Chief Evan Pricco.

By continuing to provide an open access forum for cutting edge scholarship, visual interventions, and incisive commentary on urban art cultures, street art practice, and graffiti, *Nuart Journal* marks our collective progress towards realising a more critical street art. We are committed to showcasing both new academic articles and more experimental and visual work. We have an open call policy and we welcome high quality submissions that challenge conventional modes of scholarly and artistic communication. We believe there is a productive synergy activated by bringing scholars, artists, writers, photographers, and curators together.

If you would like to contribute to a future issue, please see the back cover for the call for papers.